

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR  
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT:    HIGHLINER INN  
                          PRINCE RUPERT, BRITISH COLUMBIA

DATE:                WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 1993

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"for the record..."

**STENOTRAN**

1376 Kilborn Ave.

Ottawa 521-0703

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**Highlinger Inn**  
**Prince Rupert, British Columbia**

**May 26, 1993**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Opening Prayer	1
Presentation by Erminio Pucci, City of Prince Rupert	10
Presentation by Joy Thorkelson, United Fishermen & Allied Workers Union	17
Presentation by Tricorp - Frank Parnell - Cliff Anderson	64
Presentation by Northwest Urban Aboriginal Society of Prince Rupert - Vern Brown - John Stewart - Bill Wright - Fred Anderson	100
Presentation by Christie Clifton, North Coast Tribal Council Education Centre	142
Presentation by Mary Anne Wilson, Skidegate Caregivers	163
Presentation by Ken Harris, Meensganist Housing Society	183
Presentation by Louisa Smith, North Coast Tribal Council	208
Presentation by Bernice Goldie	221
Presentation by Sandra Green, First Nations Women's Group	234
Presentation by Isabelle Hill, Daughters of Kitkatla	239
Presentation by Peter Efimoff	251
Closing Remarks by John Stewart	255
Closing Prayer	256

May 26, 1993

1

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1  
2

3 --- Upon commencing at 9:25 a.m., Wednesday, May  
4 26, 1993.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Good  
6 morning, ladies and gentlemen.

7 We are about to begin this session of  
8 a public hearing of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal  
9 Peoples here in Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

10 To get proceedings under way, I invite  
11 Alan Gabriel to provide us with an opening prayer.

12 **(Opening Prayer)**

13 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank  
14 you, Mr. Gabriel.

15 My name is Paul Chartrand and with me  
16 is Bertha Wilson. We are both members of the Royal  
17 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

18 I would like to begin by making a few  
19 comments explaining the nature and the function of the  
20 Royal Commission and then I will ask my co-Commissioner  
21 to make some opening remarks after which we will promptly  
22 get under way with proceedings.

23 This Commission was established by Order  
24 and Council of the Federal Government in August 1991.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

2

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 It followed the recommendations made by the special  
2 representative for the Prime Minister, the recently  
3 retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Brian  
4 Dixon, who consulted widely with the people across Canada  
5 in order to make recommendations on both the membership  
6 and the mandate of this Commission.

7                   Who are the Commissioners? Seven  
8 Commissioners were appointed. There was Alan Blakeney,  
9 the former Premier of Saskatchewan. Georges Erasmus, a  
10 Dene and the former National Chief of the Assembly of First  
11 Nations. There was Rene Dusseault, a judge of the Quebec  
12 Court of Appeal. There's also Mary Sillett, recently  
13 retired as President of the Inuit Women's Association,  
14 an Inuk from Labrador. And, there was Viola Robinson,  
15 a Micmac from Nova Scotia, and recently retired from the  
16 Native Council of Canada.

17                   What is the mandate of the Commission?

18 It is a very broad mandate requiring us to make  
19 recommendations to the federal government respecting the  
20 policies that ought to be adopted or changed or jettisoned  
21 respecting issues concerning Aboriginal peoples.

22                   The mandate is broad so it covers, I  
23 think, all issues that could be identified. For example,

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 we are to consider the constitutional position of  
2 Aboriginal peoples in Canada and the legal position of  
3 Aboriginal peoples in Canada. That refers to all the  
4 Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

5                   Historically, the federal government  
6 has administered its policies with respect to Aboriginal  
7 peoples by defining some of the Aboriginal peoples as  
8 Indian pursuant to its main piece of legislation, the  
9 Indian Act, and its policy has essentially focused on the  
10 administration of affairs on the reserves on which these  
11 people resided.

12                   We are to consider not only the  
13 circumstances of these people, but also other Aboriginal  
14 peoples who have not or do not live on reserves. That  
15 includes the Inuit people and the Metis people.

16                   We are also to consider issues  
17 concerning the treaties and you may know that in Canada  
18 many treaties have been entered into historically and in  
19 quite recent times with Aboriginal peoples from many places  
20 across Canada, but treaties have not been entered into  
21 with all the peoples in all places in Canada.

