

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: THE FERN RESORT
ORILLIA, ONTARIO

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1993

VOLUME: 3

"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

1376 Kilborn Ave.

Ottawa 521-0703

TABLE OF CONTENTS
The Fern Resort
Orillia, Ontario

May 14, 1993

NAME	PAGE
Opening Prayer	1
Opening Remarks by Mark Douglas, Moderator	1
Roundtable on Self-Government:	
Presentation by Merle Assance-Beedie	12
Presentation by Patti Williams	29
Presentation by Greer Atkinson	32
Presentation by Rob Belfry	39
Presentation by Ernie Sandy	46
Presentation by the United Indian Councils	59
- Vice-Chief Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux	
- Greer Atkinson	
- Laurie Flynn	
- Chief Jeff Monague	
- Vice-Chief Mel Jacobs	
Opening Remarks by Sherry Lawson, Moderator	124
Presentation Topic: Youth	
Veronica Sandy, Chippewas of Rama	127
Stephanie King, Chi-Mnissing Youth Group	128
Naomi Walser, Chi-Mnissing Youth Group	129
David Forget, Wings of Youth Group	131

Laura Forget, Wings of Youth Group	133
Erica Louittit, Wings of Youth Group	134
Presentation Topic: Aboriginal Women	
Dawn Sillaby Smith	141
Martha Francis	145
Joan Simcoe	148
Shelley Essance-Lamarche	152
Brenda Black	153
Gloria Louttit	157
Presentation Topic: Orillia Fish Weirs	
Mark Douglas	164
Ken Cassavoy	167
John Pomeroy	170
Rob Belfry	173
Presentation Topic: Extinguishment of Treaty Rights:	
Roger Obonsawin	177
Closing Remarks by Sherry Lawson, Moderator	185

May 14, 1993

1

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 --- Upon commencing at 9:20 a.m., Friday, May
2 14, 1993.

3 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Welcome to a
4 beautiful morning at the Fern Resort. I'm going to ask
5 Lorraine McRae to say the morning prayer.

6 **(Opening Prayer)**

7 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Building from
8 Wednesday night through yesterday and on until today, the
9 four touchstones of healing, relationships and
10 self-sufficiency and today's agenda is self-government.
11 Well, this morning's agenda, at least.

12 We have with us today in our square Round
13 Table people involved with trying to help our communities
14 understand self-government. I know that there are other
15 descriptive words to describe that process -- I know my
16 own Chief, Chief Stinson, is upset with the word
17 self-government. I can't recall his interpretation and
18 the word that he chose to use.

19 In my own journey to know who I was I
20 found out that I was from the Loon Clan only recently,
21 and it was within a month that I found out I was of the
22 Loon that Brian Mulroney minted the loon coin. I thought
23 that was in honour of my finding out that I was from the

May 14, 1993

2

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 Loon Clan. I was really impressed with the federal
2 government for finally understanding us.

3 I thought and thought about
4 self-government. I didn't know what we used to have.
5 I studied the Indian Act. I watched the various
6 administrative systems that were set up in my lifetime
7 functioning under or within the guidelines of the Indian
8 Act. I saw frustration. I saw people trying to be
9 creative.

10 It's been a tough time, but as we talk
11 to the people in the community it seems as though the only
12 self-government model that they understand is the model
13 that was designed by the federal department in the 1800's
14 and set about in the Indian Act. Many of our people have
15 gone to sleep with the traditional understanding of
16 self-government and they think that our government should
17 be modeled -- and they believe that our government as is
18 outlined in the Indian Act.

19 This morning I wanted to share with you
20 a teaching that I'm still struggling to understand and
21 I wanted to share the little bit that I understand about
22 it. It's seem as though maybe about 10 per cent of our
23 community, or less, have some understanding about what

May 14, 1993

3

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 our traditional self-government was like.

2 It's seems as though perhaps 70 per cent
3 of our community understand the Indian Act
4 self-government. There's only a few people trying to
5 design and set in place new models and new systems and
6 they are not being understood by the bulk of our community
7 because they feel they're being threatened because they're
8 so comfortable using the Indian Act system of
9 self-government. They just don't seem to grasp the
10 significance of us needing to take back our control and
11 set new systems in place.

12 So, we are going to be exploring those,
13 but I thought we would start with the teaching as I learned
14 it from Jim Dumont and other people.

15 I have to use a microphone. I have to
16 draw on the board. Please bear with me.

17 In Anishnawbe society or in our
18 teachings there were seven principle clans. Our
19 government was based on those seven particular clans.
20 As I just said I'm from the Loon Clan. It may have been
21 in my family of the loons they may have asked me to come
22 to a council and speak for them -- all my family, extended
23 family, the Loon Clan. Perhaps we had an issue or we could

May 14, 1993

4

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 see a perceived problem in our community and it was up
2 to us to come to council and share our understanding of
3 this concern that we had.

4 It said in our lodge as the seven clans
5 gathered that there were seven principle speakers, but
6 there were families sitting in behind them. So my family
7 and I -- my relations and I, Loons, -- they might have
8 put me up front for the day.

9 If it said in our lodge that I would speak
10 I would get up -- and said I would speak to the fish sitting
11 across the lodge. The head of the fish is the turtle.
12 I would get up and with all the rhetoric that I could muster
13 and with all the descriptive analysis my family and I were
14 able to generate, I would get up and try to motivate the
15 fish that we have a problem.

16 I would embellish it and call it and
17 colour it as best I could and I would take my seat. It
18 is said that the fish would rise if he concurred with any
19 piece of information that I had generated on behalf of
20 my family. He might be whispering to some of this family
21 behind him and they would quickly put in place a
22 spokesperson.

23 The fish would get up and take a couple

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 of pieces of what the loon said and add additional
2 information from their perspective and their understanding
3 of this issue. They would twist it a bit, they would colour
4 it from their own perspective and they would get up and
5 speak to the crane. And the fish too, if he supported
6 what the loon was saying would try and encourage the crane
7 to understand that this is a problem. This is an issue.
8 This needs some looking at.

9 The crane might have a quick conference
10 amongst themselves, very quickly, and they would put their
11 best spokesperson that knew something about this issue
12 to the front and the crane would rise in the council lodge
13 and take maybe one small piece of what the loon said, two
14 small pieces of what the fish said, and add additional
15 information of their own perspective of this issue. Add
16 and give from their own perspective and understanding of
17 this issue or problem.

18 The crane would be speaking to the bear.
19 The Bear Clan would quickly have a quick council amongst
20 themselves, put their spokesperson to the front and the
21 bear might take one small piece of what the loon said,
22 one small piece of what the fish said, a couple of pieces
23 of what the crane said and add new dimension and new

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 understanding of this issue.

2 They would begin saying whether it was
3 a big problem, a little problem or just a mid-size problem,
4 but begin adding their dimension to this issue. The
5 process would continue. The bear would rise and speak
6 to the Martin Clan. The Martin would rise, take a small
7 piece from here, a small piece from here, a small piece
8 from here, a small piece from here and add new pieces of
9 information to this problem or this issue.

10 He would get up and speak to the Bird
11 Clan. The Bird Clan would get up and again take all those
12 bits of information, pay honour to the bits of information
13 of the other clans, add their own perspective and add new
14 pieces of information to the process and they would get
15 up and speak to the Hoof Clan.

16 The most amazing thing of this
17 traditional system was when the hoof got up to tell me
18 we had a problem here, the problem would have been restated,
19 reformatted. All the perspectives would have been blended
20 into the problem and when the hoof got up and told me we
21 had a problem here with a different description with the
22 little piece that I had of the misunderstandings that I
23 had, it would all become clear as each perspective were

May 14, 1993

7

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 blended into this problem.

2 They say that we would then break, maybe
3 eat, sing some songs and do some other things and council
4 would be reconvened. While we had our break I would be
5 consulting with the Loon Clan, and again they may have
6 asked me to speak for them. I would get up in the council
7 and try to motivate the fish that we have to do something
8 about this problem. I would be very specific on what
9 should be done.

10 I would speak with all the rhetoric based
11 on the perspectives I just heard, having consulted with
12 my family on a possible solution and the process would
13 continue. The fish would get up and take one or two pieces
14 of what the loon said, add some new information and suggest
15 perhaps a piece of what the loon said and add a new
16 perspective of what should be done about this issue or
17 this problem.

18 So this process continues and all seven
19 perspectives were blended into this solution. If we had
20 done all of that right, when the hoof finally gets up to
21 tell me what we're going to do about this problem, it's
22 pretty powerful because they've blended in all those
23 different energies and suggestions and good talk and its

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 synergy -- that's a modern word today, synergy.

2 The toughest lesson I had to go through
3 when I went to the mountains to do my fasting and trying
4 to understand from Peter Ochise -- he said seven twice
5 is eight and I didn't understand him. The next time I
6 went he said, "Seven twice is eight. Do you understand
7 Mark?" I didn't understand, but I nodded my head -- I
8 lied to him, I said, "I understand."

9 It's taken me some time to grasp what
10 he meant. Seven perspectives blended, seven perspectives
11 working in harmony together to truly define the problem,
12 truly define the action that is needed makes for an eighth
13 understanding. It's a tough lesson that we don't know
14 all the answers, we don't know all the problems. We really
15 own only one-seventh of the understanding of it and we
16 only know one-seventh of what to do about it. We need
17 each other in harmony to know how to do things.

18 From the other cultures it's perceived
19 that often times when they come to me and ask me what to
20 do about something, I don't know. I need some time to
21 go through my process to consult the other six
22 perspectives. I don't have instant answers. So to the
23 other races it's said that we're perceived as being a little

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 slow, and there's other more unkind words about that about
2 slow.

3 This process that we had was 100 per cent
4 ownership to the problem. We had 100 per cent ownership
5 to the solution. When the hoof got up to tell me and all
6 of us what we were going to do about it, having paid honour
7 to all the other six perspectives, when the Zhaagunaash
8 came all they saw was the hoof get up and tell everybody
9 what to do.

10 They thought we had a dictator. They
11 said, "Our way is much better. We like to use
12 parliamentary procedure and we have people who make motions
13 and second, and we have debate. We have the yes camp and
14 the no camp. They argue back and forth for awhile. We
15 debate and then we call a vote and if 51 are in favour
16 that's what will do. If 49 people are unhappy, tough
17 luck." They said that would be good for us and they put
18 that into legislation and they created the Indian Act.

19 They said every two years we would clean
20 house and put in a new Chief. They put all these rules.

21 They had no understanding and we didn't really have the
22 ability to try and explain our process to them. There
23 was no -- we were just considered that we didn't know

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 anything and this would have to be done for us to make
2 us modernized, or so that they could record our government
3 system or how we dealt with problems and came up with
4 solutions.

5 We didn't have a dictator. It was a
6 healthy process. This is my understanding of how we once
7 had our own government amongst the Anishnawbe people, our
8 people. Other Aboriginal cultures had their own
9 variations of this, their own house process, other nations
10 had their own process. I've come to understand this much
11 and I thought I would at least share that little bit that
12 I know.

13 I'm still trying to appreciate and I'm
14 trying to understand if there's a possibility of bringing
15 that back. I know we can't bring everything back, but
16 I think the lessons are there that we had something very
17 powerful. It wasn't understood, it was replaced by
18 another something and now we need to create something new.

19 In our teachings they say we don't know
20 how to go into the future unless we know where we come
21 from. I think this is why I've been struggling to
22 understand what we used to have, to get that benchmark
23 or that reference point, to understand how we got to now

May 14, 1993

11

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 so that we will walk in a straight line into the future.

2 I wanted to share that piece with you.

3 Meegwetch.

4 Joining us today and the people filming
5 today's event are with Trilliam Cable. I think we call
6 them Cable 8. They're going to make tapes available for
7 the Royal Commission's archives. As well as they will
8 be broadcasting this within their region during next week
9 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 3:00 p.m. I forget
10 the number of television sets that they reach -- 400,000
11 television sets. Hopefully, somebody will wake up and
12 put on their television next week. I'm glad their here.
13 Welcome.

14 In our way we try and go in a clockwise
15 manner. I know that there are different people and
16 different perspectives here this morning and I'm going
17 to ask Merle to begin her presentation now.

18 Meegwetch.

19 **MERLE BEEDIE:** Meegwetch, Mark.

20 Good morning to Mary and Bertha.

21 I'll begin with the custom that we are
22 beginning to recognize and that is to introduce myself.

23 I will give you my Ojibwe name first to let the

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 grandfathers know that I need their help.

2 My Ojibwe name is Northern Lights Woman.

3 I come from Christian Island and my totem is the Otter
4 Clan.

5 This is a historic occasion for our
6 community to have the presence of Mary Sillett and
7 Commissioner Bertha Wilson visiting our communities to
8 hear our concerns, our needs, our perspectives on how life
9 is in our communities.

10 Presently I am a community member of the
11 City of Barrie. I hold no position anywhere in any
12 political organization. My involvement at this table is
13 through the Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle, which is
14 a grassroots community involvement that focuses on
15 concerns that grassroots people can bring to an
16 organization voluntarily.

17 We very willingly put a call out many
18 times for people to attend our meetings and many do come
19 willingly. There are no honorariums and sometimes no
20 travel expenses given for people to attend our meetings,
21 but we do have willing participants who come and voice
22 their concerns in that forum.

23 I mention that this is a historical event

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to have the Royal Commission visiting our community because
2 I think it is going to be the last Royal Commission that
3 will have hearings on Native peoples. I say this because
4 we Native people are on a positive road to self-government
5 -- whatever that word means.

6 I have never heard any presentation on
7 self-government to this day. Whatever views I have are
8 from discussing our concerns in our communities with
9 elders, youth, and general community members all over the
10 place. The word self-government does not mean anything
11 to us because we don't know what it is.

12 So, I can bring to you a perspective
13 probably that is based on traditional and historical events
14 that have happened in our community. Perhaps I should
15 start where it all began, with our ancestors who came to
16 this area and settled here and loved this area so much
17 that they stayed on here.

18 In this room are many people who come
19 from the families of those original settlers who were
20 involved in some of those claims, treaty claims, and in
21 fact, the very first reservation was part of what we now
22 call a pilot project right in our area of Simcoe County
23 at Coldwater. And back in those days that was also a

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 disaster.

2 It seemed that whatever the government
3 tried to do for us by way of helping us to develop turned
4 into disasters right from the beginning. The leaders at
5 that time knew that and they've continued always to quarrel
6 with government to try and regain some control over their
7 lives, to try and maintain a way of life that was theirs
8 and they were comfortable and happy with.

9 Today, I'm wearing a medal that was given
10 to my great-great-great grandfather, John Assance, in the
11 War of 1812. I mention this because the veterans made
12 a presentation to this Commission and my uncle was one
13 of the presenters. He was so overcome with feeling that
14 he was unable to discuss what he thought. He wanted to
15 bring to this table to discuss what our veteran's concerns
16 were from our community.

17 He was also going to mention the fact
18 that in this area 140 members from the communities of
19 Christian Island, Rama and Georgina Island came freely
20 and willingly to fight in the War of 1812, when a call
21 was put out for people to fight in that war.

22 We always knew that this was our place,
23 this was our home and this was where we wanted to always

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 be. The book in front of me also holds a lot of history.
2 It records a couple of generations of activities that
3 happened in these communities. In it also is documented
4 the fact that the Royal Commission came through here in
5 the year 1923, and the very people who are seated at these
6 tables had grandfathers who participated in that Royal
7 Commission as well. I remember my grandfather telling
8 me that he wore this very medal at that hearing.

9 We bring a lot of history to this table
10 and it is a historical event, like I said, and I sincerely
11 believe that it is going to be the last Royal Commission
12 on Aboriginal people. We are on a road that is going to
13 take us and all the other nations of the world into a way
14 of life that is unknown to them.

15 We bring to this Commission different
16 attitudes about our way of life, different perspectives
17 that are so reasonable, sensible, correct, honest, full
18 of respect and that takes care of every individual in the
19 community whether they be child, whether they be orphans,
20 whether they be cripples, whether they be widows, whether
21 they be alone or whether they be from the homosexual
22 community. Everybody had a place in our community life.

23 As Mark mentioned, each of those clans had a spokesperson,

May 14, 1993

16

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a family head, a family member that took care of the
2 concerns of that family.

3 I have no vision of what this
4 self-government is going to be like, and I don't know what
5 the other presenters are going to bring to the table, but
6 what I do know is that we do not fit into the government
7 system that's in place now. We never will.

8 We don't fit into the election system
9 although we will probably, in time, phase that out and
10 put in a system very much like our grandfathers had because
11 that is our way. That's what belongs to us. That's what
12 we Anishnawbe people want, something that is truly ours
13 and something that other nations of the world can model
14 their governments after.

15 In fact, they have to a certain point
16 copied the Iroquois Federation in their American
17 Constitution, and also the Communist countries have
18 modeled the Iroquois traditions into their way of life.

19 A lot of religions also copy some of our spirituality
20 and our beliefs.

21 We have many, many things to share that
22 have been left a mystery until this period in time. We
23 as Anishnawbe people have a lot to offer other people --

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 people to people. It is the precious gifts of sharing
2 and caring that the Creator gave to us that we will be
3 passing on to the other nations.

4 If it were given to us to destroy the
5 Earth, as our elders tell us it would not be in us to do
6 because we love the Earth so much, we care for our world,
7 our Earth, our mother, too much to destroy it and the
8 precious things that the Creator made, including the other
9 races, the white race, the yellow race, and the black race.

10 That caring and sharing will help us move
11 on into some difficult times ahead for us, but because
12 we have the Creator to look out for us we are going to
13 make and create an example for others to follow because
14 they have nowhere to go. They are in trouble. Everybody
15 the world over is fighting and wondering which way to go.

16 Like this one Anishnawbeque told me the
17 next 500 years are for us Native people, not only here
18 in this continent, not only on this side of the continent,
19 but also the Native peoples the world over have wonderful
20 attitudes to pass on which costs governments nothing --
21 a difference in viewing things and it doesn't cost one
22 cent to change your attitude about the world around you.
23 That is what we have.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 And competing for government funds is
2 not going to be part of our way of life either in the future,
3 because the government is going broke -- the governments
4 all over the world are going broke because of their endless
5 spending on defence and all sorts of other negative
6 projects that they get themselves involved in.

7 We Native people know how to function
8 without government funds. We have been brought into this
9 government funding through this whole elected system in
10 the Indian Act which was brought into place. We've been
11 made to be dependent on that. We Native people have to
12 change our attitudes about that funding. We know how to
13 live day-by-day, week-by-week with very little. We know
14 how to be happy. We know how to be content within our
15 own homes with very little.

16 This book chronicles, like I said, a
17 couple of generations of activity within the Christian
18 Island community. Very little is talked about funding,
19 except when people need it to build their homes they would
20 ask for perhaps \$100, so that they could maybe buy a saw
21 or an axe to cut the trees down so that they could build
22 a house.

23 Many things were planned in our

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 communities that didn't require a lot of money. The caring
2 and sharing continued throughout our whole community life
3 day-by-day and we depended on our families and our
4 neighbours to help us in times of trouble, as you all well
5 know.

6 This government that we seem to see in
7 front of us emerging, this self-government, we have to
8 be very guarded about what we're going to sign on to.
9 We have to truly understand what the meaning of the word
10 self-government is before we raise our hand up and say,
11 "I'm going to buy into this."

12 The last referendum also told everybody
13 -- we all learned from that that we don't want to buy into
14 something unless we know what we're getting ourselves into.
15 That requires every individual family's participation
16 in whatever planning is going to come out of this growth
17 process that we Native people are involved in.

18 When I talk about the changing attitudes
19 of some -- the evidence is already happening in our
20 communities about the changing attitudes about what we
21 want to do just by us following the Anishnawbe road. Some
22 of us are beginning to realize what good people we are.
23 I'm becoming a better person because I'm following some

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 of our traditional values.

2 As we learn more and more of these things
3 we become stronger and stronger. At one time I would not
4 have been able to sit in front of you and talk and express
5 my feelings as easily as I'm doing now, because I came
6 from a background where all of that was suppressed. I'm
7 a boarding school kid. I went to four boarding schools.

8 So if I were to write a journal about my experiences I
9 would have to write four journals because I went to four
10 separate schools and had four separate trials.

11 I guess the hardest thing I have to go
12 back and visit when I talk about boarding school life --
13 for us boarding school kids that is something too that
14 we need to visit. I understand that many of us want to
15 start to do something about this because my friends that
16 I still maintain from boarding school days, we get together
17 and talk many, many times, and we have more or less formed
18 a very loose self-help group to help us through the times
19 past. We were never prepared for the life that existed
20 out of boarding school.

21 The one thing that I've never talked
22 about and have always avoided was the inability to talk
23 about the incredible loneliness that we children used to

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 feel in boarding school, not having anyone to go to but
2 each other and the bonding that happened between us helped
3 us survive the terrible conditions that we as children
4 were subjected to.

5 I wasn't going to mention the boarding
6 school days at all today, but again that's part of
7 government policies that we have lived through. We, as
8 children, lived through an incredible period in time --
9 actually it was over a period of over 100 years -- and
10 again, I will refer to some history. This very community
11 of Rama had a Chief named Yellowhead and a Chief at
12 Christian Island named John Assance, my great-
13 great-grandfather, who opposed the establishment of these
14 boarding schools. They were the only two chiefs in all
15 of the areas surrounding this area that opposed the
16 formation of those schools.

17 The reason being -- I remember my
18 grandfather saying that it was because it was going to
19 destroy our way of life. They saw that vision all those
20 years back that this was going to happen. Incredibly,
21 the very men who opposed it had their children sent there.

22 Yesterday, or the day before yesterday,
23 a gentleman from the Veteran's Affairs made a presentation

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 about all the help that is available to widows and
2 pensioners and the people who were involved in the First
3 and Second World Wars and the provisions that are made
4 for them now.

5 I went to boarding school because of the
6 lack of this kind of understanding at the time. My father
7 was in the Armed Forces and he developed a heart problem
8 while he was in the Armed Forces and he was discharged.
9 He died. He was discharged in June -- no, he died in
10 June. He was discharged the year before, so he convalesced
11 at home for a year before he died. My mother was left
12 with seven children.

13 I mention this because that was the
14 reason that we went to boarding school. My mother could
15 no longer look after us. She tried every way she could
16 for the Veteran's -- for the Army to give my father a
17 pension. They refused her. So we went to boarding school
18 where we stayed until we were 16.

19 In 1988 a notice came in her Old Age
20 Pension cheque that said if you were a widow of an Army
21 person that you could qualify for a pension if you had
22 never received any. So mom said, "Let's just try and see
23 if we can get something." I said, "Okay." So, I helped

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 her write the letter and we wrote down all the anguish
2 and the hardships that she suffered trying to get this
3 pension before she sent us off to boarding school.

4 We sent the letter off and a letter --
5 in fact, a phone call came first from the secretary who
6 received the letter and she said, "We passed your letter
7 around the office, we were so impressed with it." She
8 said, "Everyone of us cried when we read the letter. We
9 are going to send it on to the next department so that
10 your mother can get some assistance."

11 On and on it went and every time it went
12 to another office we received an acknowledgement that they
13 received the letter. The end result was after a year or
14 so, the end result was that she did not qualify because
15 my father did not die in battle. There were other reasons
16 that he didn't qualify. So mom said, "I knew this was
17 going to happen." She said, "We can't trust the
18 government."

19 The government is made up of people.
20 What the Anishnawbe people have to do is reach out
21 people-to-people so that some of these changes take place
22 that help us. I hate confrontations. All Native people
23 hate confrontations, I'm sure.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 I'm reaching a block here.

2 There are a lot of ironies in all of this
3 happening, you know. Maybe I should just tell you one
4 more story about boarding school life just to tell you
5 about the incredible strength of children, and Anishnawbe
6 children at that, because we survived the system that was
7 so cruel.

8 I would like to tell this story for
9 Lorraine McRae because language is such an important part
10 in her life and she fights so much for it. I share that
11 fight too.

12 The last boarding school we went to my
13 sister and I, believe it or not, incredible as it sounds,
14 we still spoke the language. All through those other
15 boarding schools no matter what punishment we received
16 we kept speaking, but the last boarding school we went
17 to was one of the harshest ones we had attended. In fact,
18 we survivors of that particular one in that particular
19 period in time, refer to it as the
20 Alcatraz of all boarding schools.

21 My sister and I would have our hair cut
22 off. There were kids in the school who, for their own
23 survival, used to tell stories to the matrons about the

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 other children, so no matter what you did you always got
2 punished one way or another. My sister and I, because
3 we spoke the language, would always be in trouble because
4 we spoke it. So they would do all sorts of things to us
5 by way of punishment.

6 Naturally there would be the strappings
7 and we'd be denied privileges. We'd be put in -- my sister
8 being put in a little room to peel onions, bags and bags
9 and bags of onions locked in that room. We'd have our
10 hair cut off. We were made to wear pyjamas for a month
11 at a time all through the days so that all the other children
12 would know that we spoke the language and we were being
13 punished for speaking it. On and on and on it goes.

14 We went through that whole thing and no
15 matter what they did to us, my sister and I, we would speak
16 it anyway. We were so obstinent. We thought they may
17 as well kill us anyway. They're going to kill us anyway
18 so we might as well keep on doing it anyway. We would
19 speak it just the same.

20 The irony is that when we reached high
21 school age the principal received a call from the local
22 radio station around Christmas time and they wanted some
23 Mohawk children to go up and sing Christmas carols in Mohawk

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 at the local radio station. He came down to the playroom
2 to ask for volunteers for people to go to the radio station
3 to sing Christmas carols. None of the Mohawks there could
4 any longer speak or sing.

5 So he said, "Is there anybody here at
6 all that speaks or sings anything?" So all the kids said,
7 "Merle and Sheila still speak the language." This man
8 had forgotten that he had punished us so much that he
9 punished the language right out of some of us. As usual,
10 children being very accommodating and so on, my sister
11 and I along with a couple of other girls from my reserve,
12 Blanche and Rita Jackson who played the guitar, went to
13 the radio station and sang in Ojibwe to the tune of a
14 Christmas carol.

15 We sang Ohwakigish (PH) Ichingowah (PH)
16 and that's the irony of all of the whole thing that we
17 were involved in.

18 All of this pain needs to be talked about
19 in order for the healing to take place. We need to hear,
20 "I'm sorry." We need to hear I'm sorry over and over again.

21 The people today when you say that to
22 them they say, "But we didn't do that. That happened to
23 you years ago -- 500 years ago, 300 years ago, 200 years

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 ago, 100 years. It was not our fault that happened to
2 you." What I say is, "Yes, it is your fault. Even today
3 it is your fault because you stand by and continue to watch
4 it happen. You continue to stand by and do nothing. You
5 continue to stand by and be silent."

6 In order for us to move on ahead we need
7 to hear those apologies and we need to be told, "I will
8 share with you the road ahead. I will help you." We have
9 many works ahead for us as Anishnawbe people.

10 The one last thing I would like to speak
11 about before I stop is that the direction and the guidance,
12 the intelligence, the respect, the blessings from our
13 elders is what is going to help us through the trials ahead.
14 These individuals with all their wisdom are going to help
15 us through this next few years.

16 If the next 500 years are meant for us
17 Native people, we here in this room have a share in the
18 beginnings of this new face of life for us Anishnawbe
19 people.

20 Meegwetch, Mark. Meegwetch, Mary.
21 Meegwetch Bertha.

22 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Patti
23 Williams. Will you introduce yourself as well, please?

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 **PATTI WILLIAMS:** Anine (PH). My name
2 is Patti Williams and I am from the Chippewas of Rama First
3 Nations. I'm very pleased and honoured to be here to say
4 what I think is important to me regarding self-government.

5 Just a year ago I started my journey into
6 healing. On that road it has taught me many things and
7 I have searched out elders and I've listened to them and
8 they have shared many things with me. Today I would like
9 to share with you the little bit I know that my elders
10 have taught me.

11 This one Anishnawbeque likes to talk and
12 she likes to say, "And there will be a time." That's her
13 favourite saying when she talks to me. I just love that
14 saying. She talks about the prophecies. She talks about
15 the seventh fire in particular and that is where we are
16 presently. She told me that there will be a time when
17 our people start to stand up and do the work. That's where
18 we are and this is what we are doing. All the Native people
19 across the land.

20 She talks to me and she says, "Patti,
21 you must find the strength within you and you must share
22 this with all the other young women." She says, "You must
23 be strong for all your people because before we can go

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 forward we must take a look at where we came from" -- as
2 many people have said here.

3 She says that long ago, before the
4 Europeans came here, we walked beside our men. We sat
5 at the table with them and we talked to them. We were
6 all equal. When the Europeans came over we had to take
7 a step back behind them. Now, with the coming of the eighth
8 fire, the eighth and final fire, when all people -- if
9 we are to continue on this Mother Earth we all will have
10 to become one and equal. She says that to become equal
11 and live in harmony we must once again walk beside our
12 men and sit with them in decision- making.

13 This thing that we are doing will not
14 be easy. It will be very difficult because as it stands
15 now men in our Native First Nations communities lead us.
16 They are the men in power, they run us.

17 To find this harmony, although it may
18 be difficult, we must try and work with them if we are
19 to live in peace and harmony, in order for the First Nation
20 people to continue to exist for our future generations.

21 I have recently started working in Rama
22 and it's been very difficult. I'm only young. I'm a
23 woman. Sometimes I feel like what I have to say is not

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 important. I guess that's why I'm talking about these
2 issues because there are other young women here coming
3 up and you want to take a stand and do what's right for
4 our people. I just wanted to let them know that they are
5 not alone. My elder has taught me that we must do this
6 for our future generations so we will be able to reach
7 our goals for positive change for our future generations.

8 That's all I have to say, Meegwetch.

9 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Hurry up,
10 Neil. Pass that eagle feather to the next person.

11 Greer Atkinson, will you introduce
12 yourself, please?

13 **GREER ATKINSON:** Good morning. My name
14 is Greer Atkinson. I work with the United Indian Councils
15 which are all of the people in this room. The United Indian
16 Council is a group that is trying to give expression to
17 the term self-government and trying to define what that
18 means to the people.

19 I was also given the topic to speak on
20 women and self-government this morning with Patti and we
21 agreed earlier that she would try and take a more
22 traditional perspective and then I would try and take a
23 more present perspective.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 It's interesting, but I have watched
2 people -- have listened to people take the term
3 self-government and say, "I don't know what that means"
4 or "We're not really sure what that means." When I look
5 at the term self-government, the first four letters of
6 that word stand out to me and that's "self". When you
7 look at it that way maybe it makes things a little bit
8 clearer.

9 For women, I guess, in self-government
10 -- and just like it's been said, it's going to be our
11 responsibility and it always has been our responsibility,
12 but especially right now it will be to teach the next
13 generation how to live in both worlds, how to live with
14 the Anishnawbe, but also relating to other communities
15 and other peoples around us.

16 I think we've reached a point where we
17 have the means to do this now. I want to share with you
18 a story -- it's not a story it's a recent happening and
19 it concerns youth and it concerns, I think, many of the
20 things that have been discussed around the table right
21 now.

22 At the Wallace Conference we did have
23 a visitor from the States and she worked specifically with

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 youth. As we were riding down to the airport with her
2 we were discussing the fact that in role modelling we seem
3 to have a lot of our people that get up and -- let me just
4 say this is with youth too, just to clarify things -- they
5 get up and they talk about their experiences and how they
6 healed and they talk about it in that "I've had a drinking
7 problem for the last 20, 30 years."

8 Since she shared with us that what was
9 also her experience we asked her and we said that kind
10 of concerned us because we thought when people talk like
11 that to youth, it was our concern that that was validating
12 for youth that it's okay to go and lose control of yourself
13 for your early 20's or into your 30's, and then you reach
14 some midpoint in your life and you say, "Now I'm going
15 to be a real human being and I'm going to heal myself and
16 get better."

17 We asked her about that and what she had
18 said to us was, "When we get up and we say those things,
19 and especially to youth, we also have to communicate to
20 them that they have a choice now. We have the means and
21 we understand what's happening to us. In my generation
22 and for many of the people that are here that wasn't
23 necessarily the case, but it is now."

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Yesterday a woman got up here and all
2 these things are being expressed at this table right now,
3 Patti's fear of saying it is like a low self-esteem, "I
4 worry that what I have to say isn't important" and the
5 woman that was up here yesterday saying, "I have a real
6 problem with my self-esteem."

7 These are all issues that we're all
8 battling with. Everybody in this room in my own peers
9 have a problem, or there is a lot of pain and anger and
10 abuse in our communities and that's something that we have
11 to deal with. We keep passing it on, it's a generational
12 thing. I think we've all learned by this point.

13 Going back to that "self" part of the
14 self-government, how we deal with these outstanding issues
15 -- and I think self-government is one of them -- will
16 reflect on our children. We are the living hope of our
17 ancestors by the fact that we're still here today. We're
18 the hope of our people. We need to understand this and
19 we need to take self-responsibility for that. That's why
20 are here.

21 I've talked about the means and what are
22 the means and maybe I need to explain it a little bit better,
23 but the means are in ourselves. It's right here in Merle's

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 sharing and everybody else's sharing to say -- just as
2 Stephanie had said yesterday. She said something very
3 important, I think, she said, "We keep talking about
4 healing, but it's so important that we have to say it over
5 and over." I think that's so true.

6 In going back to the means, I think we
7 do have the means. I think at this point a lot of our
8 communities are taking the steps towards that with the
9 community Wallace Conference, but also on a personal level
10 that's happening. I know in my own community a lot of
11 people have taken on that self-responsibility and have
12 gone to treatment, or have found spirituality, or have
13 done the things that they need to do to heal themselves
14 in order to heal for the next generations, to take care
15 of themselves.

16 We look around us and we can see it.
17 You don't have to be educated or you don't have to go through
18 treatment to see the posters on the walls that tell us:
19 "Use hugs, not drugs", or "Abuse is not right". We don't
20 need abuse. Let's take care of our children. It
21 shouldn't hurt to be a child.

22 These are all things or messages that
23 are coming at us constantly. For our youth and for

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 ourselves we do have a choice now and that's part of what
2 self-government is. It's our vital element in it all.
3 I think also that it's working with our children -- our
4 younger children especially are starting to get that
5 message when it's brought to them at that age.

6 I think also that we need to pay special
7 attention at this time to our youth because I think they
8 missed out a bit on that and they're in need of our care
9 and our encouragement and our reinforcement with that
10 message for our future generations.

11 Just going back to bringing the topic
12 around to women. I think women are -- they have an amazing
13 creative force, and in terms of the self-government they
14 have a lot of potential to build and carry on what we're
15 trying to do in our communities. We need to tap into that
16 resource and we need to foster it. If we don't pay
17 attention to what we're doing right now, just as we have
18 that creative force, we also run the risk of destroying
19 it. I think we've seen a lot of that destruction happening
20 or it has happened in the past and we need to stop it
21 because, like I said right now, we have the means and we
22 have the knowledge and we need to put it to use.

23 Also, going back to that self and with

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 women, I think we really need to support and encourage
2 each individual -- women who make up the self-government
3 in self-government.

4 In closing, I do have a couple of
5 recommendations for the Royal Commission. I would like
6 to ask the Royal Commission that they hold a special round
7 table on women's issues, and I'm not talking about
8 addressing it with the national women's associations, but
9 I'm talking about addressing it with the community, the
10 women leaders in the community. They are all sitting right
11 here.

12 These people here need to have time to
13 talk about the issues that they're dealing with in their
14 homes, or if that can't be done I want to ask that, just
15 as the Wallace Conference was funded in part by the Royal
16 Commission, to provide further funding for community
17 groups to hold workshops that can deal with these issues
18 and to help foster and encourage the support that we need
19 amongst our women in our communities.

20 Also, on behalf of the United Indian
21 Councils I would like to present our Commissioner women
22 with a couple of T-shirts that we have from our Wallace
23 Conference. Just to show you what it says on here -- and

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 it goes with my belief that there is a lot of creative
2 force and a lot of capacity in our communities -- our motto
3 was using the UIC, as in United Indian Councils, and turn
4 it into Unlimited Inner Capacity because we really strongly
5 believe that our people have that. So, I will just bring
6 these over and let you have these.

7 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** We're out of
8 time and we have two more presenters. What do I do?
9 Should I call a coffee break and we'll come right back?

10 Five minutes, maybe ten.

11 --- Short break at 10:30 a.m.

12 --- Upon resuming at 10:45 a.m.

13 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Yesterday I
14 gave a short story on assertiveness and I didn't have the
15 proper level of assertiveness this morning. I lost
16 control and I lost a lot of time. We still have two
17 presenters on this mornings agenda before we move into
18 the next presenters.

19 Rob Belfrey, you're on. Introduce
20 yourself.

21 **ROB BELFREY:** A quick introduction. My
22 name is Rob Belfrey and I work with the Oginash (PH) Tribal
23 Council. I've been told to keep it short and I look outside

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 and I know that on a day like today you have to travel
2 with your mouth closed, so everything seems to be working
3 that way.

4 I guess what I wanted to do -- I'm
5 supposed to tell you about communications and
6 self-government, but I haven't thought of a way to do that
7 yet. So I'll start off by saying that I really enjoy the
8 month of May. A year ago in the month of May I came back
9 home and I got a job here in the community and I feel I
10 am so happy to be here. It's incredible -- hard to
11 describe.

12 Another me, a number of years ago, ran
13 away from here. I ran away from here like my feet were
14 on fire. I wanted to go to school and become a reporter,
15 a journalist. I borrowed \$250 from the Irwin J. Douglas
16 Scholarship Foundation and I had \$110 and I ran away to
17 become a journalist in London, Ontario. I went to the
18 program on Journalism for Native people.

19 That's my way of getting into talking
20 about being on the Constitution Express because we had
21 to do a class assignment and the class assignment was to
22 ride the train, the Constitution Express. I travelled
23 from Vancouver to Ottawa in 1980 and along the way as it

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 travelled it picked up Indians from everywhere. It was
2 just an incredible experience.

3 It was probably the first time I had ever
4 heard the drums and people were singing. I remember one
5 of the songs, Loulouitt (PH) Valley Singers, I'll remember
6 it forever because it was a song about the DIA, Department
7 of Indian Affairs. The chorus went "DIA, DIA, I'm not
8 your Indian any more, hay yeah, hay yeah."

9 The trip was so empowering it was
10 incredible. This is where this process, this Royal
11 Commission came from. It's because in 1980 the federal
12 government -- then Pierre Trudeau was Prime Minister --
13 was trying to get the Constitution here in Canada. He
14 wanted to do it quick and he wanted do it fast and he didn't
15 want to do it with us. We had to get his attention. We
16 had to stop him from doing that.

17 I remember that people were just pouring
18 into the City of Ottawa because the last hearings on the
19 Constitution were being held -- what was needed before
20 it could be brought home here in Canada. This train was
21 picking up people that felt they had something to say.
22 They had something that they had to give to the Prime
23 Minister so that he would include us in that Constitution.

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 From that December so long ago came a
2 number of First Minister's Conferences. From those First
3 Minister's Conferences came this Royal Commission.

4 I'm trying to keep this short so I'm
5 trying to sort what I want to say here.

6 I guess the next thing I want to talk
7 about is that this time since the Constitution has been
8 a time full of promise. We have built many beautiful
9 things in this time based on those promises, and one of
10 the ones that I was involved in was called the National
11 Aboriginal Communications Society. I say "was" because
12 in my heart it died, but I found out recently it still
13 exists and still in Lac La Biche, Alberta. It's still
14 run by the same guy who was president when I was there,
15 Ray Fox.

16 During this time of promise we had
17 trouble. The government was promising us they wanted us
18 in the Constitution. It wanted to tell us how it felt
19 about us being the first citizens of this land and have
20 the Constitution reflect that. While it was saying all
21 of this it was cutting up the beautiful things we were
22 building. Cutting them up by taking a knife to budgets.
23

May 14, 1993

41

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 I know there was an elder here yesterday
2 that said we shouldn't depend on government money, but
3 we use that government money because of the promises that
4 were being made during this time since the Constitution.

5 We felt that what they were saying was
6 going to mean something and we began building the beautiful
7 things we needed to become full participants in this
8 society, and communications is one of the most important
9 ones.

10 I was listening to Mark speak this
11 morning and looking at the seven star mandella, I guess
12 that's what our communications societies are trying to
13 build is they are trying to rebuild that mandella. I don't
14 understand very much about this and I'm only guessing here,
15 but the mandella seems to be how we communicated with each
16 other in the days when we were running our own lives,
17 without those people in Ottawa telling us what to do.

18 It's gone now. It's like the National
19 Aboriginal Communications Society, it's still there, it's
20 still functioning, but so many people don't know about
21 it because it's only a small amount of people who are
22 involved in it.

23 Many many people are involved in

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May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 communications. Native communications is 98 per cent
2 volunteer. There's no money for communications. There's
3 no money to help our people talk to each other about the
4 things that they need to talk about.

5 The federal government took away the
6 budget for all the Native newspapers in the country and
7 it took away the budget for the National Aboriginal
8 Communications Society. I make a joke about that because
9 I became Coordinator of that society. In January I was
10 writing the budget for approval by the federal government.

11 In February I received approval and I also received a
12 set of cards, business cards as Coordinator. In March
13 they told me that I didn't have a budget any more, even
14 though they approved it in February and so my cards --
15 I still have half of them. They're limited edition prints.

16 I think that's mainly what I wanted to
17 say, that mandella is missing. I see people struggling
18 to the south of us, to the north of us, they're building
19 things. In Kettle Point they built a newspaper. At Six
20 Nation they built a newspaper and they built a radio
21 station. Those radio stations are as close as we can get
22 to that mandella easily because everyone in the community
23 has access to them. They can make you mad sometimes.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 People want to say what they have to say.

2 In Akwesasne they started talking about
3 the gamblers on the radio and one night the people went
4 to bed and the next morning they woke up to find their
5 radio tower had been torn down, blown up. A pretty
6 destructive force was at work there. After about a month
7 people began to miss the radio station so much that one
8 gentleman donated his house -- he gave them his house,
9 "Put your radio station here." About 10 or 15 people got
10 together and they paid \$15,000 to put up a radio tower,
11 but they paid to put that radio tower back up.

12 Until we can get our mandella working
13 again we have to focus on communications in some other
14 way. If the Royal Commission could make this point that
15 we need our communications and we need all the help we
16 can get to build them, not these cuts. Let us build our
17 beautiful things and help us build our beautiful things
18 so that we can help ourselves.

19 That's all I have to say.

20 Meegwetch.

21 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Ernie Sandy,
22 will you introduce yourself please?