22                   We are to consider, also, the land  
23 issues. We are to consider social issues, economic

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 issues, education, cultural issues, the issue of languages  
2 and in considering all the terms of our mandate -- and  
3 I might add that our mandate has been broken down into  
4 16 points of reference in the report to the Chief Justice  
5 -- we are also required to consider particular perspectives  
6 on these issues. For example, the perspective of elders,  
7 the perspective of women and the perspective of young  
8 people.

9                   We are to consider also the perspective  
10 of people who live in the towns and cities as opposed to  
11 those who live in more remote and rural communities. We  
12 are, of course, to consider the circumstances of people  
13 in those situations as well. We are, also, to consider  
14 the particular circumstances of people in the north.

15                   That is our mandate and we are organizing  
16 ourselves to attempt to issue a final report late next  
17 year. We have undertaken a series of public hearings  
18 across Canada beginning with the tour of provincial  
19 capitals in December, 1991, and during the last year with  
20 public hearings in various communities across the country.

21                   At the same time we have initiated a very  
22 large research project commissioning research on all  
23 aspects of our mandate from scholars and other researchers

May 26, 1993

5

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 across the country. We have initiated the special program  
2 to assist the research of organizations to enable  
3 organizations to conduct their own research and on the  
4 basis of that research, to make particular recommendations  
5 to us.

6                   That intervenor dissipation program  
7 then is one that has assisted organizations and we expect  
8 to be provided with the benefits of that program now or  
9 in the near future.

10                   Our function here is to solicit the views  
11 from members of the public, from all interested  
12 organizations and interested individuals and to consider  
13 your recommendations in light of all the other information  
14 that is provided to us. And, from there, to graft  
15 appropriate policy recommendations to the federal  
16 government.

17                   I look forward very much to these  
18 hearings and before calling on the people that are to make  
19 the first presentation, I invite my fellow Commissioner,  
20 Bertha Wilson, who is appointed as a recently retired  
21 member of the Supreme Court of Canada who has excessive  
22 experience on the Supreme Court in cases involving  
23 Aboriginal issues -- I call on Commissioner Wilson to make

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

6

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 her opening remarks.

2 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
3 Paul.

4 Good morning. I'm one of the three  
5 non-Aboriginal members of the Royal Commission and I feel  
6 that I have been very honoured and privileged to be chosen  
7 to sit on what is really quite a unique Royal Commission.

8 It's unique in a number of ways. First  
9 of all, it's unique in the fact that the majority of  
10 Commissioners sitting on the Commission are Native people.

11 It's also unique in the fact that the substantial majority  
12 of the staff of the Commission are Native people and we're  
13 very proud of our staff and the way that they have rallied  
14 together to provide us with all the help that we need.  
15 It's also unique in that it has taken on a tremendously  
16 large research task and that research is being done mainly  
17 by Native scholars across the country.

18 So, in these three basic respects it's  
19 a very unusual and unique Royal Commission.

20 Of course, the challenge is tremendous.  
21 One of the things that we are frequently asked at our  
22 hearings is: What makes you think that anything is going  
23 to happen as a result of this Royal Commission? We've



May 26, 1993

7

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 had studies and Commissions in the past and they have just  
2 moulded on the shelves and nothing has happened. What  
3 makes you think that this one is going to be any different?

4                   Some ask us: Can you give us any  
5 guarantee that after we do all this work that you're asking  
6 us to do some good is going to come out of it for Native  
7 people? Of course, we have to admit that we can give no  
8 guarantees because in the final analysis it is governments  
9 that have to implement the recommendations that we make.

10                   However, I personally am very optimistic  
11 and the reason I'm optimistic is that I sense that  
12 non-Native people across the country really want a change  
13 in the nature of the relationship between Aboriginal and  
14 non-Aboriginal people. I think the general public in  
15 Canada is conscious as it has never been before of the  
16 injustices that have been done in the past to Canada's  
17 First Nations.

18                   It's for that reason that I'm optimistic  
19 because, as you know, what makes governments move is  
20 pressure from the public, from the electorate, and I  
21 believe, and my sense is, that the public is most anxious  
22 now to address this problem.

23                   So, for that reason I'm very excited and

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

8

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 thrilled about being on this Commission and as I say, I'm  
2 very hopeful. I know that there are many people who are  
3 not and who are quite concerned about whether anything  
4 is going to happen, but I remain confident that it will.