23 **ERNIE SANDY:** Thank you very much.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My
2 name is Ernie Sandy. I'm from Christian Island and this
3 Royal Commission here has been very interesting. A lot
4 of interesting points have come up and a lot of sad stories.

5 I guess I feel very glad about it in being
6 able to use my language as an interpreter, we are sitting
7 in the box interpreting from English to Anishnawbe and
8 it's a lot of fun because the language -- some of the words
9 we have no problems with, but how do you say "computer",
10 that's pretty hard to say.

11 Anyway, I was glad to have been asked
12 to be an interpreter and it's very rewarding because it
13 shows that our language is very much alive, even though
14 a lot of people have forgotten it. But as long as there
15 is a little spark in the dark, if you may, the language
16 can be learned. It's not going to be forgotten as long
17 as we have people like Lorraine and other language
18 teachers. It won't be lost.

19 Anyway, I will get on with my little
20 presentation.

21 I would like to talk just briefly -- I'm
22 under a time constraint, too -- I would like to talk briefly
23 about somewhat of a taboo topic called suicide. I'm part

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 of an organization in Orillia called SPOT, Suicide
2 Prevention of Teens. I would like share a letter with
3 you from our coordinator, Vern Handford.

4 The SPOT, Suicide Prevention of Teens
5 in Orillia has been working towards raising the awareness
6 of the suicidal issue, especially among our youth.

7 Our main focus is outlined in our
8 information letter. To date, we have established a
9 self-support group AFTERS. We also have held information
10 sessions, for example, public forums and mall displays.

11 SPOT has held a two-day teen awareness workshop attended
12 by both teens and adults. SPOT is on a voluntary basis
13 and all committee members have had personal experience
14 with suicide.

15 We want to be proactive instead of
16 reactive to suicide. SPOT continues to work towards
17 prevention of suicide and it's implications for both
18 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

19 Respectfully submitted, Verna Handford.

20 This will be submitted to your Royal
21 Commission.

22 Right now I'm going to talk about myself.
23 What I do right now is -- which I'm very glad to be doing

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 -- I'm a language teacher, trainee coordinator.
2 Essentially what that involves is arranging for
3 professional development for the teachers who will be going
4 to Thunder Bay. That involves workshops, et cetera, in
5 teaching experience.

6 Everything is going to chop chop when
7 I talk about that, but I haven't the time to go into
8 elaborations. I like Sherry can go on and on and on, but
9 I will keep it very brief. Some of the things that I say,
10 I will be saying and am going to say have been said before
11 and my topic here is self-government.

12 As an individual I have been following
13 Aboriginal government for about 20 years and I was around
14 when the White Paper was introduced and the great upheaval
15 that it caused. From there on, just to fast forward if
16 I may with this Constitution process as well, I guess what
17 comes to mind right away is the Charlottetown Accord.

18 When Charlottetown -- you know there was
19 a difference of opinion on the Charlottetown Accord, but
20 when Elijah Harper put the legislative boots to Brian
21 Mulroney it didn't take hours and hours of speaking, it
22 didn't take, for lack of a better expression, verbal
23 diarrhoea, all Elijah Harper said was "No". He held a

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 feather high. He held a feather in his hand and said,
2 "No, I will not accept this." Such became of the
3 Charlottetown Accord.

4 As I mentioned I'm going to be talking
5 very briefly, just to round off what I've been hearing
6 the past couple of days. In terms of the relationship
7 -- rather than have a long speech, I just sort of cut it
8 down to a sentence. Relationship -- like all the speakers
9 that we heard in the past couple of days, I said let's
10 walk and talk together as people. It doesn't matter what
11 race your from or what denomination or whatever.

12 For self-sufficiency, self-sufficiency
13 has to come from within our communities. One of the ways
14 to advance self-sufficiency is help and shop Anishnawbe.
15 If you see an Anishnawbe business, by all means patronize
16 that little guy because he is looking for customers --
17 just a figure of speech, but I think we have to help one
18 another. You see a store, for example, at Rama or
19 Christian Island and it's that guy that is trying to create
20 a few jobs here and there and it's that guy who is trying
21 to make a living.

22 In terms of relations -- just about that
23 topic a little bit, my experience as a child. I can relate

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to what Merle was talking about, but only this was at the
2 reserve setting where we were (Native language) we were
3 very abused there, as well, and some of my classmates are
4 sitting in here, too. Although it wasn't as harsh, I can
5 identify with what you were saying.

6 Number 3, getting into my topic here,
7 self-government. Self-government is going to come from
8 each and every one of us. The government as we know has
9 failed us miserably in their attempts to define the way
10 we're supposed to live.

11 Also, I have condensed this to a sentence
12 that's used very widely: Self-government if it is to be,
13 it is up to me. Each and every one of us has the
14 responsibility for self-government. Self-government
15 comes from the individual. It doesn't come from big
16 organizations it comes from you and I. You and I have
17 the responsibility to lay a foundation for our children
18 and their children and their children's children.

19 In other words, what we're looking for
20 is something that should be for generations, not short-term
21 road programs -- that hasn't worked.

22 So, just to reiterate that: If it is
23 to be, it's up to me. It's up to me to care for my

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 neighbour. It's up to me to love my neighbour. It's up
2 to me to use the wisdom and to use the knowledge that I
3 have, or you may have, and to have the courage to be able
4 to stand up and say there's something wrong here. If you
5 have a dispute with something, be it of whatever nature
6 it is, and to show respect, respect for our elders, respect
7 for each other, respect for everyone regardless of their
8 beliefs as Merle indicated.

9 Humility, as we say in Anishnawbe,
10 Basadisowin (PH), don't think you're above anybody else
11 because we're all in circle. Everything that we look at
12 is a circle.

13 I mentioned that I work for BANAC, Barrie
14 Area Native Advisory Circle, and I'm very pleased with
15 this organization. I had the opportunity to work with
16 them last year and I continue to volunteer whenever I can
17 for them. A self-government also can't be measured in
18 dollars. It can't be measured in what's in it for me.
19 It's how can I help you?

20 The BANAC report came out -- I'm not sure
21 when it came out, but it looked at the very essence of
22 Anishnawbe needs. It looked at the very topics -- the
23 kitchen table dialogue, if you will, that's the way

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 self-government is. It's going right to the Anishnawbe
2 and saying, "How can we help you? What kind of service
3 can we provide for you?" This is Anishnawbe way.

4 Just to reiterate what I was talking
5 about, self-government essentially follows sharing, love,
6 wisdom, knowledge, courage, respect and humility. If we
7 can possibly follow those things in the leadership of our
8 people and the caring of our people then we will have a
9 long relationship with each other and a strong foundation
10 for our people from which to rise.

11 Meegwetch.

12 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Do the
13 Commissioners wish to respond?

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would
15 like to make a comment about what Greer said about the
16 fact that today young Native people do have choices. This
17 is the first time I've heard this being stated, although
18 I've been in a great many communities.

19 I think this is something that we need
20 to hear and to recognize because the impression I have
21 received as I've listened to many many people is that
22 previous generations didn't have those kinds of choices.

23 They felt that they were caught up in a system over which

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 they had no control and in which they had very little
2 opportunity to make any kind of an input. Therefore, they
3 didn't have the opportunity to make choices.

4 I think what you said about the fact that
5 that is one significant difference today, that young Native
6 people do have the ability to make choices and as you point
7 out -- and this was a new thought to me -- that that is
8 a fundamental part of self-government. You put the
9 emphasis on self. I think that that is a valuable insight
10 that you made to us, the Commissioners, which we hadn't
11 heard before and I wanted to thank you for that very much.

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would
13 like to thank everyone for making their presentations.

14 Just a few comments.

15 When we first discussed how we would
16 proceed with our hearings it was clear to us that our
17 approach must be inclusive and that we had a responsibility
18 to make sure that everyone, not just the leaders, had a
19 chance to talk to us.

20 We believe it's important for us to hear
21 from the leaders on self-government, but we also feel that
22 it's equally important for us to hear from other people
23 in the communities, from grassroots organizations as Merle

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 said, from the young people, from the women.

2 So I'm really encouraged to hear the kind
3 of presentations that we've had here today.

4 With respect to residential schools, I
5 think that this is an issue that we've heard about wherever
6 we've gone, particularly in areas where people live
7 on-reserves. We know that the Indian Act -- there was
8 a policy at one time in this country which stated that
9 Indian children must be educated in residential schools.

10 That meant sometimes taking children who were very, very
11 young away from their families, away from their friends,
12 away from their support for very very long times in order
13 to make them non-Indian, and what they taught them was
14 to speak Indian was no good. To be Indian was no good.

15 I think that clearly is an unacceptable
16 policy and one that Canada should be ashamed of. As a
17 result of that bad policy people have suffered incredibly,
18 children, parents, grandparents, communities. People are
19 still suffering. Clearly there is need for healing.

20 There's need for an apology. I think that we as parents,
21 we as grandparents, must do whatever we can to make sure
22 that this kind of thing never ever happens to our children
23 or the people that come after us.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 With respect to residential schools,
2 we've discussed that internally for a long time and we've
3 thought that this is an issue that is such an issue in
4 many of our communities that we have a responsibility to
5 do something similar to an interim report.

6 We also recognize that suicide is very
7 high in many of our communities because of the social
8 conditions -- that we are losing many of our young people.

9 So, we recognize, Ernie, what you have said with respect
10 to that issue.

11 I'd also just like to make a comment with
12 respect to your recommendation to have a round table on
13 women. Women have told us sometimes that they don't feel
14 very comfortable coming to us in a place like this, in
15 a forum like this, to talk to us. We must make special
16 provisions in some places to have in camera sessions, to
17 have sessions where they can speak freely about the kinds
18 of experiences that they have had. That has been done
19 in a lot of cases.

20 We've had many round tables which have
21 been more public too on issues related to women. We are
22 planning to have a round table on youth because there is
23 a wide-spread recognition that the youth are our future

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 leaders, and we do have someone on staff who works as a
2 youth coordinator.

3 In our mandate we are specifically asked
4 to look at the special needs of not only Aboriginal people
5 in the North, but to look at the needs of elders, the needs
6 of women, and the needs of youth. We take those
7 responsibilities very seriously.

8 I'd like to say what's often said at our
9 own meetings and I would like to extend a special thanks
10 to the interpreters for they are our language role models.
11 Without them we would not be able to understand each other
12 and we would not be able to talk to each other. So, I
13 extend a special thanks to the interpreters and
14 translators.

15 Thank you.

16 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** I would like
17 to invite the United Indian Council presenters to join
18 us now, please.

19 Vice-Chief Cynthia Wesley is going to
20 introduce her team.

21 **CYNTHIA WESLEY ESQUIMAUX:** Good
22 morning, Commissioners. It's nice to see you again. I
23 hope you had a good evening. I saw you rushing through

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 the flies this morning, they're pretty bad.

2 For those of you who haven't had an
3 opportunity to meet me, and I to meet you, I'm Cynthia
4 Wesley-Esquimaux. I'm one of the Vice-Chief's for the
5 United Indian Councils. I guess Merle and I are related
6 because I'm also Otter Clan.

7 I'm going to introduce my team, as Mark
8 called it, and I'm going to just do a couple of opening
9 remarks and then we will try to keep to our time frame
10 so we won't get caught up with lunch.

11 I'm going to introduce them in the order
12 that they are going to be speaking, and I'd also like to
13 point out that we chose this order because of its
14 significance. In the United Indians Councils' process
15 the most important element of the entire process and the
16 reason it's there is for the people and because of the
17 people. That is what government is all about. Nothing
18 gets done for any other reason.

19 I'm going to be asking Greer Atkinson,
20 Georgina Island also Otter Clan, to do the opening remarks
21 on the community consultation process that we use or that
22 she is particularly involved in. That is her main job.

23 I'm going to ask Laurie Flynn who is a

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 United Indian Councils community worker and does a lot
2 of the work that was mentioned on the kitchen conferencing
3 and going door-to-door, and helping people to understand
4 what this process is about.

5 I'm going to ask Chief Jeff Monague,
6 Christian Island, Beausoliel, to talk about some of the
7 governance concerns that we're up against in dealing with
8 the federal and provincial governments.

9 In spite of the fact that we like to talk
10 about Indian Government as our own and what we're going
11 to do about it, the reality is that in 1993 we do have
12 to deal with the provincial and federal governments on
13 an ongoing daily basis. We do have to co-exist.

14 I often like to say it would be nice if
15 they all went away, but they're not. It's all here to
16 stay so we need to learn how we're going to manage to work
17 together into the future and get rid of a lot of the
18 prejudices that we've been talking about.

19 Then I'm going to ask Vice-Chief Mel
20 Jacobs to talk about federal and provincial relations and
21 what can be done and what we're going to do.

22 I'm going to do a visual demonstration
23 of the United Indian Councils model -- a short visual

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 demonstration for your benefit so you can have a look at
2 some of the ideas that the communities have put together.

3 The United Indian Councils have been
4 developing community-based Indian Government for eight
5 years. This is not a new process and it's not something
6 that we've just recently started. It hasn't been easy.
7 We've had a lot of difficulty getting to or reaching the
8 community membership. I think a lot of that comes back
9 to the relationship building that we talked about.

10 There often is a bit of a breach or split
11 between the community leadership and the people at the
12 community level, for whatever reason, and it's probably
13 got a lot to do with the elective system that we were forced
14 into through the Indian Act. So you have these people
15 that are set aside as the leaders and there's not real
16 interaction between them.

17 The United Indian Councils is a very old
18 alliance of people. It's not something that we dreamed
19 up eight years ago. The United Indian Councils originally
20 came together in 1908 for purposes that dealt with the
21 treaty relationships and signing new ones in 1923.

22 What we're doing is we're giving modern
23 expression to traditional forms of government. We're

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 bringing them into the 90's and into the future and we're
2 maintaining a lot of those traditional expressions because
3 that's what the people want and we think it's important.

4

5 We also have to recognize that we've been
6 using the elective system since the Indian Act, since 1867,
7 and the elective system is what people by and large are
8 accustomed to, and as Mark mentioned earlier, 70 per cent
9 of our communities say, "What's wrong with the Indian Act?
10 That's what we've lived under for all this time and why
11 should we change?"

12 So, we recognize at the United Indian
13 Councils Advisory level and at the Chief and Council level
14 that we're not going to change things tomorrow.

15 I'd also like to note that the United
16 Indian Councils' model has what we're calling in the modern
17 context a Congress. I think that the Congress embodies
18 a strong sense of the clan system that Mark mentioned
19 earlier. It's based on a clan system decision-making and
20 I think that each of the communities could easily take
21 this model and put that system together into the Congress
22 which would in a healthy way interact with the Chief and
23 Council, however they wanted to set that system up within

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 the community.

2 The United Indian Councils Indian
3 Government requires that all of our membership is empowered
4 and involved in the model and is responsible for ensuring
5 that there is good government, that there is a self in
6 that government, and it's not just something that's over
7 there and doesn't belong to them.

8 The United Indian Councils' model
9 recognizes fully autonomous individual First Nations and
10 we have nine First Nations that are involved in this model.
11 Each one of them will be respected and independent of
12 the others on a regular daily basis and we also have a
13 regional government for strength, for economies of scale,
14 for sharing, and for support.

15 Essentially what we're doing with the
16 United Indian Councils models is we're moving from words
17 to action. We've done a lot of talking over the years
18 about Indian Government -- my grandfather, my
19 grandfather's grandfather and on and we don't want to
20 continue to be talking about this 10 years from now about:
21 Wouldn't it be nice or what could we possibly do?

22 We recognize that it must be at the
23 community level. We recognize that it's going to be very

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 difficult. We recognize that it's going to be a long
2 involved process and we also recognize that we're not alone
3 in this.

4 It's not just the United Indian Councils
5 peoples that are involved in this, there are people across
6 the country, across Canada and the United States, I might
7 add, that are grappling with this issue and our doing
8 everything they can to ensure that the future benefit of
9 their people are protected. That the rights that they
10 currently enjoy and enjoyed in the past will remain there
11 for their children.

12 We are looking at developing a unity
13 across the country with everybody that's out there moving
14 from words to actions and supporting each other in those
15 ventures.

16 Thank you and I would like to thank you
17 for that and I'm going to hand it over to Greer Atkinson.

18 **GREER ATKINSON:** Cynthia mentioned that
19 I work in community consultations -- I travel out to the
20 communities sometimes. Mainly what I am is a link between
21 the advisors and the community workers. I do many
22 different things to try and get community involvement and
23 to empower the communities.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 We do "Smoke Signals" that is quarterly
2 that goes out to the communities every three months. Even
3 getting involvement in that is pretty difficult, trying
4 to get people to submit articles, or to think that they
5 can, or whatever it is that blocks them from getting
6 involved in that.

7 We have the community workers program
8 and just like Cynthia said, what their job is is to go
9 out and to talk to the members and to help explain what's
10 going on, but to also get their input and to help them
11 get involved.

12 Cynthia, myself and the other advisors
13 often travel to different communities to hold community
14 meetings. We also have gone to different schools to talk
15 to youth and numerous things like that. There's the
16 leadership who I think also try to get the community
17 involvement. We instruct self-government committees in
18 a lot of our communities to try and get better involvement,
19 but it has to be the most frustrating thing on earth to
20 get the communities involved.

21 I think a lot of those obstacles are what
22 Cynthia has talked about in that. The Indian Act, I think,
23 has bred maybe a feeling of powerlessness or a feeling

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 that it's someone else's responsibility to get up and say
2 things. There's no self in the government that we have
3 right now.

4 We get people to try and come out and
5 to come out and help us talk about what we're trying to
6 build. We find that they're not coming and maybe that's
7 fear of change and maybe it's many reasons, but trying
8 to empower our people to understand that they can be --
9 that this is their process and to take ownership of it
10 is extremely difficult.

11 I like some of the comments that Ernie
12 made earlier and I'm going to try and use them. We held
13 a consultation workshop a little while back and that was
14 one of the things that was mentioned in our literature.
15 We might try and include some quotes from the community
16 and it might make it more appealing. Also, to really try
17 and communicate that this is something that is really
18 important and it's happening. We may not ever have this
19 opportunity to be involved in a community-based type
20 building process again. If we don't succeed with this,
21 what happens? Eventually I think that it's coming. We
22 need to become involved.

23 That's pretty much all I have to say on

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 it. I think I will hand it over to Laurie. She can speak
2 a little bit more on what it's like at the community level.

3 **LAURIE FLYNN:** Thanks, Greer.

4 Hi. My name is Laurie Flynn. I'm the
5 community consultation worker for Hiawatha First Nation.

6 Since I have been the community worker
7 in Hiawatha everyone knows that Hiawatha is a First Nation
8 of the United Indian Councils. They know what it is that
9 the United Indian Councils First Nations are trying to
10 accomplish. Not all of them understand Indian Government
11 as much as I would have them, but since the fall of 1991
12 we've come a long way.

13 Our First Nation staff have all attended
14 or have been participants in adhoc committees developing
15 proposals for the federal government and the provincial
16 government. I've held -- as Greer and Cynthia have
17 mentioned -- kitchen conferences with families in our First
18 Nation to try and introduce them to the concepts of Indian
19 Government.

20 In January of 1993, 15 First Nation
21 members came together to form Hiawatha's self-government
22 committee. For me that's a strong committee considering
23 we are a small First Nation of only 155. At our first

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 meeting I asked the committee to tell me why they wanted
2 to join this committee. Just off the top of my head as
3 I was sitting over there I tried to remember some of the
4 things they said.

5 Basically what they said was that we have
6 to help our people help themselves to understand what
7 community-based self-government is and why our Indian
8 Councils is working to develop Indian Government.

9 They know that if we don't do this work
10 for ourselves that the federal government will. One of
11 the first articles I ever wrote for our quarterly newspaper
12 Smoke Signals was before I really even understood myself
13 what Indian Government was. I spoke about a dream and
14 that we all have to have dreams because if we don't have
15 a dream for ourselves the federal government has a whole
16 shelf full of them for us.

17 I asked them what they thought
18 self-government would do for us? And here are some of
19 the comments as well: to once again become a proud people;
20 to once again be responsible for ourselves; to be able
21 to offer ownership of something so important that we would
22 once again be in control of our destiny; and to once again
23 make our leaders accountable to our First Nation people

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 and be involved in decision- making on our First Nation.

2 Since that first meeting the committees
3 understanding of UIC Indian Government has grown in leaps
4 and bounds. They are excited about digging in and helping
5 me, not only to educate the community people, but to start
6 some initial work on such things as membership and
7 elections, regulations and procedures.

8 What I am saying and talking about in
9 my community is that community involvement is a must in
10 the development of Indian Government. If there was
11 another word in the dictionary that was stronger than
12 "must" I would use it.

13 Our people have never been asked what
14 they want their future to be like and now that they have
15 been asked, at first it may have been a shock. Once they
16 get over that shock they realize that yes, it is serious.

17 We do realize also that for once what they have to say
18 matters. It's important. This makes people proud and
19 they are starting to take ownership of Indian Government.

20 I've become aware of the fact that the
21 federal government wants to abandon our community-based
22 self-government process. They say it's too expensive and
23 this worries me deeply. Here I am sitting and talking

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to our people that grassroots involvement is a priority
2 and we need and want their input and their involvement.

3 Do I now have to turn around and once again in our Native
4 history tell them, "Guess what, the federal government
5 was only kidding. What you want no longer matters"?

6 I shudder to think what their reaction
7 would be. You can't build confidence, pride and hope in
8 a group of people and knock them down because it's too
9 costly. We deserve so much better than that.

10 It's also not in my nature to do a job
11 half-heartedly, so I work all day and even into the night.

12 It's frustrating to be all hyped up to make a difference
13 in the lives of people and to be told that maybe it's all
14 for not.

15 I'm told by my Chief and Council, my
16 staff and my community to just keep plugging, keep going
17 and that's what I plan to do.

18 I hope that this Royal Commission can
19 take a recommendation back to our government that Indian
20 Government, for this to be strong and workable, if it is
21 to be the hope for our future, for our people, I believe
22 it has to be community based.

23 That's all I have to say.

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Thanks. Meegwetch.

2 **CHIEF JEFF MONAGUE:** Good morning. I'm
3 Chief Jeff Monague from the Beausoliel First Nation on
4 Christian Island. A lot of you know where that is. A
5 lot of you don't want to know where it is.

6 How do you translate that? He just
7 loves those.

8 I would like to talk a bit about the
9 United Indian Councils Indian Government process and some
10 of the problems that we're experiencing.

11 The problems that we're experiencing are
12 not only problems that our community consultation workers
13 and our advisors are experiencing at the community level,
14 but also the problems that the leadership finds themselves
15 experiencing in dealing with other governments and dealing
16 with, in particular, the federal government.

17 If you recall last year we talked about
18 -- there was a lot of discussion and debate around the
19 Charlottetown Accord and many people had their own opinions
20 depending on how it was interpreted or how they interpreted
21 the document. The biggest part of the Charlottetown
22 Accord is that it was a collection of ideas from a whole
23 number of participants across the country and for the first

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 time ever Native people being included in all of that.

2 What we need to do is we need to implement
3 the spirit of the Charlottetown Accord, if not some of
4 the ideas that were brought forward, in the Accord itself.

5 Just the very idea that for the first
6 part, Native people were given the opportunity to have
7 a voice and to have a say in what happens in this country.

8 Also, the very fact that what would have been included
9 in the eventual final document would have been an inherent
10 right to self-government and the recognition of that.

11 It's something that we still need to strive for.

12 The process that we're currently
13 involved in will lead to legislation which, of course,
14 won't be as strong as Constitutional law, nevertheless
15 it's still worth taking the bath because what we will be
16 doing is building a future for our future generations.

17 I think it's important that people have
18 to start thinking that way. People have to start saying
19 self-government is basically us having a voice today so
20 that we can build a foundation for the future generations.

21 We have to stop thinking of ourselves at the present moment
22 and start looking ahead and giving those children the
23 future, the opportunity that they will have and giving

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 them the opportunity to build on something. We have that
2 opportunity right here today, to start to lay that
3 foundation.

4 Some of the things that are happening
5 to us -- and like I say, the leadership are finding it
6 very frustrating because the federal government and the
7 provincial governments that we have to deal with do not,
8 at this point, have the political will to achieve
9 Aboriginal self-government. They must have that
10 political will in order for it to be achieved. It's always
11 nice to talk about it, but let's move on it, let's not
12 just talk about it.

13 Governments are not sure on the desire
14 to deal with long-term solutions. Once again, we're being
15 bombarded with ideas or suggestions for funding that will
16 give bandaid solutions. We need to go further than that.
17 We need to plan for a longer length of time. All of this
18 will not happen overnight. Everyone has to be aware of
19 that, I think everybody sees that.

20 The current policy that we're having to
21 deal with is outdated -- the current self-government
22 policy. The Department of Justice is preoccupied with
23 protecting the federal Crown and the bureaucracy is

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 retrenched its position since Charlottetown. Before the
2 constitutional talks and even during the constitutional
3 talks there was an openness that we felt from the
4 bureaucracy, because for the first time people were
5 starting to open the doors of their minds and seeing things
6 like how they could be and they were listening to us.

7 Once we saw that there was a no vote,
8 the door was closed. Those people that sat last year with
9 an open mind at our tables sit today with closed minds.

10 It's very frustrating. How does that happen overnight?

11 The problems still remain the same so why can't the
12 solutions to those problems remain the same as they were
13 last year?

14 Federal and provincial problems,
15 especially regarding trust, obligations and financial
16 responsibilities hamstringing the self-government process.

17 We need government-to-government negotiations with First
18 Nations and not through the Indian associations. An
19 example of that would be the Agreement or the Statement
20 of Political Relationship that was signed between the
21 Province of Ontario and the leadership of the Native people
22 of Ontario that basically stated that from now on Ontario
23 would deal with First Nations on a nation-to-nation basis,

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a government- to-government relationship.

2 That was signed in 1991 through a big
3 ceremony and it was supposed to mean something. However,
4 here we are a couple of years later and we still have the
5 same problems that existed prior to the signing of that
6 relationship and the relationship itself doesn't stand
7 up.

8 I speak of frustrations and problems.
9 We have currently fishing disputes in our own territory
10 and were the Government of Ontario true to their word in
11 saying they would deal with us in a
12 government-to-government capacity I think we would already
13 have had solutions and resolutions to that problem. We
14 are being blocked with hurdles and walls and bureaucracy
15 and it's frustrating.

16 The terms for negotiations that we are
17 currently in are dictated by Ottawa and should be discussed
18 and mutually agreed to by both parties. The United Indian
19 Councils submit -- and what usually happens is we submit
20 a budget of how much we think a certain item is going to
21 cost. If we're talking about economic development and
22 working towards an economic development structure within
23 our own communities, then we will submit a work plan with

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a budget and how many people it would take to see that
2 plan through. What usually happens is we don't get what
3 we ask for. I talked about that earlier. Once again we
4 are having to deal with having to work with bandaied
5 solutions rather than long-term solutions.

6 Other ministries within the federal
7 structure consider self-government to be an Indian Affairs
8 problem and only an Indian Affairs problem. I think there
9 needs to be a link-up, a better system of communication
10 within the federal structure to understand that
11 self-government is going to be something that will effect
12 all other ministries and not just the Indian Affairs.

13 The province does not want to negotiate
14 without the federal government at the table taking
15 responsibility for trust obligations and financing.

16 Again, it gets difficult because we talk
17 about some of the problems that we're experiencing in our
18 self-government process and a lot of that is jurisdictional
19 problems. People washing their hands of certain items
20 that are being proposed because they say they do not have
21 the jurisdiction or the capacity to deal with it. They
22 pass it off to each other. Sometimes that ball gets batted
23 back and forth with no one particular body of government

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 wanting to take hold of the ball. We usually end up with
2 it.

3 We see the solutions because we have
4 lived this life and we have been told and had it passed
5 on from generation to generation that we would be better
6 off looking after our own affairs. We see the problems
7 and we try to offer our solutions to those problems. It's
8 frustrating when on the other side of the table you get
9 a no. How do they understand? How do they really know
10 because they haven't come to our communities and they
11 haven't lived our life?

12 I think there's a worthwhile thing
13 happening today. The processes that we're involved in
14 are something that I truly believe in and something that
15 I will put my heart into to ensure it happens. I will
16 work towards encouraging our people to do the same to stand
17 up and be themselves.

18 Thank you.

19 **MEL JACOBS:** Thank you. My name is Mel
20 Jacobs and I'm from the Curve Lake First Nation. I'm from
21 the Crane Clan and I'm a Vice-Chief with the United Indian
22 Councils.

23 I would like to speak today about what

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 we feel is needed from the governments, the other
2 governments in Canada. Chief Monague spoke briefly about
3 the federal government and the commitment to a process
4 that's in place.

5 Back in December of last year we had a
6 meeting with Minister Siddon in Toronto and prior to his
7 coming to a meeting with us he had a press conference in
8 downtown Toronto and at our meeting he reaffirmed what
9 he had said and basically his statement was: "If Indian
10 people don't move forward in self-government themselves
11 that there will be a self-government process in place for
12 them within 10 years." He said, "We are committed to
13 dismantling the federal government bureaucracy called
14 Indian Affairs." The justification for that is the Indian
15 people want to have a change.

16 It's not as if it's something that we're
17 working for that might happen in the future. It's
18 something that we've been told now that the federal
19 government is also working for.

20 So, what we need from the federal
21 government is a commitment that will allow us to take the
22 time that's necessary to move towards self-government.
23 It can't be an ultimatum saying, "Well, you have eight

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 years left, you have seven years left down to the final
2 deadline and if you don't do it tomorrow then we're going
3 to have something -- here's a package and here's what it's
4 going to look like for you again."

5 That's the way the Indian Act developed
6 and that's the way the processing developed that put us
7 in the situation that we're in today. So, that's not
8 acceptable to us.

9 We need time now to look at the
10 development, a joint development of a policy and a process.
11 What Canada's current policy says is that we will allow
12 you two years to look to your people, to go back and talk
13 to your elders to find out exactly what it is you've lost.
14 What were the principles that you governed yourselves
15 under? What were the values your community had? You've
16 got two years to go back and do historical research and
17 define for us what those things are.

18 We look at the European government
19 that's been developed in Canada, it's been at least 500
20 years and it's viewed as not perfect by the constituents
21 out there so how can they expect that the Indian people
22 would be able to redevelop or restate their government
23 principles after two years of work?

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 The other part of the current policy is
2 that they talk about the government relationship at the
3 end of the day would be one where it would be a legislated
4 agreement. It would be a law that we would have in place
5 that would either speak to the question about the United
6 Indian Councils Act or the Rama First Nation Act or the
7 Beausoleil First Nation Act, these types of things.

8 Legislation being one where admits of
9 government having power over another government. We very
10 much like the work that was moved forward when they were
11 talking in Charlottetown and they were saying that there
12 would be an inherent right recognized, that it would be
13 something that would be Constitutionalized, not something
14 that would be legislated. We would like that to become
15 a reality again.

16 In the interim, though, we are prepared
17 to continue with the policy that exists. One that will
18 allow us to move forward in these areas. One that would
19 eventually lead only to legislation if that's all we can
20 do today.

21 We need, also, a commitment from our
22 provincial government, the Government of Ontario -- I spoke
23 a bit about this last night, but we want the provincial

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 government to move forward in their commitment -- as Chief
2 Montague said in 1991 they signed a Statement of Political
3 Relationships that said we will recognize you as a
4 government.

5 Again, as I stated last night, every time
6 we get to the table to talk to them about an issue that
7 should be government to government, they say just hold
8 on a minute, we haven't yet defined what the SPR means.

9 They're very much afraid that every time we sign an
10 agreement with them that it will be a treaty and that's
11 based on our Supreme Court Decision, the Sioult (PH) case,
12 that it doesn't have look like a treaty to be a treaty.

13 So, there should be some concern there.

14 But before government signs an Accord
15 that says that this is how we will deal with you they should
16 have taken the steps to look at what the implications might
17 be. Not sign the Accord and then frustrate us two or three
18 years after before deciding what that means. We need the
19 government there.

20 The financing of self-government. It
21 must move towards principles that recognize us as a
22 government. I talk about certain things and I was a civil
23 servant so I do know the process that evolved from grants

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to bands, to contributions onto alternative funding
2 arrangements and so on -- I fail to see why the federal
3 government only looks at AFA Plus, they are not looking
4 at government to government transfer models. They're in
5 place now.

6 The federal government transfers money
7 to the provinces. The federal government transfers money
8 to the territories. We have a package in place that looks
9 at something like that. It's something new, it's
10 something innovative, but it's certainly not impossible
11 to implement.

12 The other thing that I think creates a
13 major problem in the government circles is the issue with
14 regard to the costs. They're saying well if we go ahead
15 and we allow First Nations to do this it's going to cost
16 more. There's no proof that it's going to cost an awful
17 lot more. I think the only existing case right now is
18 one where they estimate that the start-up costs are going
19 to increase by seven per cent, but there basis for them
20 saying that self-government is going to double the cost
21 or triple the cost.

22 Some of the initiatives that we talk
23 about within the development of those principles -- if

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 we had some of the natural resources that we had within
2 our traditional territories and if we were able to share
3 in the money that is derived from that, that benefits that
4 are derived from that, perhaps that's a way that the costs
5 could be lessened.

6 I will talk about treaties or claims in
7 the end, too, but that's another way.

8 We don't think that the issue of
9 financing should undermine the movement towards a
10 settlement on self-government. We need better linkages
11 between the three levels of government, both in
12 negotiations and in implementation and the operations.
13 By three levels of government I mean that we are a third
14 level of government in Canada. That when we sit down and
15 talk to Canada, we shouldn't hear that we can't talk to
16 you about social assistance because in 1965 we signed an
17 agreement with Ontario and they're the ones that are
18 responsible for it.

19 Then we go to sit down with the
20 Government of Ontario and they say that's a delegated
21 authority and before we sit with you we have to get Canada
22 to the table. They use it as a ploy not to sit and do
23 something as opposed to using it as an opportunity to

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 develop things with us.

2 In the area of education, the Education
3 Act in Ontario controls what we must have once we get off
4 the reserve. If you look at the Indian Act, the federal
5 minister is, in fact, is a Minister of Education because
6 that is a legislated requirement in there. It says that
7 the Indian Affairs will look after the education of people.

8 So, that makes him a Minister of Education. We don't
9 feel that it is something that necessarily should be
10 delegated down.

11 What we would like to see is that there
12 be some coordination within those two levels of government.

13 They must agree both that we are going to move towards
14 self-government. They must clarify what their roles are
15 going to be before they get to the table so that we don't
16 get frustrated every time we sit down.

17 I would like to spend a minute with
18 regard to treaties because I think it's something
19 important. We talk about the nine First Nations that we
20 have -- the Mississauga First Nations, there are five of
21 them. They are involved in 17 treaties in this area.

22 The Chippewa Tri-Council is involved in 11 treaties. The
23 Pottawatomi of Moose Deer Point is another group of us.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 They are involved in 20 U.S. treaties.

2 One of the issues we have to deal with
3 is claims. When we get to the table to start talking about
4 claims -- that could be another way we could help support
5 our own government, we get problems because a lot of our
6 treaties were pre-Confederation treaties, the friendship
7 treaties and moving into a modern day treaty in 1923.

8 They are not numbered treaties which
9 seem to take up so much of the press. They shouldn't be
10 getting so much attention because they are numbered
11 treaties and our treaties a lot of time don't seem to matter
12 at the table. They are treaties. There are claims
13 against these things and they should be settled.

14 So, not only moving along with the issue
15 of self-government whether it be a policy or not, the moving
16 along on the settlement of claims would help us in our
17 process.

18 I would like to impress on the members
19 of the Commission that that is a message that we would
20 like to take back today that we are prepared, as a people,
21 to move forward in these things, but we are not prepared
22 to take an Indian Act again. We have that now. What we
23 want is something that's developed by the community, with

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 the community and something that we have control of as
2 we move through the future with our next generations.

3 Meegwetch.

4 **CYNTHIA WESLEY:** I'm going to do the
5 overheads and I don't know if you want to move or turn
6 around.

7 I apologize it's not as sharp, but they
8 wanted to take some of the glare off of the white sheet.

9 This is where we are in Ontario. This
10 is the reason that the United Indian Councils have
11 established have established a regional government for
12 when they come together as a group because we are very
13 geographically spread out. The Pottawatomi of Moose Deer
14 Point are up by Parry Sound. Christian Island is, of
15 course, in Georgian Bay. Rama is here at the narrows.
16 Georgina Island is in Lake Simcoe. This is the Mississauga
17 of Scugog Island. The other Mississauga communities are
18 over here. Curve Lake, Alderville and Hiawatha and way
19 down here at the bottom of the map is where New Credit
20 is. That is the other Mississauga community.

21 So, you can see we are very
22 geographically spread out so we have a regional government
23 for economies of scale and also, because our population

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 bases are really varied, down to about 45 people on-reserve
2 to 700 or 800 on-reserve. So, there is quite a bit of
3 difference between them.

4 These are some points that we think are
5 really important and I know you've heard some information
6 about this through the course of these hearings about our
7 youth. It's a concern of ours and we're very aware that
8 there are Native children in our cities who don't know
9 who they are who were raised in foster homes, who were
10 adopted out and who were not raised with their families
11 who don't know who they are or where they're from, that
12 we want to reach out to.

13 There are Native social and economic
14 indicators that are well known by the Commission and by
15 the people in this room that we think that have to be dealt
16 with. To us at the United Indian Councils, Aboriginal
17 self-government and what we're doing is about solving those
18 problems.

19 It's about our own people solving our
20 own problems for ourselves. It's about wellness in our
21 communities and for our people. It's about strengthening
22 that Aboriginal identity, our self-respect, our culture,
23 social, economic and political renewal in our communities

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 and its about looking after our own people. As I said
2 yesterday, so many times people are doing for us. We
3 always have people doing things for us and telling us how
4 to do things and it's our feeling that it's about time
5 and it's necessary for us to start looking after our own
6 people and doing stuff for ourselves.

7 Taking care of our own business and that
8 includes Canada taking care of its business, the provinces
9 and First Nations having the right -- because we have the
10 ability, to look after ourselves and our own business.

11 It's about resolving our own social,
12 economic and political and legal problems. We have to
13 recognize -- again, you heard here about the justice system
14 problems, the political split that we often have in our
15 communities, economic problems and our social conditions
16 that are way out of whack and we want to bring those back
17 together.

18 It's about dealing with those problems
19 if we have the support and protection that we're owed by
20 Canada and the provincial governments because here in
21 Ontario we have had a lot of relations with the provincial
22 governments and although I know it's not across the board
23 that people want to deal with the provincial governments,

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 in Ontario we do. I think that we recognize that here
2 and we recognize that they have to play a part in it.

3 It's about Canada continuing to have
4 those obligations as well. I know with Indian Government
5 and development of it, a lot of people at the community
6 level have expressed concern that if we have Indian
7 Government that that will sort of let the Crown off the
8 hook and we'll be sort of given a pot of money and sent
9 out on our own into never never land.

10 But, in fact, the United Indian Councils
11 model is based on continuation of that obligation from
12 the Crown because of the treaties that we signed, because
13 of the exchange of resources that we had and that ongoing
14 relationship that will continue into the future.

15 Through it all, we expect that we will
16 gain -- we gain our proud place within this country and
17 that's something that we must have.

18 Because of time constraints I'm just
19 going to give you some quick looks at some of the things
20 that the United Indian Councils have looked at in the
21 development of this government. There are the First
22 Nation citizens and again, in this model, we always put
23 the citizens at the top because they are the most important

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 element of it all. We talk to them about involvement
2 in the community planning process and not just sort of
3 leaving it to somebody else.

4 Making decisions involving that
5 fundamental change that's going to occur. Taking
6 responsibility for individual involvement. We are not
7 going to do it for you. That's not our responsibility
8 or our role to do it for the community. The community
9 has to do it for itself.

10 To monitor that congress that we talked
11 about, the council and staff activities. To elect or
12 appoint in any way they want -- it hasn't been tacked down
13 definitely for each community -- their congress, council
14 and UIC representatives.

15 The First Nation Congress has been put
16 aside to establish a set First Nation laws, reviews,
17 operations, make important land decisions so that it is
18 not left in the hands of a few people, make important
19 financial decisions -- again, so there is a broad based
20 decision making capacity there, and again, that could
21 include things like the clan system, and to consult with
22 First Nations citizens.

23 That is one of the things about the

May 14, 1993

87

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Congress that was important that the Congress would be
2 a body that would be able to be replaced if they weren't
3 doing the job that was necessary to make sure that the
4 work was being done at the community level. Right now
5 we don't have that option and I think its important. If
6 you're not being accountable to your constituent base then
7 you're out of there and somebody will be accountable will
8 be put in your place.

9 The First Nation Council will probably
10 remain and will interpret and implement the First Nation
11 laws -- it was necessary to split those so that there was
12 more accountability -- establish the First Nation
13 bureaucracy -- it's that policy, something we have to have,
14 and amazingly enough, this is across the country, many
15 First Nation communities have no policy in place of their
16 own.

17 They don't have any rules or regulations
18 for governance within the internal capacity of their
19 governments so things are done on a very haphazard,
20 slap-happy way and people wonder why it's not working.
21 It's because there's nothing in there to set down those
22 day-to-day decisions.

23 They are going to manage and direct First

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Nation affairs and manage external relations and UIC
2 relations, because again, that's an important element of
3 any government interacting with other governments and
4 interacting with outside agencies that are working with
5 and are apart of your community in some way whether it's
6 through education, social assistance or anything that has
7 to do with your government.

8 The United Indian Councils regional
9 government in on aside because -- I'm going to give you
10 the next overhead which will show how that fits in in the
11 Appeals Tribunal, as well.

12 The First Nations bureaucracy is
13 essentially the bureaucracy that you have in place at the
14 First Nation level which may change to be more appropriate
15 for the needs of the community, but by and large will still
16 remain in place and they will provide support services
17 to council and the government.

18 The regional government -- as I
19 mentioned earlier when I first did some opening remarks
20 -- the nine First Nations at the top are fully autonomous
21 and individual and will run their governments, have their
22 own Constitutions that their people will draft themselves.

23 The United Indian Councils regional

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 government will also have a Constitution and it will
2 outline how when the nine First Nations come together to
3 sit as a United Council how they will operate and how the
4 board will work and the kind of decision making capacity
5 that they will have.

6 The independent agencies that the United
7 Indian Councils is looking at will involve Tribal Court,
8 a policing authority, environmental authorities, an
9 important one to us because we get a lot of flack from
10 OFAH and different organizations about whether or not we
11 are concerned about the environment and conservation and
12 in fact, we are very concerned and have every intention
13 of ensuring that our Mother Earth is well protected for
14 now and into the future.