5 I would like to say that the Native  
6 people across the country have done more than their share  
7 of work for us on this Commission as we've gone across  
8 the country and visited various communities and urban  
9 centres Native people and Native groups have presented  
10 very very thoughtful and imaginative, and also very  
11 practical, suggestions and ideas for change. They really  
12 have done their homework and it's been very gratifying  
13 to us to receive this valuable input from the Native  
14 presenters.

15 I would like to thank you for inviting  
16 us to Prince Rupert. I've never been in this part of the  
17 country before. It's very lovely and we appreciate being  
18 invited to come and like my colleague, I look forward very  
19 much to hearing what you have to tell us.

20 Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Before  
22 inviting the first presentation to be made I would like  
23 to say that we have a panel of two Commissioners here.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 The Commission splits up into three panels and there are  
2 two panels travelling elsewhere this week. We travel in  
3 three different panels to cover as much of the country  
4 as is reasonably possible given our goals.

5 Since neither the co-chair here -- you  
6 will notice I picked up the short straw and I have the  
7 privilege of chairing the presentations today.

8 As I indicated my name is Paul Chartrand.  
9 I'm Metis. I grew up in the Inner Lake area of Manitoba  
10 and I have a position at the University of Manitoba. My  
11 education includes two degrees in law at the University  
12 and I have a concern to do research writing and teaching  
13 in the fields of law and policies that pertains to  
14 Aboriginal peoples.

15 Having done these opening duties I now  
16 call upon Mr. Erminio Pucci, the Director of Economic  
17 Development and Tourism for the City of Prince Rupert,  
18 please.

19 **ERMINIO PUCCI, THE CITY OF PRINCE**

20 **RUPERT:** Thank you.

21 My name is Erminio Pucci and I'm here  
22 representing the Mayor and Council of the City of Prince  
23 Rupert. I would like to thank you for the opportunity

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 to allow us to make this presentation to the Royal  
2 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

3                   We did not make a written submission,  
4 but did inform the Commission that we would be here. I  
5 did bring a long copies of our presentation. I have just  
6 handed you a copy.

7                   I would like to start by saying very few  
8 people dispute the necessity of getting the land claim  
9 question settled and to correct the injustices done to  
10 the Aboriginal people over the years. The Native land  
11 question should be settled equitably and honourably.

12                   In order to accomplish this the City of  
13 Prince Rupert recommends the following: that all  
14 negotiations be conducted openly and equitably; and that  
15 a more public consultation process be adopted. Further,  
16 that a sociological and economic impact study be completed  
17 on a regional basis on the effects of any land claims  
18 settlement on the non-Aboriginals and their communities.

19                   That no land claims agreement should be signed prior to  
20 the implementation and the completion of the above.

21                   Thank you very much for the opportunity.

22                   If you have any questions, I will try to answer those  
23 questions for you.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Mr.  
2 Pucci, I wonder if you might like to assist us by providing  
3 us with some information on the memorandum of understand  
4 which I'm lead to understand has been signed between the  
5 Province of British Columbia and the municipal governments  
6 in the province?

7                   **ERMINIO PUCCI:** I'm not apprised of that  
8 memorandum. I'm not right up on that memorandum.  
9 Apparently, it has just been signed after some considerable  
10 lobbying from municipalities and in particular,  
11 municipalities from Northern British Columbia and that  
12 they are the greatest effected by the process that's being  
13 undertaken.

14                   There was some concern, as I understand,  
15 with respect to the secrecy of the negotiations that were  
16 taking placespecifically with the Nisga'a and tripartite  
17 agreement that was in place.

18                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Mrs.  
19 Wilson, would you like to ask some questions or have any  
20 comments for Mr. Pucci?

21                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.  
22 Touching on what you have just said I notice that your  
23 first point is that negotiations be conducted openly and

May 26, 1993

12

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that suggests that they haven't been. I would be  
2 interested in hearing just what you have in mind.

3 **ERMINIO PUCCI:** There's a perception --  
4 clearly a perception that there have been closed-door  
5 negotiations, in particular some of the areas of British  
6 Columbia and that it leads to some degree of scepticism  
7 on behalf of the non-Aboriginals.

8 I've recently returned from a fisheries  
9 workshop on coastal communities and it was evident that  
10 there was Native and non-Native participants in the room.