15 There will be wellness centre because
16 as you have heard here there is a lot of pain, grief and
17 anger and sorrow in our communities that's going to take
18 a long time to heal. So, we think that the people deserve
19 to have a centre that they can work with to get that
20 assistance directly from their own people. A child
21 welfare agency, family care agency, health care,
22 education, economic development.

23 The United Indian Councils

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May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 administration is something that will exist only at the
2 behest of the United Indians Councils First Nations up
3 here. Basically, it's there again for economies of scale.

4 It will be very expensive to have an individual First
5 Nation run, for instance, a land registry, to do policy
6 development on a broad scale, to do their political
7 advocacy, work with treaty rights and relationships, land
8 claims, some of the legal services, fiscal capacity, as
9 well.

10 So, at the behest of the United Indian
11 Councils if its a decision made by the Chiefs, Councils
12 and communities there will be a body established to work
13 on all of those areas to ensure that the communities are
14 getting more bang for their buck, or at least getting a
15 proper format put in place that will work for their
16 communities. These are all amendable as necessary.

17 So, what have we done through the course
18 of developing the United Indians Councils model? We've
19 looked at a grassroots process because we think that it's
20 paramount that there be an opportunity utilized -- a
21 traditional consensus building process.

22 Again, that comes back to the clan
23 systems and the decision making process having everybody

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 involved in the decision-making process and the community
2 participation being there to build that consensus.

3 We've done community based research to
4 ensure that the model is relevant to the needs of the
5 community. There's no point in putting together an Indian
6 Government model that's built from top down that's going
7 to sit on somebody's shelf and gee, wasn't that an
8 interesting exercise, but it's not relevant to the
9 community.

10 We've looked at community empowerment
11 to build confidence and we've really started to head a
12 lot stronger into that area now that we have the opportunity
13 and a lot of the technical elements of this model have
14 been developed. We're focusing on community needs and
15 practical problems, because that's what the community
16 needs and that's what the community wants and that's what
17 government is all about.

18 The First Nation governments are
19 directly involved in the negotiations in this process and
20 that's one of the reasons that the Chiefs and Councils
21 are concerned about the CBSG policy being tossed out the
22 window. In this process it's not up to me to do the
23 negotiations, the Chiefs sit at the table themselves

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 directly involved in what happens there.

2 There is a measured process with First
3 Nation input into the agenda, the scheduling and the
4 time-lines and we have an ongoing argument with the federal
5 government over this one because they want it done
6 yesterday and they don't want to wait for the consensus
7 building process to be put in place and for it to work.

8 We're looking at socially and culturally
9 relevant expressions of governance to ensure success.
10 Too many things have happened to our communities and we
11 need to ensure that they are successful this time because
12 as Merle Beedie mentioned this morning with the Coldwater
13 experiment, the communities were doing fairly well with
14 that and all of a sudden, the government said, "This isn't
15 working." So they just sort of ripped the rug out from
16 everybody and people were left really very stunned at what
17 had happened and there is a long story around that
18 agreement.

19 Because of the need to co-exist we have
20 also placed a lot of emphasis on a public education program.

21 We are committed to communications with all third parties
22 and third parties meaning OFAH and the guy down the road
23 and the people that live next to the reserves and anybody

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 that has any kind of connection to or impacted by Indian
2 Government.

3 We express consideration of their
4 legitimate interests in the negotiations. We do not
5 conduct secret negotiations through the United Indian
6 Councils although we have been accused of that. We are
7 well open to expressing ourselves and our interests and
8 we share a lot of information. We have to co-exist with
9 our neighbours and we're determined to do that in a very
10 healthy, giving and intelligent based way.

11 Our mission is to develop our First
12 Nation societies, our economies and to contribute to
13 regional development plans for the benefit of all parties.

14 Most of the communities on-reserves not only here in the
15 United Indian Councils, but everywhere, get left out of
16 the decision-making process for development that goes on
17 around them -- around reserve lands. I think that it's
18 time to stop that. The United Indians Councils peoples
19 and all Indian peoples have a right to have a say as well.

20 We have no interest disinheritng
21 innocent third parties. This comes up a lot especially
22 through the land claims process that we're working in where
23 people are concerned that if we resolve a land claim it's

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 going to mean that we're going to be kicking people off
2 their lands and taking back Toronto. Who wants their
3 garbage? We're not going to do that.

4 The arguments that we have in those areas
5 are with the federal Crown and the provincial Crown and
6 there's no reason to hurt anybody outside of that. In
7 fact, there is no reason to hurt anybody. It's going to
8 help. We also want to involve the third parties in the
9 process and let them know what's going on and we make a
10 very concerted effort to do the public education in all
11 communities.

12 We've initiated that public speaking
13 schedule with all of our members. Our chiefs are also
14 actively involved and people in our membership like Laurie
15 Flynn and Greer Atkinson make a direct attempt to talk
16 to as many people as possible on these matters.

17 So what have we done? This is the record
18 of achievement of the United Indian Councils communities
19 through this process, through this model, and all of the
20 sub-agreements are available to the community membership
21 and they are welcome to read the background papers and
22 the research that went into making them a reality.

23 We've looked at everything that's

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 necessary and beyond and principles of governments, legal
2 status, elections, structures of government, membership
3 and residency, lands, conservation and environment,
4 economical development, application of federal
5 legislation and how it impacts, the fiscal transfer model
6 which is done, taxation done, comprehensive economic
7 development organization -- all the way down through --
8 I'm here to tell you that the United Indian Councils has
9 the distinction of being on time in everything that they've
10 ever chosen to do with the federal government. We have
11 followed and met our time lines to the day, pretty much.

12 I'm also here to tell you that the
13 federal government has not been able to respond to us in
14 at least five areas and has been sitting on agreements
15 that we have put forward to them for at least a years or
16 more.

17 At the same time they are telling us this
18 process isn't working, it's too expensive, it's too time
19 consuming and we need to move on to other things and we've
20 told them the fact that it's not working is not our problem.

21 We've done everything we can to make sure that this thing
22 works and it's really up to the federal government to be
23 able to respond to these things. They just don't seem

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to have the capacity that First Nation governments do to
2 make sure that we move from words to action.

3 These are some of the structural
4 linkages -- just to give you a look at how we sort of see
5 it. It's a visual representation of the recognition that
6 there's federal jurisdiction that essentially has nothing
7 to do with us in government, provincial jurisdiction, there
8 is also First Nation jurisdiction that is solely our
9 responsibility and has nothing to do with anybody else.

10 Recognize that there is trust relations
11 that will remain. There are provincial and First Nation
12 co-management agreements that are being drafted and that
13 are being looked after and we are exploring all of the
14 areas that will potentially impact upon each other and
15 sitting down and talking about how do we work this out?

16 Who is going to have jurisdiction? Who will manage this?
17 How can we co-manage an area that is crucial to us to
18 do so?

19 Federal-provincial relations, again
20 that have nothing to do with us and a tripartite process
21 in the middle. We're not a part of the tripartite process,
22 the formal thing that's actually going on, I guess, not
23 directly, but we recognize that there are times when our

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 chiefs and councils and our people and our communities
2 have to sit down at a table with the federal and provincial
3 government in education, for instance, and work out
4 agreements that will be mutually acceptable and
5 responsible to all parties.

6 We're looking at federal trust
7 obligations and the continuation of those obligations to
8 our people. We're looking at Canada having an obligation
9 to protect First Nations from outside incursions and that
10 includes themselves. We need to have that at least for
11 awhile until we are able to fully do it ourselves. We
12 need those kinds of protections. Canada has an obligation
13 to defend our First Nations from outside attacks and to
14 work with us to ensure that our people are protected.

15 An obligation to assist First Nations
16 to improve the quality of life for their citizens, I think
17 that's something that is very difficult to convince the
18 federal government of because their attitudes seem to be
19 it's not our problem, but in fact it is.

20 Canada has an obligation to remedy those
21 historic and contemporary wrongs to First Nations that
22 we talked about here at this table, as I'm sure you've
23 heard all across the country. Canada has an obligation

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to protect and assist in the implementation of Aboriginal
2 and treaty rights. Vice-Chief Jacobs talked about the
3 treaties and what they mean to us briefly, but they do
4 have that and we will hold them to it.

5 Canada may have even more specific trust
6 obligations which will be determined from time to time
7 through the courts. I see that coming especially with
8 Indian Government. There are going to be a lot of
9 jurisdictional arguments and problems, but through mutual
10 agreement with the First Nations or through the
11 straightforward recognition of the special relationship
12 Canada has with Aboriginal peoples, that special
13 relationship is becoming more and more difficult to define.

14 It's also interesting because Canada has
15 a very high immigration population. People say, "Who are
16 these Indians anyway and why did they have a special
17 relationship with the Crown that I don't have?" I think
18 that educational process is going to have to begin tout
19 suite, as they say, and we're doing our best to ensure
20 people understand that Aboriginal peoples were the
21 original peoples here. We signed treaties that were
22 agreements to share and to continue a relationship on
23 through history and the future.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Vice-Chief Jacobs talked about
2 implementation, we need guarantees that Indian Government
3 can be operationalized which is something we don't have.

4 As Laurie Flynn said, with all the work we're doing we
5 don't want to go back to our communities and say, "Can't
6 you take a joke!" It's important to our people that it
7 is not treated as a joke, that we have the ability and
8 that we have the guarantee that we can move forward doesn't
9 make it a reality.

10 It has to take place at a pace set by
11 the First Nations involved and our people do not like to
12 be rushed.

13 The creation of wellness within our
14 communities and the empowerment of our people and human
15 resource development must be the cornerstone of that
16 implementation. We need to ensure that our people are
17 able to take up that burden and to carry it forward into
18 the future in a positive way.

19 Fiscal relations is a key to success for
20 implementation and Canada must respond and show a
21 willingness to go beyond the status quo if we are going
22 to be able to achieve self-determination and create well
23 societies for our communities. We need education of all

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 levels of government, and again Vice Chief Mel Jacobs said
2 this. The federal, provincial and municipal governments
3 have to be aware of what's going on in the ministries,
4 as well as the business community. It is essential to
5 the smooth implementation of Indian government.

6 Canada and provinces need to establish
7 a process for rolling back their jurisdiction as First
8 Nations implement our powers. Again we have a fairly good
9 argument about that but we really do feel that it is going
10 to be essential. Self-government will cost more in the
11 short and medium term because of the social, economic,
12 political and legal problems that First Nations need to
13 correct, as well as the added responsibilities involved
14 in Indian government.

15 First Nations will be more self
16 sufficient in the long run, I truly believe that, and that's
17 not only true for Native people, it's true for anybody.
18 If you're not healthy and well in your spirit and in your
19 mind it's very difficult to be self-sufficient. It
20 doesn't matter if it is one person or a community.

21 As First Nations become well again
22 considerable resources will be saved on jails. We talked
23 about that yesterday, the rehabilitation programs,

May 14, 1993

101

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 intervention programs, urban problems, welfare and
2 dependency syndromes. I think that it's important that
3 the Canadian public realizes that and be told that because
4 that's a key element of this whole process.

5 The recommendations that we wanted to
6 put forward are that the government institute the spirit
7 of the Charlottetown Accord as a policy agenda, if not
8 specific matters from the Accord, because I think that
9 we shouldn't be throwing that out simply because it was
10 defeated. It was a very positive document in many ways.

11

12 The Minister needs to provide political
13 guidance to the Department of Indian Affairs to realize
14 the benefits of the Charlottetown Accord in the negotiation
15 of self- government. Amend the policy to reflect the
16 Accord in negotiating First Nation's policy
17 recommendations, and I have those for you.

18 Develop realistic time frames to
19 negotiate and implement workable self-government
20 agreements. The Minister must network with his cabinet
21 colleagues and the Province of Ontario in order to achieve
22 a United Indian Councils agreement in principle on
23 self-government. Canada and the United Indian Councils

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 must negotiate a realistic plan for the finalization of
2 the agreement in principle and the implementation of the
3 United Indian Councils Indian Government.

4 The Minister should provide a specific
5 claims branch to commence negotiations on the Williams
6 Treaty claims, something that we are currently working
7 on the protocol for.

8 The Minister should negotiate the terms
9 of reference for a treaty clarification process with the
10 United Indian Councils and initiate a treaty process across
11 Canada.

12 I want to leave you with this cartoon,
13 we thought it was absolutely relevant to what happens in
14 this country. You can see -- "If you will have a seat
15 the government will see you as soon as possible", and there
16 are our ancestors sitting in the closet in the dark going
17 back to the 1867 promises and forward and self-government
18 coming in the door.

19 We just want to say that we appreciate
20 the time you have given us here to talk about this issue
21 and this is not what we want to see for our future another
22 thing set down to the side and us left without anything
23 to carry it forward.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Before you leave I am going to be giving
2 you a copy of some of the background information on the
3 United Indian Councils that I have talked about here, the
4 detailed stuff. I also want to give you both a copy of
5 the negotiating -- the experiences of the First Nations
6 involved in self-government negotiations that you can
7 review.

8 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Does that
9 contain this information?

10 **CYNTHIA WESLEY:** This information --
11 some of it, but it will be in that package.

12 Thank you.

13 **CHIEF JEFF MONAGUE:** I would also like
14 to present the Commissioners with the United Indian
15 Councils pin to both of you, and one for Mark as well,
16 you get another.

17 Thank you.

18 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Before I open
19 the floor to the audience that may wish to ask questions
20 or make recommendations and to the Commissioners, I would
21 like to acknowledge that a group of students from
22 Walksoksing (PH) attending school at Georgian College and
23 Parry Sound have travelled down to join us for the day

May 14, 1993

104

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 and I would like to say thank you for coming.

2 I would also like to mention that a young
3 man from New Zealand is visiting and in attendance today,
4 Barry Drummond. I guess he is heading into his winter
5 down there and thought he would come and enjoy summer up
6 here. Welcome, Barry.

7 I have been asked to keep it short we
8 want to get some lunch in us today and there are some people
9 that want to raise some points. So they will -- I see
10 Peggy and Meg heading for microphone number two.

11 **PEGGY MONAGUE:** We are almost ready for
12 lunch and I am very aware of how hungry we can be so I
13 will keep it very short and also the diabetics in here
14 need their lunch.

15 I am Peggy Monague from Christian
16 Island, originally from the Rama First Nations and just
17 hearing everything that was said this morning and
18 throughout the time we have been here that is a lot to
19 absorb. There has been a lot and I guess I am aware of
20 the time frame.

21 I have heard 500 years, I have heard 10
22 years and I guess that is a concern for me and for our
23 people. I've also heard a lot about the First Nation's

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 communities, but we also have to remember our people who
2 are not in the First Nations communities. We also live
3 in those surrounding areas and in urban centres, and we
4 are in the same boat, if you want to use that expression.

5 We can't throw our people off the boat because we don't
6 belong in the First Nations community or don't live in
7 the community.

8 I would like to make a strong
9 recommendation to the Commissioners, and I know Mary and
10 Bertha are here and there are other Commissioners in other
11 areas of Canada. What the federal government -- in coming
12 up with that apology that brought us here at this point
13 in time, and it is a historical time because this is known
14 to be the beginning of the future for our children, and
15 that is for all the Native people in Canada and the rest
16 of white society in how we walk and work together.

17 The federal government does need to come
18 forward and say I'm sorry for what Mary was expressing
19 this morning. That is not going to go away until the
20 federal government realizes and understands what happened
21 and they say sorry, and the government is made up of the
22 people of Canada and we are included in that. But they
23 do need to bring the apology forward and not give the time

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 restrictions that was -- I was really concerned when Mel
2 said we've got 10 years.

3 So I strongly recommend that the
4 Commission bring that forward for the federal government
5 to say, "I'm sorry. How can we help?" instead of putting
6 on time limits, whatever happens, but I guess it has to
7 begin there.

8 That is all I'll say for this time, we'll
9 see what happens this afternoon.

10 Meegwetch.

11 **LAURIE FLYNN:** Peggy, I just want to
12 thank you for bringing up the off-reserve membership.
13 One thing I have done is I have drafted a letter and sent
14 it to all our off-reserve members asking them if they are
15 interested in Indian government, if they want to be
16 involved. I do have an off-reserve list that I send out,
17 I try to send it every three or four months to keep them
18 up-to-date on what is going on, and two of our committee
19 members are off-reserve people, because they may not be
20 in the community now, but a lot them want to be in the
21 future. So I try to involve them as much as I can.

22 Thank you.

23 **GEORGE PAWIS:** It give me great pleasure

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to be here today representing our class from Georgian
2 College. We are learning some things, believe it or not.

3 I am elder myself and I speak for the
4 elders as well as the young people. Let's go out in this
5 world and forget our culture for the elders as well as
6 the young people coming up. We have to educate them some
7 how.

8 I know some -- I should say they're
9 grandparents, I'm not a grandparent yet, but they can't
10 speak a word of Indian. There is something lacking here
11 somewhere. The emphasis should be on educating them
12 culturally as well as the other points.

13 I myself have had the same emotional
14 experience as Merle had, and I'm not sorry, that's in the
15 past, but she spoke the actual truth. I went through the
16 same process.

17 But that's getting a little ahead of the
18 point. What I would like to request of the Commission
19 is that we set aside a body where we make an emphasis on
20 educating our young kids growing up today.

21 Thank you.

22 **MARK DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** Would the
23 Commissioners like to respond?

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 **MARIE ST. GERMAINE:** In connection with
2 the language, I don't speak my language but I have just
3 got a tape to try to learn it. But one thing yesterday
4 was said from the Commissioners that we start language
5 at three years old. I think in Rama we have started to
6 educate our children in the language and that's a good
7 thing, but I have one further thing to say in educating
8 language for parents who don't have the language. I think
9 they could start even sooner because language occurs when
10 your baby starts to babble, they learn how to say the words
11 that are necessary and that happens in all cultures.

12 So if you don't speak the language and
13 you have a newborn baby I think it would be a good thing
14 to have pre-recordings of the Indian language so that they
15 can hear the sounds and the words. Then it will be easier
16 for them to speak the language and it might help revive
17 our language sooner.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** In
19 connection with the presentation that was made on behalf
20 of the Council I think all I can say is, "Wow". We haven't
21 had anything comparable to that in our travels across the
22 country and I'm just tremendously impressed at how far
23 you have got in your thinking and your planning for

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 self-government. I think it's wonderful.

2 I'm glad you have given us a copy of your
3 material because we certainly want the other Commissioners
4 to have the benefit of this and to study it, because we
5 have been thinking that it was probably necessary to try
6 to come up with some models of what self-government might
7 look like.

8 We've been studying forms that have been
9 adopted in other countries and trying to ask ourselves
10 and ask the native leaders whether they think they would
11 work in Canada because we are very anxious that anything
12 we recommend be workable.

13 So I would just like to say how much we
14 appreciate what you have given us here to think about and
15 to work on and I think you are to be congratulated.

16 Thank you very much.

17 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I always
18 repeat what Mrs. Wilson says, "Wow". Having said that
19 I remember sitting there feeling really really impressed
20 with the work that you have done over the past eight years.

21 There were several questions that popped into my mind
22 though and they are in terms of the development of
23 self-government models. They are questions.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 One of them was the whole issue of
2 financing, how self-government models will be financed.
3 That's an issue that we often hear. That's an issue that
4 we have very few answers too. It was raised earlier in
5 the discussion that we should be looking at a
6 government-to-government transfer model of financing and
7 I'm wondering what that is because I don't really
8 understand that, that's my own ignorance.

9 I think the other question I would like
10 to ask is one of membership. I think membership is an
11 issue that people become very very emotional over. There
12 are many many divisions created as a result of that
13 question. I'm wondering how you plan to -- for example,
14 what are your plans for membership? Are you planning to
15 include everyone, people who are on-reserve and
16 off-reserve? Are you planning membership for
17 self-government purposes, for program services, for
18 identification, for all of those purposes or some of those
19 purposes?

20 The third issue is, I was wondering if
21 you -- we've often heard, especially the non-aboriginal
22 public people saying that you know self-government will
23 cost a lot of money. I heard you say that self-government

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 will cost much money in the short and medium, but it is
2 less expensive in the longer term. I'm wondering if you
3 have any documentation to support that so we can respond
4 and counter the many criticisms that we receive?

5 **MEL JACOBS:** I will check out the fiscal
6 stuff, the financial stuff. We are quite willing to make
7 a presentation to the Commission with regards to our fiscal
8 relations paper. It is very detailed so I won't get into
9 a lot of detail here, but we are prepared to come at your
10 request to make a presentation to the full Commission with
11 regards to that.

12 It is a lengthy presentation, it is
13 detailed, but it will allow you the opportunity to see
14 how much thinking has gone into it. It is unique, but
15 it takes into account the principles of current methods
16 of transfer. It takes into account the differences in
17 cost indicies and this sort of thing.

18 So we think it's quite exciting and it
19 scares the dickens out of the feds is what it does So
20 we promise that if you request it of us we will make a
21 presentation to you on that.

22 With regards to cost of self-government,
23 it's quite easy for the federal government to pull out

May 14, 1993

112

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 a figure that says this is what it costs today. Basically
2 what we have seen in the past is using what we call an
3 A-base figure which shows what money is being spent.
4 Direct funding basically is what you can capture quite
5 quickly.

6 There are other expenses though that
7 don't show up on the ledger sheet, for example, if the
8 federal government has a question with regards to Indians
9 they call the Department of Justice and a Justice lawyer
10 provides the advice and it doesn't cost or at least it
11 doesn't seem like it costs anything.

12 There are provincial associations that
13 provide or provided some money with regards to
14 consultation. There is a national consultation processes
15 that are in place. First of all, we have to capture what
16 is out there that is available or being used to support
17 Indians today, not Indian government, but the devolution
18 of programs today. I think when we capture that we will
19 then be able to reflect and say this is what the difference
20 might be.

21 That being said, we do have another
22 project we are working on together with the Government
23 of Canada for sure. Ontario is sitting there as

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

113

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 participants but they are not saying yeah or nay to it.

2 It is a fiscal relations pilot project with both
3 governments to work out how it is we would cost, what it
4 is we want, the relationship that we would have to what
5 is there today, because one of the things we always get,
6 for example in the financing of government is the -- the
7 federal government always says, "Oh yeah, you are talking
8 about a Chief and Council, you're talking about band staff.
9 We take care of that in band support funding."

10 They don't take care of it out of band
11 support funding they developed a formula in Ottawa and
12 said, "This is what your going to get. We don't care whether
13 it matches your need or not." So we're saying you don't
14 take care of it out of band support funding, throw that
15 little thing away. We'll talk about you on these pilot
16 projects, we will be able to provide you with information
17 as long as you allow us to get it, access the information
18 and we are doing that.

19 Our commitment to you today is if you
20 request it we will make a presentation to the Commission.

21 We will also make a presentation to you with regards to
22 the FRPP, as we call it. There is too much detail to go
23 into in this type of session, but we guarantee if you said

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 "Wow" today, you will say "Double Wow" when we are finished
2 with that.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would
4 just like to make a comment in response to what you said.
5 We started out at one point thinking, because people were
6 raising this issue of what self-government is going to
7 cost, we thought it would be interesting to know what it's
8 costing now under the miserable system. It is absolutely
9 impossible to get any kind of realistic figure from the
10 federal government as to what it is costing. They simply
11 point out that they have to deal with all these different
12 departments, all these different programs and it would
13 be a major undertaking to make any reasonable assessment.

14 We have, I think, somebody working on
15 this trying to get a handle on it, but I don't think we
16 are very optimistic that anything meaningful is going to
17 come out of it. But the point you make is well taken that
18 when people say, "What is this going to cost? My God,
19 are my taxes going to go up?" You know they never apply
20 their minds to what it's costing now under the system that
21 nobody is happy with.

22 There are of course all the other
23 benefits from self-government in terms of the self-esteem

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 of the people and the ability to control their own lives
2 and all these sort of things that you can't put a monetary
3 value on, they forget about all these other aspects that
4 go with self-government.

5 **MEL JACOBS:** Again, with the permission
6 of the Chiefs, we have just gone through a base costing
7 at least. We have gone through that to be able to figure
8 out what direct funding and I think -- I can seek
9 permissions from the Chiefs, but I think I could send you
10 one copy of the information we have.

11 We have costed out for the past four
12 years what direct contributions have been made to the nine
13 First Nations. We have cost out what the First Nations
14 themselves have had to put into the development or the
15 operations of their government. We have also been able
16 to identify what money is coming from provincial
17 governments.

18 We haven't been able to isolate the
19 indirect costs yet because there is another project in
20 Ontario going on outside of UIC that is doing that, but
21 I would be more than happy -- I will check with the Chiefs
22 and if they say yes I will ensure that the Commission
23 receives a copy for your review.

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 **CYNTHIA WESLEY:** I also just want to
2 add, with the permission of the Chiefs, we have developed
3 what we call a generic document on the fiscal relations,
4 the fiscal model that the UIC has developed for an Indian
5 government for the whole model. I think that they would
6 probably allow that to be sent to you also.

7 In terms of the membership question that
8 you raised, you are right it is a very sensitive issue,
9 very emotional and people are quite concerned about it.
10 We have already done a sub-agreement on membership and
11 I believe it will be in your package, if it's not we would
12 be happy to send to you the document that's been prepared
13 for public consumption.

14 We do have a lot of information that we
15 have given you that outlines pretty much the key elements
16 or the principles of each area, I have given those to you
17 and I am pretty sure that membership is there.

18 But in terms of the question of
19 off-reserve people, that is a difficult one for each
20 individual community to grapple with and because of the
21 nature of the way this government is being developed, we
22 are not imposing decisions upon any of the communities.
23 They are internally going to be setting up committees

May 14, 1993

117

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to grapple with those issues and if they choose to involve
2 off- reserve people then that is their right and their
3 privilege. If they don't want to, then that is not up
4 to us to tell them that they have to, although certainly
5 we've been looking at the way the government has been
6 restructuring itself and we are taking that into
7 consideration.

8 **MARC DOUGLAS, MODERATOR:** I am reminded
9 that the Commissioners need to leave this afternoon by
10 about 3:15 in order to catch the big bird to the next place.

11 I am not sure what lunch arrangements have been made,
12 but we need to take a very short lunch and try to be back
13 as quick as possible. Try and aim for maybe 1:15. It
14 would be nice if we could do it.

15 Meegwetch.

16 --- Luncheon recess at 12:40 p.m.

17 --- Upon resuming at 1:45 p.m.

18 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Welcome to
19 the final afternoon session of the Royal Commission
20 Hearings in our area.

21 My name is Sherry Lawson and I'm proud
22 to be a member of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, Loon
23 Clan.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Sometimes when I do opening remarks, for
2 some of you who don't know me by now, they do tend to go
3 on and these ones aren't going to. We have people here
4 this afternoon who have things to tell us. We have youth
5 who have come from afar and some from not so far. We have
6 our aboriginal women who want to speak. We hope to have
7 join us Roger Obonsawin who is coming from Toronto. We
8 will end up this afternoon with Mark Douglas who will tell
9 us a story of Man Jik A Ning.

10 It's been a most interesting time since
11 Wednesday evening. All of us here have gone through a
12 lot in that time. You have heard stories of sad things
13 that have happened to us and also stories of good things.
14 You have heard of our dreams and our wishes for the future.
15 You have been told how our past is tied into our present
16 and that is not separate from our future.

17 For some of you who may be joining us
18 for the first time, there have been presenters here who
19 have reached deep into themselves to tell their stories
20 and we are grateful for that. I am personally pleased
21 that our youth are prepared to speak today. I have said
22 before that I work with teenagers and I know they have
23 a lot to say, but sometimes they are intimidated in this

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 world of adults. They don't always have the opportunity
2 to use their voice and today is that chance.

3 We have heard stories of what some people
4 refer to as white privilege of being Anishnawbe living
5 in a world where we are one of four races. We have been
6 told by some of our elders and teachers to be sure and
7 walk equally on Mother Earth with the other three races.

8 One of the most difficult lessons of all
9 has been to try to be at peace with our history. It's
10 a very difficult one, but we're trying.

11 With that I would like to have our young
12 people begin their presentation today. I know we have
13 people here from the Che-Mnissing Youth Group from
14 Christian Island and The Wings of Youth Group, Barrie,
15 and we have a representative here from our youth of
16 Chippewas of Rama.

17 I think we will go the way the circle
18 goes, and I won't do little circles I'll keep us going
19 this way, clockwise, the way the circle goes. I would
20 ask everyone who is going to speak to be sure to introduce
21 yourself, give us a brief bio if you feel comfortable doing
22 that. It means we are starting with you, Veronica, please.

23 **VERONICA SANDY:** I'm Veronica and as

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Sherry said I am from Chippewas of Rama.

2 I guess I will start off by saying that
3 I am glad that I had this opportunity to say what I have
4 to say. I'm just a bit nervous here.

5 First of all, I would like to start off
6 by saying that an idea that I have is to have a youth healing
7 centre. About a year and a half ago I had been in a circle
8 and it was good for the girls and it was good for myself.

9 A couple of months later the people that put this circle
10 together for us said that it was wrong what we were doing.

11 This was very upsetting to me and to a
12 lot of others and I thought it was incredibly unfair that
13 something like this can happen, and that we have to wait
14 until we are 18 to get ourselves proper treatment for those
15 of us who are in need of healing. It bothered me so much
16 that I guess you could say that it set me back in somewhat
17 of a withdrawal and I was in more trouble then I was at
18 the start.

19 I really did have more to say, but right
20 now I am too nervous.

21 Meegwetch

22 **STEPHANIE KING:** Chi-mnising

23 ndoonjibaa.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 I would first like to say thank-you for
2 having this chance to address the Royal Commission.

3 I am here representing our Native as a
4 Second Language class from St. Theresa's High School in
5 Midland. We make up a large portion of the Chi-Mnising
6 Youth Group.

7 We as a class identified some of the
8 issues that concern us on Christian Island.

9 1. Education: We feel that a lot of
10 our youth do not take education seriously enough. There
11 is a lot of absenteeism and the drop-out rate is high.
12 Some students say, "Why should I finish if there are no
13 jobs for us anyway?" We think that there should be
14 programmes created or more role models to help motivate
15 students to stay in school. Maybe some kind of achievement
16 awards could be given out each year for not only those
17 who graduated but as well for those who finished the year.

18 2. The economy or employment: As I
19 mentioned before, some of us are concerned that there will
20 not be any jobs for us after finishing our education.
21 A lot of us want to live on- reserve and think that if
22 we are going to become self-sufficient in the future that
23 we need to look at our resources and set long term goals

May 14, 1993

122

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 on providing our people with steady employment.

2 3. Recreational Facilities: We feel
3 very strongly about this issue. On our reserve there is
4 not a whole lot for young people to do. We think that
5 by having some kind of gymnasium or recreational centre
6 that this will help keep kids occupied with something
7 positive, rather than turning to drugs or alcohol because
8 there was nothing better to do. A centre like this we
9 would think would draw the community closer together by
10 getting the youth and adults involved with each other.

11 **NAOMI WALSER:** (Indian Language)

12 Another issue that concerns the youth
13 of Christian Island is transportation. Coming from an
14 Island we know the feeling of isolation.

15 Most of us seem to agree that a bridge
16 of causeway would be something we would like to see in
17 the future. All secondary students have to leave their
18 families for the winter months and sometimes it is really
19 hard to adjust to living in a strange or new environment
20 at such a young age. If there was a causeway than the
21 students would be able to commute back and forth all year.

22 Also there would be more people able to find employment
23 off the reserve if they didn't have to worry about a boat

May 14, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 schedule or having to board during the week which would
2 help keep them away from their families.

3 5. Youth need a voice: We feel that
4 we would like to have a member of the council appointed
5 who would represent the youth and address any concerns
6 or suggestions that we may have to contribute to our
7 communities improvement.

8 6. Last but not least is cultural
9 awareness. We feel that there should more of the culture
10 taught to help instill a sense of pride in being native,
11 also to keep the language programme going. We wrote an
12 essay in our class and most of us feel that the language
13 is very important and are happy that it is finally being
14 offered.

15 In closing, I would like to say that
16 these may not be all our concerns but a few of the more
17 important ones. It was brought up in our discussions that
18 some people did not think that anything would come of these
19 hearings and that the government was not to be relied on
20 to act on any of the concerns or recommendations, we hope
21 that history will not repeat itself once again.

22 Meegwetch.

23 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Stephanie and Naomi.

2 I neglected to mention that the headsets
3 that some of these people have. For some of you people
4 who haven't been here before you can see by the sign on
5 the wall we are still winning. Ojibwe two, English 1.
6 People can pick up headsets at this little side table here
7 the person you here in the tent is translating into Ojibwe
8 as soon as people speak and then we have these people who
9 keep one ear on in Ojibwe and listen in the other one in
10 English go figure I have enough trouble in one language.

11

12 So you are welcome to get one of those
13 if you want to follow along in Ojibwe or even just hear
14 that lovely language whether you speak it or not.

15 Okay, we are going to keep going around
16 the table here to David Forget.

17 **DAVID FORGET:** Hi my name is David
18 Forget and I am here representing my group, The Wings of
19 Youth from Barrie. We would like to express our thanks
20 to the Royal Commission for allowing the students to
21 participate in this event.

22 I am speaking about problems in school.
23 Students are facing a great deal more social and economic

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 problems in today's society because of pressures to
2 accomplish scholastic feats at amazing rates.

3 Our students face extreme problems in
4 dealing with self-identification because they feel they
5 have to deal with learning two cultures, native heritage
6 and the non-Native social system.

7 Problems that exist in today's schools
8 in Simcoe County are racial discrimination, harrassment,
9 inequality, all the stereotyping of Native people within
10 our communities. There is, and still continues to be,
11 numerous situations of peer pressure that usually lead
12 to crime incidences. Stress of trying not to fail school,
13 low self-esteem and very little job experience
14 opportunities for Native students.

15 Students feel added pressure to make a
16 place in peer groups in the urban setting. Some students
17 are feeling alienated by school/ teacher relationships.
18 Some are even feeling belittled by teachers. It has been
19 discussed that certain families are being centred out and
20 used as examples by some teachers. Sexual harrassment
21 from school peers, coined "easy", is really being reflected
22 in our female drop-out rates.

23 Some recommendations that students in

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Barrie would like to see happen are:

2 1. A form of credit for co-op
3 education. When the students are learning culture
4 traditions example a pow wow or conference.

5 2. A formal self-help group available
6 to students during school hours at one location centrally.

7 3. A full-time male and female native
8 councillor available for native students for academic
9 assistance.

10 There are some students that are here
11 with us that would like to tell you about some of their
12 experiences with discrimination in school.

13 **LAURA FORGET:** Hi my name is Laura
14 Forget and just last week I went to student unemployment
15 to go find a job, or at least to get help to find a job.

16 It almost seemed to me that they were sending me back
17 to my centre, to the native people, because it almost felt
18 like they did not want me out in society or to at least
19 find a job. To me that doesn't seem like they are there
20 to help.

21 They have these cards where it has little
22 boxes you check off and it does read that you don't have
23 to fill it out. I did anyway and it sort of bugged me

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 that in the little description up front it said it was
2 more or less for statistics. I myself do not want to be
3 a statistic.

4 Actually, that is all I have to say is
5 about trying to find a job out in the city world among
6 white people.

7 Thanks.

8 **ERICA LOUITTIT:** Bonjour (Indian
9 Language)

10 I am part of the Barrie Youth Group.
11 One of the problems I have at school is I get made fun
12 of a lot at school. My teacher, my principal, I guess,
13 she uses me as example for being late for school and always
14 getting suspended, because I get suspended a lot because
15 I am late. She uses me as that -- me and my brother are
16 always late so she goes -- she uses me and my brother for
17 an example. She goes, "You don't want to be like that
18 Louttit family always being late."

19 That is one example, but I have a lot
20 of stories about what I go through at school and most of
21 them really hurt and there is a lot of racism at my school.

22 There are teachers that are racist against me. I see
23 that. There is one teacher that came up to me because

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 I walked the skidway of life with my parents. She goes
2 to me -- I told her all about my traditional ways.
3 She goes, "You don't need that, you don't need to follow
4 that, you don't need your traditional ways, you live in
5 the white man's world. You have to survive in the white
6 man's world. The white people are always going to be
7 around you don't need that traditional way."

8 I looked at her -- I told my parents and
9 my parents did something about it and the teacher got into
10 trouble. Now she is helping my brother learn our language.

11 There is one example right there of a teacher being --
12 I don't know how to put it the way she said it, but it
13 really hurts to hear them putting down my traditional ways.

14 A lot of people, a lot of my teachers
15 and friends compare my traditional ways -- "Oh you don't
16 need that" -- because I am having a hard time as it is
17 with my traditional ways because I go to school and I need
18 that time off to go to my teachings instead of school.

19 I need that time to learn from my elders, my aunties, my
20 uncles. I can't make it to June ceremonies in Wisconsin
21 this year because I have to stay at school, because those
22 are important days for me to stay at school. It is making
23 me hurt, I am also crying because I can't go to my

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 traditional teachings and learn from the lodge, learn from
2 my elders and it hurts because I can't go, I am stuck at
3 school.

4 Meegwetch

5 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** I see how
6 some of you have come up to the mike don't necessarily
7 go up there to talk, but go up there to help each other.

8 I see two teachers here, I assume, who are not here to
9 speak but here to help, to be moral support for their
10 students.

11 Our kids do, in particular, have a tough
12 time and I see that very much so in the educational system.

13 I am sure the Commissioners have heard stories across
14 the country of the high proportion of Native people in
15 the justice system as well, and particularly our youth.

16 I was told quite a while ago that Native
17 people have more of a chance of spending time in a federal
18 penitentiary, or having a close relative die a violent
19 death, then they do of graduating from high school. It's
20 a sad, sad statistic.

21 I have on the wall in my office a quote
22 and I'm not sure who it's from, it says Unknown. It says:
23 "All of us were children once and someone cared for us,

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 and now it is our time to care."

2 We must remember that.

3 It makes my heart glad to hear these
4 young people speak Anishnawbe. I didn't think I would
5 ever see the day. When I was a youngster growing up myself
6 that language was very much discouraged and it's kind of
7 fitting that that same educational system that took our
8 children away from us to residential schools and literally
9 beat the language out of them is now spending their money
10 to pour it back in.

11 People have said to me in my travels,
12 "Well, Sherry, you seem to be a pretty together person,
13 how did you ever get through all this? You must have gone
14 through the same thing these young people did." I sure
15 did. I was one of the first ones, I think, to go through
16 that, being the first one in my community to complete high
17 school. I took a lot of razzing from the other students
18 and I had a lot of teachers give me a hard time and a lot
19 of employers who wouldn't give me a job.

20 On those days when they seemed to be very
21 dark ones I would remember the words of my granny who used
22 to say that we are all given many tests. Remember that,
23 it's not you who has the problem. You have to go through

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 that so you believe your having a problem, but it's not
2 you who has the problem. You are Anishnawbe, be proud
3 of that. It is the people who are being wrong to you who
4 have the problem.

5 We must not turn our back on them as our
6 teachers tell us, we must walk with them and teach them
7 and teach them all the wonderful things we know and all
8 of the teachings we are given in the lodge and in our
9 ceremonies; and all the other things we learn at times
10 when we don't think anyone has a lesson to tell us. We
11 must take those and use them to teach them because the
12 opportunities are there.

13 I remember Neil mentioning the other
14 night, Neil Monague from Christian Island, someone phoned
15 him and he got very angry with them on the phone. He said
16 he could have hung up the phone, hopped on that boat, gone
17 to the mainland and punched him out, but what would that
18 have accomplished.

19 I met an old man up north one time and
20 he told a story of when he was younger and how there was
21 a hotel in town that he wasn't allowed in because he was
22 Indian. Everybody knew that, but he went there anyway
23 and he wanted to get a room for the night and they wouldn't

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 give him one. They had no reason. They said the rooms
2 were full, but he knew it was because he was Indian.

3 Someone found out from some association
4 -- I guess some Ontario Human Rights Commission -- called
5 him and said, "That's not right. You are supposed to be
6 able to go in there. You come with me and we'll make sure
7 they let you in." He said: "No, I won't go with you."
8 The person from the Ontario Human Rights Commission came
9 to him and said, "That's not right. That's wrong. You
10 come with me and we'll make sure they let you in. He said,
11 "No." They said, "Come on, there's a lot of people here
12 and we'll go with you. We'll make sure he let's you in."
13 He said, "No." The Commissioner said, "Why won't you
14 do this? Don't you see what an example you would be to
15 everybody else to be able to stand up and do this?" And
16 he said, "You don't understand." The Commissioner said,
17 "What don't we understand?" And he said, "This isn't my
18 problem, it's the innkeepers."

19 That's a hard lesson to learn.

20 I want to make sure that if there's
21 anything else that these young people have to say who have
22 made sure that they got themselves on the agenda that they
23 have their chance now. These people are flying away on

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 that big bird today. You will probably not see another
2 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People as long as you live.

3 You will be able to tell your grandchildren, "I was there
4 in 1993 and they listened to me."

5 Is there anyone else who wants to press
6 that little button? This is your last chance. If not,
7 I want to say Meegwetch for coming. You have taught me
8 a lot.

9 Thank you.

10 The next group we have this afternoon
11 are Aboriginal Women. We have representatives from Rama
12 Sweetgrass Women's Circle.

13 Dawn, I would ask you to come forward
14 now.

15 I'm going to again start on the left
16 here. I don't have biographies on all you people, so
17 please do a brief introduction of yourself before you speak
18 into the microphone.

19 I'm going to start on my left with Dawn,
20 please.

21 **DAWN SILLABY-SMITH:** Hello, my name is
22 Dawn Sillaby-Smith. I'm from the York Region Native
23 Women's Association. On my left is my co-partner and she

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 will be speaking to you later on.

2 Martha Francis and I are here as a voice
3 of the York Region Native Women's Association. We belong
4 to the provincial organization, The Ontario Native Women's
5 Association, which represents Aboriginal women and their
6 families on matters that effect the political, social,
7 education, economic and justice issues of our daily lives.

8 Our local York Region is just one of many autonomous groups
9 that represent ONWA. By being autonomous it means we can,
10 as a local, address any or all issues as we choose.

11 We began under the name York Region
12 Native Women's Association in the spring of 1991. We meet
13 the first week of every month alternating Tuesday and
14 Wednesday at locations in Newmarket and Sulton so that
15 accessability for everyone is taken into consideration
16 at these meetings.

17 We, as a local, keep ourselves informed
18 about issues by attending these monthly meetings, sending
19 delegates to conferences, and if it is in our area what
20 we do is we do local fund raising through raffles to send
21 our members so that everybody has the opportunity in our
22 group to attend and learn about our culture. We also
23 distribute information releases that are sent from ONWA

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 as they arrive. We strive to be an informed local about
2 matters that concern our people so that we can help in
3 the decision making process by CNWA.