11 It was very evident that the non-Native and  
12 non-Aboriginals in the room and the communities that were  
13 represented had very little knowledge of the negotiations  
14 and what exactly the Aboriginal people wanted out of their  
15 treaties. I think there is a certain amount of perception  
16 and scepticism -- where that leads to scepticism with  
17 respect to closed-door negotiations.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** So, your  
19 feeling is that the non-Aboriginal people have been left  
20 out of the process. The process has been going on between  
21 the two levels of government and the Native people and  
22 that the non-Native people have been shut out. Is that  
23 the perception?

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **ERMINIO PUCCI:** That's the perception  
2 that I'm hearing from the non-Aboriginal communities as  
3 I know them. There has been some opportunity for input.

4                   I don't know whether that's been  
5 publicized well enough or whether it just being seen as  
6 a token opportunity or an open door where specific  
7 questions have not been answered when someone comes up  
8 and asks specific questions there's a cloak of  
9 confidentiality; and I believe there was a confidentiality  
10 agreement signed between the three parties at least at  
11 the one negotiating process that I'm aware of.

12                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Was the  
13 understanding not that the federal government was going  
14 to look after the interests of the non-Aboriginal people  
15 that might be effected by any land claims settlement?

16                   **ERMINIO PUCCI:** I think that's the fear.  
17 I think that the credibility in the ability for the federal  
18 government to do that has been eroded.

19                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I see.  
20 Thank you.

21                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** The past  
22 negotiations that you're referring to, are they  
23 negotiations involving the federal government and the

May 26, 1993

14

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 local Aboriginal peoples only or did they involved  
2 provincial government representatives?

3 **ERMINIO PUCCI:** I believe they involved  
4 the provincial government representatives, as well.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In what  
6 sense? I wonder if you might elaborate the sense in which  
7 the people of the City of Prince Rupert presumably would  
8 feel that they are not represented by the provincial  
9 representatives. Is this their point, that they do not  
10 feel that their interests are adequately represented by  
11 the participation of provincial representatives?

12 **ERMINIO PUCCI:** I'm not certain that  
13 that's the fear as much as the lack of information leads  
14 to a great deal of uncertainty.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Do you  
16 have anything else to add?

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I have a  
18 question for you that's really under the heading of general  
19 knowledge. I notice in the material that we, as  
20 Commissioners who were coming to Prince Rupert were  
21 provided with, there was a statement in the material that  
22 said that Prince Rupert was the third largest natural  
23 harbour in the world. I've been asking around what are



May 26, 1993

15

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 the first two? Where are the first two? If Prince Rupert  
2 is the third -- and I haven't been able to find anybody  
3 who knew. Do you happen to know the answer to that  
4 question?

5 **ERMINIO PUCCI:** No, I don't.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm  
7 destined to go home in ignorance, I can see that.

8 Thank you.

9 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Maybe we  
10 will want to check the accuracy of the statement.

11 Thank you very much, Mr. Pucci.

12 **ERMINIO PUCCI:** Thank you for the  
13 opportunity.

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** The next  
16 presentation according to my list is to be made on behalf  
17 of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union. I will  
18 now call on their representative, Ms Joy Thorkelson.

19 We are awaiting the arrival of the next  
20 presenters so we will proceed as soon as the individual  
21 arrives.

22 --- Upon recessing at 9:50 a.m.

23 --- Upon resuming at 10:10 a.m.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Welcome  
2 back to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal hearings and  
3 I will now call on Ms Joy Thorkelson to make a presentation  
4 on behalf of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union.

5                   Welcome and please proceed whenever  
6 you're ready.

7                   **JOY THORKELSON, UNITED FISHERMEN AND**  
8 **ALLIED WORKERS UNION:** Thank you.

9                   My name is Joy Thorkelson. I'm the  
10 Northern Representative for the United Fishermen and  
11 Allied Workers Union. The Union will be presenting two  
12 briefs. This is a Northern brief which does not go into  
13 as much technical detail as will the brief that will be  
14 presented in Vancouver. This is really a brief, I suppose,  
15 from a Northern perspective of a fishing community that  
16 has a great deal of Native participation and certainly  
17 within our Union we have many First Nations people.

18                   As an introduction the Northern Office  
19 of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union represents  
20 about 2,200 shoreworkers, tendermen and fishermen who  
21 reside and work on British Columbia's northern coast.