4 One of the duties outlined for a local
5 chapter of ONWA is to establish and determine our needs,
6 our priorities, and our goals, so we have objectives that
7 we strive to meet. At this time we are actively achieving
8 the objectives that we have set for ourselves over two
9 years ago.

10 One of the objectives that we tried to
11 achieve is to provide a means by which our women can
12 rediscover and develop those traditional skills which have
13 been unique to Aboriginal culture. We do this by holding
14 a beadwork circle every Wednesday night. It has been
15 successful and I believe it is because it's a night where
16 Native women can come together and there are no labels
17 on us. It is not on-reserve, off-reserve, Bill C31s,
18 professionals, home makers, it doesn't matter we are there
19 together as Native women.

20 We come together because we have a need
21 to learn and also for the social atmosphere that ensues.

22 In this circle we share our knowledge and our personal
23 experiences as Native women in roles such as being a mother,

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a wife and as a family member. We laugh a lot, we eat
2 a lot and we have a lot of fun. We support each other
3 in personal endeavour and that does not only stop on
4 Wednesday nights.

5 As a local we also have begun a
6 relationship with the non-Aboriginal community. Members
7 of our local have worked within the schools on a volunteer
8 system in the last year. What they do is they talk about
9 our unique world and our part in it and our relationship
10 to it. Twice in the past year two non-Aboriginal
11 university students have come and asked our local for help
12 when they were doing research on Aboriginal women and their
13 families. We invited them with open arms to come to our
14 beading group and what we did was we listened to their
15 questions and we tried to answer them as best we could.

16 Also, two of our members -- in fact, they
17 are sitting right here, Martha and myself, we sit on a
18 Committee, the York Region First Native Studies Centre.

19 We do this because we believe that the centre that is
20 being set up by the York Region Board of Education will
21 be instrumental in bringing our culture to our community
22 whether we are on-reserve or off-reserve.

23 Our local is taking part in the opening

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 ceremonies and also what follows after the opening
2 ceremonies on June 5th which is our first annual Pow Wow.

3 What our local has been doing in the last
4 couple of weeks have been working on gifts for the giveaway
5 so we have been learning new skills in terms of dream
6 catchers and medicine wheels.

7 What I would like to do now is to turn
8 it over to Martha and she is going to speak further on
9 what we've been doing as a group.

10 **MARTHA FRANCIS:** Thank you, Dawn.

11 My name is Martha Francis. I originally
12 came from the Chippawa of Kettle and Stony Point First
13 Nation.

14 I spoke yesterday about healing for
15 adopted people returning to the culture. I believe
16 women's groups such as ours are an important contact point
17 for those returning to the culture whether they were
18 separated from it by adoption or by their own choice.
19 Some of our people have left the reserves due to having
20 had a rough start in life there. Several of our women
21 are walking this healing path and from my own point of
22 view the support of this group of women has been
23 tremendously helpful.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 A large part of our active membership
2 is off-reserve women and with the nearest friendship
3 centres nearly an hour away our weekly beading night and
4 our regular meetings are our main contact with other Native
5 women and Native families.

6 Our beading circle provides an
7 opportunity for hands-on experience with a unique part
8 of our culture. As many of the speakers who spoke
9 yesterday on healing suggested it is the culture itself
10 and our access to it that heals us.

11 In the coming months we have plans to
12 bring traditional teachings to our women in our own
13 community so that they won't have to go out of the community
14 to have access to those things.

15 Something as simple as a beading circle
16 can be instrumental in rebuilding self-esteem and pride
17 in our culture. It is time consuming work and gives us
18 an appreciation for the qualities of our women -- certainly
19 patience and perseverance that we, as women, require in
20 our everyday lives as mothers are reinforced here.

21 I remember the first few beading classes
22 that we had nearly a year ago. Everyone was concentrating
23 very hard on what they were doing and someone asked me

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 how long it would be before I can bead and talk at the
2 same time. I'm proud to say that those same women will
3 be renting a table at our upcoming Pow Wow and will be
4 selling their work, so they have come a long way in a short
5 time.

6 Our traditional way of life embodies
7 different ways of interacting and valuing one another and
8 access to mothers who are raised around those values can
9 be helpful to those struggling with the lack of positive
10 parenting models in their own upbringing.

11 It is very encouraging to see the way
12 in which a small group of women such as ours can empower
13 one another to achieve their goals.

14 I think Dawn has another comment to make.

15 Thank you.

16 **DAWN SILLABY-SMITH:** One thing that we
17 would like to bring to the Royal Commission is a concern
18 that seems to be expressed by all of our members throughout
19 all of the times that we meet and that is the problem with
20 language. Because we are off-reserve and we live in a
21 rural community yet we do not -- our children do not attend
22 the schools that are close to the reserves. Our children
23 are not being serviced in terms of language programs, in

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 terms of the Ojibwe language program.

2 We feel, as members of York Region local,
3 that all Aboriginal children should be given the right
4 and the opportunity to learn their language.

5 Thank you very much.

6 **JOAN SIMCOE:** Good afternoon, elders,
7 Commissioners, guests, brothers and sisters.

8 My name is Joan Simcoe. I'm a member
9 of the Rama First Nation, President of the Rama and Area
10 Native Women's Association and we are also affiliated with
11 the provincial organization. Also, I'm one of the little
12 guys that Ernie was talking about -- I'm in business for
13 myself and I must bring up the fact that I'm the co-owner
14 of the Rama Moccasin and Craft Shop. I have to get a plug
15 in there.

16 During the past couple of days you have
17 heard some of our speakers talk about and support the
18 healing lodge. Our dream of a Native way of healing.
19 For the past few years the Rama and Area Native Women's
20 Association have had a vision, our own healing lodge
21 located on the Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

22 At present, there are no Native
23 treatment centres in any of the United Indian Council or

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Tribal Council areas. Non-Native treatment centres have
2 little or no knowledge of Native traditional healing
3 methods. As a result, very few Native people, if any,
4 will attend non-Native treatment centres, therefore there
5 is no progress in the healing process and the cycle
6 continues be it physical, sexual or emotional abuse --
7 not to mention alcohol or substance abuse.

8 We must have our own healing lodge
9 whether it would be ideally a holistic approach to healing
10 for all family members including extended families. The
11 tragic cycle that many Native families find themselves
12 in will not be broken until we can implement our own healing
13 methods with a facility Native people will have a trust
14 in and feel comfortable in their own environment -- with
15 our healers, our own elders, our own language, our own
16 treatment centre where we will not be judged because we
17 are different, but will be accepted and respected for who
18 we are. This will surely promote the trust needed to
19 enhance our motivation to wellness as well as instill pride
20 in our people and our traditional way of life.

21 Research and surveys have been done by
22 RANWA and BANAC to address the vital need for this type
23 of facility in our area. A person was hired to do a needs

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 assessment for a healing lodge covering areas of family
2 violence, child abuse, alcohol and substance abuse.
3 Throughout this process RANWA has networked with many
4 resource people and government agencies.

5 The Chippewas of Rama First Nation has
6 agreed to allocate the land for a healing lodge. A quiet
7 peaceful location near the woods and the lake, and at the
8 same time not far from our population. We must have this
9 facility funded. As it has already been said we have the
10 resources, we just want to use them. We no longer want
11 to feel like we are getting something for nothing. A
12 dollar value is placed on everything Aboriginal people
13 propose to do. We no longer want to feel that we are
14 accepting charity. We must be able to feel that we are
15 accepting our own fair share for all that we have lost.

16 Also, we no longer want to feel that we are a burden to
17 the taxpayer as wards of the Crown.

18 I don't want to dwell on things past
19 because the past is gone, but my own son committed suicide
20 at the age of 20 years. Last summer my sister died of
21 alcoholism. There are many such stories as these. With
22 our own treatment centre perhaps some of these tragedies
23 can be avoided. My parents were both alcoholics. We had

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 nowhere they could accept treatment, so the cycle
2 continued.

3 Until we can achieve our own on- reserve
4 holistic healing lodge, our people will continue on the
5 destructive path of family violence, of substance abuse,
6 of suicides, of identity lost as well as the loss of our
7 language and traditional values.

8 Thank you for allowing me to address this
9 Commission and thank you for listening.

10 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you,
11 Joan.

12 Next on the round table we have Shelley
13 Essance-Lamarche.

14 **SHELLEY ESSANCE-LAMARCHE:** Bonjour.
15 My name is Shelly Essance-Lamarche. I am speaking on
16 behalf of RAMA, a Native Women's Association -- Rama and
17 Area Native Women's Association. I am speaking about the
18 environment.

19 Long ago our people had very close ties
20 with Mother Earth. We had an interrelationship with the
21 trees, the rocks, the plants, the water and the sky. Our
22 lives closely followed the moon and the seasons. Our way
23 was of kindness and gentleness for the earth, sun and

May 14, 1993

144

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 thunderbeams. We had respect for all that lived.

2 In our daily life we gave thanks to the
3 elements which sustained us. We respected Mother Earth
4 for all that we needed that came from her. We celebrated
5 the earth in song and dance. When we look at how we live
6 now compared to what we had, we need to return to that
7 place of gratitude. You can see how that balance has been
8 lost by the negligence and garbage strewn on the earth.

9 Not only do we need to heal ourselves, but also our Mother
10 Earth.

11 I have a song to sing that sums up all
12 of this.

13 (Sings Song)

14 Meegwetch.

15 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Meegwetch.

16 Brenda, please.

17 **BRENDA BLACK:** My name is Brenda Black
18 and I'm speaking on behalf of the Georgian Bay Native
19 Women's Association.

20 We started as a small group and recently
21 we have become affiliated with ONWA. Our main purpose
22 for establishing a group was to provide some programs for
23 our children and do fund raising activities so that we

May 14, 1993

145

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 could have annual Christmas parties and Easter hunts and
2 whatnot. So, our main concern has always been our
3 children.

4 Recently we've been involved in some
5 training programs. We've just recently completed two
6 phases of computer training and we're presently
7 undertaking a pre-employment cooking skills course and
8 we're looking at providing a computer-based education
9 course so that women can attain their grade 12 equivalency.

10 Some of the barriers that we face and
11 some of the problems that we have encountered have been
12 that most of our Native women have been heavily relying
13 on social assistance and there has always been that
14 long-term dependence and it's carried on for generation
15 and generations.

16 There isn't enough employment
17 opportunities available when we provide the training.
18 We don't have access to employment and economic
19 opportunities. Our goal is to look beyond the day-to-day
20 living and look at becoming self-sufficient and having
21 control over our own future and giving direction and
22 providing positive role models for our children.

23 The barriers that we come into when we

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

146

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 are looking for employment and when we are trying to be
2 self-sufficient is that we have no access to culturally
3 appropriate child care. We don't have transportation
4 available. So right there there are two barriers that
5 are put up before you can even go out looking for work
6 or before you can even take a training program.

7 There is a lack of self-esteem and
8 self-motivation and that's from not knowing who we are
9 and where we came from -- lack of Native identity. There
10 isn't enough support and knowledge out there of the
11 existing programs that are available and what is becoming
12 available. a

13 We found that racism in the school system
14 is becoming a big problem again. It had faded in the last
15 10 years. It had calmed down a little bit, but now it's
16 beginning to rise as a major issue. We have children
17 coming home not wanting to go back to school and being
18 told that they are different because they are Anishnawbe
19 people.

20 We have to start educating our people
21 and letting them know who they are and where they came
22 from so they don't run into the problems that we have all
23 faced in our past going through the education system.

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 We would like to see the funding for the
2 training. We want to develop and implement our own
3 training programs and provide economic opportunities for
4 our Native women when they are finished their training.

5 We need to look at our youth who are going to school and
6 when you look at the courts, there are quite a few Native
7 youth involved in those courts. We have a problem there
8 and how are we going to solve it? I couldn't even begin
9 to try to explain that.

10 It was really heartbreaking when I had
11 to attend a court hearing with a member of our organization
12 and when I walked in 80 per cent of the underage people
13 in that court house were Native. It really hurts when
14 you see our youth turning 15, 16 years old and already
15 getting in trouble and going through the same cycle that
16 our brothers and sisters have fallen into.

17 We need to treat our children, our youth,
18 our brothers and sisters as equals. The government has
19 provided the Indian Act which has separated us and divided
20 us. You can still see that they are throwing a pot of
21 money into the centre of the circle and expecting us all
22 to get a hold of that. It's causing a lot of conflicts
23 amongst our Native people.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 We are fighting amongst ourselves and
2 until we can begin to work and establish good working
3 relationships, which is starting to happen, we will have
4 positive role models and we will give our children a
5 brighter future to look at because our children are
6 learning what they see. Everything they see everyday,
7 that's how they're learning and their minds are developing.
8 If we can live life with a holistic approach and value
9 our children the way they should be valued, we would have
10 a happier more welcomed society, I guess.

11 The last thing I would like to say is
12 please don't let this report sit on somebody's desk like
13 other reports have. I think we have talked enough. We
14 have offered enough solutions in other hearings that we
15 should start implementing some of those solutions.

16 Thank you for listening to me.

17 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you,
18 Brenda.

19 Gloria, please.

20 **GLORIA LOUTTIT:** (NATIVE LANGUAGE)

21 Obinosequa (PH) is my spirit name. I
22 belong to the Eagle Clan. I am from Christian Island.

23 We have a lot of concerns in our women's

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 group, but this is one of the main ones that I brought
2 this afternoon. They also had concerns on Bill C-31 which
3 I thought the woman that had those concerns would be behind
4 us here and be able to talk about those things.

5 I was kind of afraid to come up and talk
6 this afternoon, but as the woman in our group -- I'm the
7 President of the women's group there and they tell me that
8 once I get going I can't quit so they told me just to say
9 what's from my heart. So, that's what I'm going to do.
10 I will read this to you.

11 I also have another story later on --
12 if I'm given time I would like to tell you another story,
13 but I didn't write it out because it wasn't to be written,
14 I guess. It's just something that I wanted to bring up.

15 Problems and key issues concerning
16 language:

- 17 1. Losing the language;
- 18 2. Reintroducing the language;
- 19 3. Language and culture go hand in
20 hand, one can't exist without the other. The danger exists
21 that one without the other can result in dying of the
22 language or the culture; and

- 23 4. Anishnawbe language as a credit in

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 the school system.

2 Causes:

3 1. Residential schools didn't allow
4 us to speak our Anishnawbe language;

5 2. Churches made us feel our culture
6 was no good and made us feel ashamed of who we were, thereby
7 resulting in losing our language;

8 3. Not enough funding available; and

9 4. Our parents are afraid of the
10 traditional way because they have been brought up to think
11 that our culture and ways were no good. For example,
12 heathens and savages, religion was put down as devil
13 worship. Our relationship to nature is a basis to our
14 culture, values and beliefs. We learned to identify with
15 it because of being surrounded by nature always. Our
16 holistic purpose, spirituality and language was based on
17 nature and this was mistaken by the early explorers and
18 missionaries.

19 Just a second I have a story here.

20 The story I'm going to tell you is about
21 -- I also have started -- I'm a Native Language Instructor
22 Trainee and I've been going to different schools for the
23 past weeks and the story I would like to mention is about

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a case of a young man finishing high school this year.

2 He was enroled in an Anishnawbe language
3 class where he received one credit, but he needed two
4 credits to finish his term for this year. So he had to
5 drop the language class to get the two credits in another
6 subject.

7 We think our children's language is more
8 important than having to put this aside to learn another
9 subject so that our children and grandchildren can carry
10 on with our Anishnawbe language in the future generations
11 that come behind us.

12 Criteria to measure solution:

13 1. Losing the language -- more funding
14 to be made available to meet the needs of recapturing our
15 Anishnawbe language; and

16 2. Reintroduce the language by
17 enforcing it in the home and in the school system.

18 Alternatives:

19 1. We, as Anishnawbe Kive, are
20 responsible for our children just as our mother the Earth
21 is responsible for all living things. We are responsible
22 to our children and grandchildren in our homes because
23 if they learn the language in school and not at home it

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 will be lost again;

2 2. As part of the healing process it
3 has become apparent that funding be made available to
4 provide training for the ones that still hold the
5 Anishnawbe language to take the Ojibwe Language Teaching
6 Course at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay;

7 3. Language workshops be implemented
8 on the reserves and friendship centres where the large
9 concentrations of Anishnawbe people are and funding should
10 be provided to do this; and

11 4. To be successful for our youth
12 learning the language use of elders would play an important
13 role as teachers especially if they can give the teachings
14 in the Anishnawbe language.

15 We as traditional women in our group we
16 go to ceremonies down in the States and when we go to the
17 lodges; all the teachings that are given to us by our elders
18 are spoken in the Anishnawbe language. Then an English
19 translator comes out and talks for the people that don't
20 understand the language.

21 Implementation, action required: If we
22 had the funding available to take action for the
23 alternatives we have chosen, we could plan ahead. In the

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 past, if we wanted to promote cultural awareness with
2 regards to the language and to sponsor a workshop, we would
3 submit proposals to obtain funding from various sources.
4 Waiting and anticipating approval for funding would make
5 it hard to proceed with plans. Having the money up front
6 would make things a lot easier.

7 These are the problems and key issues
8 that we pointed out in our group. There were a lot of
9 other things that the women wanted to talk about and as
10 I said I was hoping that they would all come and talk here.

11 I have another -- on my own I have been
12 doing an observation about anglers and hunters. Anyway
13 we had come from Barrie to come to a youth Pow Wow here
14 in Rama and on the way we heard the news broadcast about
15 the Williams Treaty and how they were talking about going
16 to talk to Rae about how the Anishnawbe people are using
17 up all the land and the resources, the hunting and the
18 fishing, in that they say that we are the cause of all
19 the fishing and hunting, that we use too much of this in
20 our ceremonies and feasts.

21 I just wanted to remind you that if you
22 go to an Anishnawbe home and look in that home you will
23 not see the fish and the wild animals hanging on the walls.

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 That's all I have to say.

2 Meegwetch.

3 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you,
4 Gloria.

5 My thanks to the Native women here today.
6 You spoke well.

7 I would like to have Mark Douglas and
8 his person, I guess, not people today -- I'm sorry, I have
9 one person on the floor here -- though I do ask that she
10 keep it brief.

11 **EVELYN JACKSON:** I'm Evelyn Jackson.
12 I'm from Kushnong (PH). I just want to say that I've been
13 12 years in healing and I'm an alcoholic. I just wanted
14 to say that today I am working on getting well and I'm
15 going on my own. I just wanted to say to the women, for
16 myself I have a lot of support. There is a lot of support
17 all around me and I can and I want to encourage you to
18 keep on with what you are doing with the language and the
19 culture and everything. I, myself, am going to go back
20 and learn my language and I just wanted to say to encourage
21 you to keep going.

22 Thank you.

23 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you,

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Evelyn.

2 Usually I do like to pace things a little
3 slower. We have that obscene thing on the wall called
4 a clock so it's very important today.

5 Mark, I don't have to warn you that you
6 have to be brief or we may experience technical
7 difficulties.

8 **MARK DOUGLAS:** Meegwetch, Sherry.

9 It's a pleasure to be sitting on this
10 side of the table today.

11 With me today is an Archaeologist.
12 Another Zhaaganaash from Orillia, John Pomeroy and an
13 associate of mine, Rob Belfrey.

14 Recently we came together -- this area
15 is famous for its fish weirs, fish weirs that have been
16 place for over 5,000 years. I wanted to tell just very
17 briefly many of us from Rama introduce ourselves coming
18 from Man Jik A Ning. Man Jik A Ning is fish, fence,
19 farmer. When you first hear it it sounds a bit derogatory
20 and it's a tough one to take -- fish, fence, farmer.

21 I have come to understand more about the
22 importance and the beauty of that word and it's said in
23 our memory, the Anishnawbe people, the Ojibwe people went

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 on a great migration and they passed by here once and sat
2 with the Hurons and visited with them and we continued
3 on out west. We went around the Great Lakes and we came
4 back into this area and we were well allied with the Hurons.
5 We worked with them. We supported them. When they left
6 we assumed the operations at the fish weirs, the people
7 from Rama. We used to live just two kilometres south of
8 here where the bridge is now between the lakes.

9 I'm going to ask Ken what that fence
10 looked like and what that was about, but it's said that
11 it was such a special and clean place that people could
12 come from miles and miles around and spend some time there
13 and it was like a healing centre, a healing place. Part
14 of it was that they had to come and work on the fence,
15 help harvest the fish, but in the evenings sit in the
16 council lodges and talk. It's said that even our worst
17 enemies were welcomed there. They could come and sit with
18 us and talk with us so that we could try and resolve some
19 of our differences and find ways to begin cooperating.

20 It's said that we had therapists and
21 trained people there to help facilitate that kind of
22 atmosphere. But when the Zhaaganaash came to this region
23 they didn't understand the beauty or the importance of

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 the place, they had other agenda items. Progress was
2 driving them, the wind was driving them to do things
3 quickly.

4 They rebuilt over the site and made it
5 all dirty. They placed a bar nearby. They placed trading
6 centres nearby and people rather than coming and making
7 a commitment to spend the week and going through process,
8 people were only dropping in for an hour and trading, maybe
9 having a quick drink and leaving again.

10 It's said that our own people still
11 stayed at the site until the early 1950's and even they
12 eventually came home to Rama. By the time they got there,
13 because they hadn't gone there 150 years ago with the rest
14 of us, they didn't get a number, but they were originally
15 from our community, the David family. They kept waiting
16 for a time when the place would become magnificent again.

17 So, when we say we're from Man Jik A Ning
18 and we say that we are fish, fence, farmer -- it's knowing
19 that that was such a special place at one time.

20 I will ask Ken to maybe explain it in
21 more detail.

22 Meegwetch.

23 **KEN CASSAVOY:** Thank you, Mark.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Thank you for inviting me to speak here.

2 I was not expecting to do so, but I am pleased to be able
3 to. I have made a few notes, but I will try as Mark has
4 been trying to teach me to speak from the heart.

5 Among other things I'm a research
6 associate at Trent University and in 1973, 1974 we came
7 here to work at the Narrows on the fish weirs which I did
8 not discover -- it's been widely reported many times in
9 local papers that I did. They've always been there. We
10 went back and looked at them again.

11 We found, at that time, many hundreds
12 of stakes that were in place and they varied, as we now
13 know, over many years in many patterns. But so that you
14 understand, in simple terms they formed a fence and they
15 forced the fish to move along in a pattern to an opening
16 in the fence where they could be very easily netted or
17 in some cases speared.

18 It was a very very efficient tool and
19 was a big part of, we know certainly, the Huron economy
20 and presumably those that went before and those that
21 followed. It's a very very important site. It's unique
22 in North America and maybe in the world.

23 When we finished our work we were able

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 to date the material from the site and we found that --
2 we expected to find that it was from the time of around
3 Champlain when he reported them, but we in fact found that
4 two of the patterns that we saw dated 4,500 years ago.
5 That is 2500 BC, so it is a very ancient site.

6 We left the work at that point and we
7 had hoped that someone else would carry it on, but I moved
8 on to some other things, but in 1992 with the threat of
9 the bridge that's to be put in place there, I came back
10 to understand further what was there and to begin work
11 again.

12 As part of that process, at a meeting
13 about a year ago, we came together as a group with all
14 of the townships and the City of Orillia and many other
15 people, the county, to talk about the possibilities that
16 might be involved -- Jamie Simcoe from the band was there
17 as well. We talked about what might be done in terms of
18 a Heritage Resource Centre. I put forward some of my
19 thoughts about how we might use it as a place to help explain
20 and understand the cultures of the people who used this
21 fence.

22 We haven't made much progress on that.
23 We have been busy fighting another battle, trying to save

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a particular weir and I won't talk about that today, but
2 I do feel at one with a lot of the people here today having
3 been fighting the federal government now for many many
4 months. I feel at one with you about that.

5 So, we have made no progress in trying
6 to save that particular weir, but I think it is just a
7 small distraction. This remains a tremendously important
8 site, one that is worthy of careful attention and
9 development and I think it's one that presents a
10 magnificent opportunity for the communities to come
11 together.

12 Mark spoke at City Council and I was
13 there to hear him. He spoke very eloquently and I think
14 maybe there is a process begun there of understanding some
15 of the concerns of the people here, but also of a need
16 to share some things and to come together in a common effort
17 to do things that will be beneficial to both cultures.
18 From my perspective that will be beneficial to this
19 particular site, as well.

20 So, while I see it now as a still very
21 important archaeological site with tremendous potential,
22 I also see it as a very special place which has a much
23 deeper meaning.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Thank you.

2 **JOHN POMEROY:** I'm really pleased to be
3 here. My name is John Pomeroy and I come from the City.

4 You have just now heard from two experts
5 talking about this and they forgot to tell you two things,
6 or they didn't tell you two things. The first is that
7 it is just over there. If there was a window in the back
8 you could see it. It's less than a kilometre away. The
9 other thing is that it was built about half as long ago
10 as the glaciers were here. It's a really long time.

11 Mark asked me today to talk to you a
12 little bit about some of the things that are happening
13 in the process that we're in, in recognizing and honouring
14 that tradition.

15 I can talk to you about two things. One
16 is the white/white interaction and another is the
17 white/Native interaction that I can just sort of see going
18 on even as I am a part of it. I will tell you for whatever
19 value you may find in it.

20 In the white/white area people that I
21 talk to are -- first of all, almost everybody is culturally
22 sensitive -- no, culturally sympathetic. They recognize
23 that there is a problem with these two cultures merging

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 and they are very aware of that. A step beyond that though
2 is something that we could call a cultural sensitivity.

3 Some of these white people that I talk to are not exactly
4 in tune perhaps to some of the cultural things that this
5 culture has -- the Native culture has to treasure, more
6 or less.

7 In my own case, I sort of think that
8 what's happened here at the weirs is or could be thought
9 of as an open cultural sore. I think it's an absolutely
10 awful thing that happened 150 years ago or so, and it's
11 not sort of a healed- over sore, it's an open sore and
12 I'm always aware -- I think that I should ask Mark if there
13 are things that I should not say because I don't want to
14 make anything worse, for starters.

15 I can give you a little example of a thing
16 that happened just this week. We're talking about a story
17 that's developing while we're part of it. I mean it's
18 just over there. This past week we talked to the Orillia
19 City Council about doing something and getting something
20 done and started and organized.

21 There were three sort of stake holders
22 in the discussion that night. One of them was a Parks
23 Canada representative and our Mayor asked the Parks Canada

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 person if he would have any trouble working with the Native
2 people and kind of coordinating that effort. It never
3 occurred to him to ask the Native people if they could
4 work with Parks Canada.

5 It's just not there quite yet.

6 Another way that we could look at this
7 relationship or this cultural interaction, I guess, is
8 the Native/white culture thing.

9 Let me just say that it just seems to
10 be starting to be hitting the hot seat. People are all
11 of a sudden becoming aware of it. I've known Mark for
12 five or six years, or something like that -- anyway, it's
13 the first time that -- like in the last month, this is
14 the first time that he's ever shown me this feather. It's
15 true. This is -- I think it's amazing, actually.

16 I have also met some people that are
17 amazed by the depth and the scope of your culture. I'm
18 astonished to find myself here tonight.

19 Meegwetch.

20 **ROB BELFREY:** Rob Douchnekaws (PH) Rama
21 Dounjeba (PH) and I don't know my totem.

22 I know you must be thinking that I'm in
23 love with this microphone or something, I've been up here

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 so often in the last day or so, but I guess the reason
2 that I'm up here is there are times in your life when you
3 hear somebody say something and you know they're right.

4 It happened when my friend, the moderator here, was
5 speaking as a member of the self-sufficiency panel last
6 night.

7 It happened a couple of weeks ago when
8 I first heard Mark talk about Man Jik A Ning. What
9 impressed me so very much about what he was saying is that
10 the stakes that make up the weirs are important things.

11 There is a symbolism there that is very difficult to get
12 into and would take a very long time to explain, but it's
13 important.

14 But more important to the site is the
15 spirit that moved the site. The power that was in Man
16 Jik A Ning that moved the ceremonies, that made it such
17 a clean place, such a harmonious place. It is that spirit
18 we cannot lose. We may lose the bridge weir and Ken would
19 be upset, but we can't lose the spirit that moves Man Jik
20 A Ning. If we aren't to lose it, we have to start
21 reclaiming it. We have to clean it up.

22 When somebody says something that is
23 right to me, I sometimes only listen with half an ear

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 because my mind opens up and I can see things happening
2 and I can see I site clear along the shores. I can see
3 people enjoying the ceremonies again. I can see a
4 building. I don't know what was in that building -- Mark
5 was talking about a training centre, a healing place, a
6 place of spirituality, a place where the four colours could
7 meet on neutral ground like it was at one time.

8 That is what I am sitting here to support
9 and that is what I would like to see. We have already
10 begun the process. The healing you can see by taking a
11 look at the four people here is already taking place in
12 a very small way just because we started talking about
13 it. If we could ever get hold of the place, if we could
14 ever reclaim it -- the power that would come from that
15 place, the healing that would come from that place would
16 be astounding.

17 We need lots of help to bring this
18 vision, which is what it is. It's just a vision, but we
19 need a lot of help to bring it out. We've already begun.
20 We've asked the City of Orillia, we have asked Parks
21 Canada, we are going to be asking the Ministry of Transport,
22 we're going to be asking people white, Aboriginal -- all
23 four colours alike and we would appreciate the support

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 of the Royal Commission as we do this.

2 Meegwetch.

3 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you,
4 Mark and the other three of you.

5 The Commissioner has one thing to add
6 here.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would
8 just like to ask if there is any literature that we could
9 have or something that would tell us more. We would like
10 to be of help, obviously, in something like this. Is there
11 anything that you could give us?

12 **MARK DOUGLAS:** We are so new. We have
13 individual pieces. We haven't had the time to blend our
14 pieces into one. That will be done shortly. We will
15 forward it to you.

16 The other point we need to make is that
17 we're a circle. We're the Fish Weirs Adhoc Circle.

18 There's room for more people. It's not a closed thing.

19 We are trying to show in good faith that it's going to
20 take city folk, rural folk, Aboriginal people, traditional
21 people, it's going to take government, federal,

22 provincial, it's going to take a blending of a lot of energy
23 to make this a reality. We figure it could even be five

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 or eight years away, but we need to start the dialogue
2 now. We need to start the understanding now.

3 We will forward something to you.

4 **KEN CASSAVOY:** If I might, I have an
5 article which was written in 1973-74 which explains some
6 of the background. It's somewhat outdated in many ways,
7 but it does provide some background information, plus my
8 report from 1992, and I will be glad to forward those to
9 the Commissioners, if it is of interest.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you
11 very much.

12 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Next we are
13 going to allow some time for someone who was on the agenda
14 and still is and I must warn him too, since he just got
15 here, that if he goes more than 10 minutes we could again
16 experience technical difficulties.

17 We have Roger Obonsawin with us from
18 Toronto.

19 Roger, please.

20 **ROGER OBONSAWIN:** I can assure you that
21 I won't be long.

22 I want to thank you, Your Honour,
23 Commissioners, for allowing me the opportunity to make

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 a presentation at this hearing. I know it's been a long
2 week and I will try to make this brief and to the point.

3 Before I make my presentation I would
4 like to give you a little bit of background on myself in
5 terms of my credentials related to the topic that I will
6 be discussing, because I think it is a very crucial and
7 important topic at this time.

8 I'm Abinake (PH). My reserve is Odanak
9 (PH). I've been raised in Ontario, various parts of
10 Ontario. I've worked in Indian communities as a
11 professional for 23 years across Canada, in French
12 communities and in the Anglo communities.

13 The 23 years that I've worked with Indian
14 communities has been in many capacities. First of all,
15 as a field worker for the provincial government Native
16 Community Branch in Red Lake, Ontario and as an Executive
17 Director of the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre working
18 with northern and isolated communities up to Hudson Bay.

19 Then as President of the National Association of
20 Friendship Centres, I was founding President of the
21 association and we formed the association in 1972 and
22 established the office in Ottawa.

23 I didn't like the Ottawa scene that much.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 I wanted to get back to the community work and returned
2 to work as an Executive Director of the Native Canadian
3 Centre in Toronto for seven years.

4 When I left the centre, my partner and
5 I formed the Hubonson (PH) Urban Consulting, the OI Group
6 of Companies. We have been working for 12 years in
7 community development types of consulting with Aboriginal
8 communities across Canada, reserves, urban areas and every
9 type of organization that there is with some government
10 contracts.

11 We also formed the OI Employee Leasing
12 which now has over 500 employees across Canada. It was
13 a network of Aboriginal employees and OI Personnel
14 Services, which specializes in placement of Aboriginals
15 in private, public, government sectors.

16 So, I do speak from experience in terms
17 of the concern that I bring to the Royal Commission today
18 and to the papers that I would like to table with you today.

19 I won't go over all the papers -- we don't have time for
20 that and I believe that some of that may have been tabled
21 before, but that we should be looking at a need to look
22 at these very carefully.

23 I'm very concerned about the issues that

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 have started to be much more public starting on January
2 1st, 1993 which was touched off by a letter from the
3 Assistant Deputy Minister of Revenue Canada related to
4 taxation in the interpretation of the Williams decision
5 and the taxation issues as it affects people that are
6 working for employees located on-reserve and would be
7 off-reserve.

8 We were surprised not so much by the
9 announcement, but by the timing of that announcement,
10 because it had always been our understanding that
11 self-government negotiations were tied in with taxation
12 negotiations, were tied in with resource negotiations,
13 were tied in with so many other aspects of true
14 self-government for Aboriginal communities, and that there
15 would be opportunities for addressing all of these issues
16 in a manner. We looked at establishing a community base
17 for our Aboriginal communities across Canada.

18 As we began to research why the timing
19 on that was as it was we became very concerned because
20 of the information that came to us and the weakness of
21 the decision that was made by Revenue Canada. A number
22 of legal opinions, some of which I have here outlining,
23 that they really didn't have a basis for changing Supreme

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Court rulings previous, the factors related to previous
2 Supreme Court Rulings such as Nogishik (PH) and certainly
3 an infraction I believe on the Sparrow decision.

4 The other documents then came to our
5 attention which really we were very concerned about because
6 they were legislation or proposed legislation that are
7 scheduled to go through beginning the end of May and to
8 go through in the next six months and into the next
9 Parliament, if you will, before the Royal Commission
10 completes it's work, it's mandate.

11 That legislation is so all encompassing
12 that we began to question the relevancy of the Royal
13 Commission in relation to the discussions that we are
14 carrying out now. Why discuss this when this has all been
15 in the works since 1985 and that there have been
16 negotiations behind closed doors to implement many aspects
17 of self-government, taxation, land charters and so on,
18 without a chance for communities to really get information
19 on that basis. We began to send information out to
20 communities and getting some reactions from communities.

21 What we found really disturbed us. One
22 is that there is a growing -- there's been a -- it's not
23 a growing it's been there for a long time and it's always

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 concerned us, but it certainly is being felt in this issue
2 -- the issue of the lack of trust that Aboriginal people
3 have in the federal government. We constantly have to
4 go to the Supreme Court to clarify agreements that we
5 already understood as being the law of the land. Why are
6 Supreme Court decisions being interpreted so differently
7 by the bureaucrats who begin to develop legislation that
8 affect our Aboriginal and treaty rights?

9 That is a great concern to us and to the
10 people that we have been talking to and certainly to many
11 of the employees that are part of OI Leasing Service.

12 Unless that trust can be re-established
13 it's going to be very very difficult to have community
14 feeling of trust in the leadership that comes to agreements
15 with the federal government right now. There is really
16 a growing concern that that trust, that lack of trust is
17 now being transferred to the Aboriginal leadership in
18 Ottawa. That's an explosive situation, Commissioners,
19 and it is a very real concern.

20 In the letter that I sent to every
21 Commissioner about three years ago, I expressed my concerns
22 because the legislation, in my mind and in the minds of
23 many people, are really extinguishment legislation,

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 starting with the off-reserve situation getting it off
2 the table so that we can get into other cases of
3 extinguishment legislation.

4 In that the information being passed
5 around is really just information that we've seen from
6 those discussions and we have passed through. That is
7 a very serious concern. If we are going to establish a
8 degree of trust in a process then we must make the process
9 open and with community knowledge of what is happening.

10 I come here, therefore, to ask a
11 question, not to pose a solution at this point because
12 I think the solutions are in true discussions and they
13 will come from communities, but to ask the Commission what
14 position they will take in terms of legislation going
15 through and in terms of using their powers to bring people
16 to the Commission, by subpoena if necessary, to present
17 their side of the story, the government bureaucrats and
18 negotiators that have negotiated these agreements.

19 We feel that it is a serious enough issue
20 that they should be -- the powers of the Commission should
21 be brought full force to have them answer those questions
22 of the work that was started in 1985.

23 That is of primary importance and is the

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 main point that I would like to make at this time because
2 it is important that there is confidence given to the public
3 that the Commission is not there to ensure that the
4 initiatives of governments are being carried out, but that
5 true dialogue is carried out, and that the amounts of monies
6 that are spent on this Commission really get to the root
7 of the issues and I believe that these are roots of the
8 issues.

9 Suicides in Aboriginal communities
10 where people are saying we have no hope, we have no hope
11 of even knowing what's going on and our leadership is not
12 giving us any hope that there's any hope for the future
13 because we don't know what's happening. I believe youth
14 are feeling very hopeless in that we are putting more and
15 more money into the solutions when we are not talking to
16 them in a way that says you have something to offer in
17 Canada, you have something positive and that your rights
18 are being respected and honoured by all Canadians, not
19 only by your community.

20 I believe it's very important to send
21 that message out to Aboriginal people.

22 I will leave my comments and I will table
23 these papers for you at this time.

StenoTran

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Thank you very much.

2 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Thank you
3 very much, Roger.

4 At this time -- the plane could be
5 running by now for all I know or it could be started up.

6 I think your bags are packed and already in the trunk.

7 This is the time when I'm going to make
8 extremely brief closing remarks because Greg is going like
9 this. I think he has a big hook to pull me off here.

10 To the Commissioners, I want to tell you
11 that there is a quote that we use when we talk about power
12 and power relationships and that is:

13 "For those of you who will come to power, take the power
14 that is yours to take and remember
15 what it was like when you did not
16 have that power."

17 That quote has to do with children as
18 well and the powerlessness that we quite often feel.

19 I want to urge you to make sure your
20 report has some teeth in it and make sure myself and other
21 library people won't be dusting it.

22 I think through the last few days again
23 and again the topic of healing has come up and that is

May 14, 1993

176

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 number one priority with our people. I think throughout
2 this time everyone here has been able to hear and see and
3 feel the strength and the vision of my people, the
4 Anishnawbe.

5 I would like to give high marks to our
6 true translators, Edward Iksmong (PH) and Ernie Sandy --
7 and I think some of you weren't tuned in when the young
8 lady was singing for us today. Edward was trying to sing.
9 It was pretty hilarious.

10 Also, there is one person who hasn't been
11 mentioned through all this who has been instrumental in
12 putting this together and that is the person giving me
13 signals here, Greg McGregor. I think he deserves a lot
14 of credit for putting all this together.

15 Thank you, Greg.

16 I would like to say that I think the point
17 that we have been trying to make is that Native people
18 do not want charity. We want the world to understand us
19 more than anything else.

20 My very final comment before I will allow
21 the Commissioners to make theirs, if you remember this
22 you will be all right. Native people are boldly walking
23 into the future with our grandparents as our guides and

May 14, 1993

177

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 our children in our arms.

2 Meegwetch.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** If I could
4 just make a brief response to the last presenter.

5 You are quite right that we as a
6 Commission have these subpoena powers and we have a number
7 of people who have written to us or spoken to us about
8 whether we would be prepared to use them. We have
9 discussed this at our Commission meeting and our response
10 to that is we would prefer not to have to use them because
11 of the effect that using them would have on the degree
12 of cooperation that we would be likely to get from
13 government.

14 We would rather try to get what
15 information we need out of government without having to
16 use our subpoena powers, but if we can't get the information
17 that we believe we need in order to address the issues
18 then we will use them.

19 That is our position at the moment, but
20 we have discussed it at a fair degree of length and there
21 are one or two issues coming up and some presently before
22 us where we have to give serious consideration to that.

23 I would like to just by way of parting

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 comments thank you very much for inviting the Commission
2 here. I think that Mary Sillett and I have been very
3 privileged to attend these hearings. They have certainly
4 been highly educational. All aspects of them, both the
5 presentations that were made by individuals and groups
6 and the round tables, have just been extremely informative
7 for us. I'm just so relieved that I was one of the
8 Commissioners that was sent to Orillia.

9 I would like to thank everyone who
10 participated and contributed to our education,
11 particularly mine, because Mary Sillett knows a lot more
12 about the problems that Native people face than I do, but
13 this has just been a highly informative and educational
14 few days for me personally and I would like to say thank
15 you very much for asking us here.

16 Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would
18 just like to respond to something that Madam Justice Bertha
19 Wilson said. When we were in Akwesasne the person who
20 was introducing us didn't have one of those biographies
21 and she said, "Mrs. Wilson's totally ignorant of Native
22 issues and Mary Sillett is an expert on Indian issues."
23 I think that was totally wrong.

May 14, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario

1 Anyway, having said that I would like
2 to say thank you very much. I'm going to extend a special
3 thanks to Greg McGregor who was the community
4 representative and Jennifer Norton for her support at
5 registration.

6 I would like to give a special thanks
7 to our moderators, Sherry Lawson, Byron Styles, Mark
8 Douglas and Rob Belfrey. Also, to our translators Ernie
9 Sandy and Edward Iksmong (PH). I would like to give a
10 special thanks to the Elder, Harvey Anderson and Lorraine
11 McRae for their opening prayers on both days and to Neil
12 Monague for the support he gave to us and to the people
13 around the table by giving a lot of people the feather.

14 I would like to thank the Commission
15 staff, Kim Scott, Kelly Wood, Don Kelly, Tammy Saulis,
16 our Court Reporter, Linda Gauthier, our ISTS Technician,
17 Darin McCoy and to all the presenters because I know that
18 you've done a lot of work for this meeting.

19 I know that many of you were nervous,
20 but we're really glad that you took the time to talk to
21 us.

22 Thank you very much.

23 **SHERRY LAWSON, MODERATOR:** Make sure

May 14, 1993

180

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples
Orillia, Ontario**

1 you don't take the headsets home. Leave them at the table.

2 At this time I would like to ask Lorraine

3 McRae to come forward and lead us in a closing prayer.

4 **(Closing Prayer)**

5 --- Whereupon the hearing adjourned at 3:30 p.m.