22                   Seventy-five to eighty per cent of our  
23 members on the north coast are First Nations people who

May 26, 1993

17

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 come from many villages and different nations. Some of  
2 our people live on reserve lands, and some live in north  
3 coast urban communities. Others make their homes away  
4 from the north coast, but return here to work during the  
5 fishing seasons.

6                   The Union negotiates collective  
7 agreements covering wages and working conditions for  
8 tendermen and shoreworkers, and fish prices and share  
9 agreements for fishers engaged in a variety of fisheries.  
10 We negotiate in the north with the four major companies:  
11 B.C. Packers; Canadian Fishing Company; Ocean Fisheries;  
12 and J.S. McMillan Fisheries. These companies, combined,  
13 process 75 per cent of the salmon and 80 per cent of the  
14 roe herring caught on the B.C. coast.

15                   The Union is the largest fishermen's  
16 organization in B.C. and not all of the fishermen belong  
17 to the Union, but our price and share agreements apply  
18 to all those who fish for the companies signatory to our  
19 agreements.

20                   However, we are not just a Union that  
21 bargains for prices, wages and working conditions, we also  
22 spend a good deal of time and energy engaged in the  
23 multitude of issues that are facing our industry, such

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 as: the environment; governmental regulations and  
2 policies; and dealing with corporate decisions which have  
3 an impact on the well-being of the fishery in our  
4 communities.

5                   We are a democratic union and we involve  
6 our membership through many means in developing our  
7 policies.

8                   I believe that really we can look at two  
9 communities -- or that I would be interested in looking  
10 at two communities up here. One is the north coast  
11 community and it's different from many others in British  
12 Columbia. It's a resource base community on the north  
13 coast, and logging, fishing and the secondary processing  
14 industries that arise from logging and fishing are what  
15 forms their economic bases here.

16                   First Nations people are involved both  
17 in harvesting and processing of these resources. People  
18 who are involved in fishing and logging who live in the  
19 villages is not as much an impediment to employment because  
20 employment does not take place for fishing and logging  
21 in the villages. They take place outside of the villages  
22 -- were outside of urban centres.

23                   However, there is little in the way of

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 resource processing plants in the villages and many First  
2 Nations people have had to leave the villages to seek  
3 employment in secondary processing in the nearby cities.

4 In the urban centres Native and  
5 non-Native people work side by side. We can look at the  
6 community organizations and community events that reflect  
7 a real mixture of different nations and different races  
8 in the urban communities in the north coast.

9 Certainly, even though there has been  
10 a high level of integration in cities like Prince Rupert,  
11 it's not to say that First Nations people have not suffered  
12 from discrimination and do not continue to suffer from  
13 discrimination. Some has been in the form of pure racism  
14 and some has been the result of hidden systemic and  
15 institutional discrimination. For example, the requiring  
16 of certain education levels for jobs. These requirements  
17 have often prevented First Nations people from obtaining  
18 work.

19 More recently, however, through efforts  
20 on part of tribal and band councils and their urban arms  
21 projects have been set up to advance the interests of First  
22 Nations people especially in the areas of education, job  
23 training and promotion of small business opportunities.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   In the fishing industry in the north  
2 coast we have 75 - 80 per cent First Nations participation  
3 including fishermen, tendermen and shoreworkers. Some  
4 of our fishing industry workers live in the villages and  
5 come down to work in centres like Prince Rupert for the  
6 summertime. Others have moved to Prince Rupert and other  
7 urban centres, but we have worked along side each other  
8 for decades.

9                   We have struggled together for better  
10 DFO fishing regulations and policies. We have struggled  
11 to protect the environment, to increase fish prices for  
12 decent wages and working conditions.

13                   For about the first half of this century  
14 there were price and wage differentials based on race,  
15 but with unionization the industry along with changes in  
16 social morays the differentials have been eliminated.

17                   On the north coast we have developed a  
18 real sense of community within the fishing industry. We  
19 have had our differences, but our disagreements have as  
20 often been along gear lines or the result of individual  
21 or organizational attitudes regarding fish price  
22 bargaining as anything else. Fishermen, tendermen and  
23 shoreworkers from all races generally have seen themselves

May 26, 1993

21

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 inextricably linked regardless of racial origins.

2                   The pressure on the industry from  
3 outside groups have been a tremendously unifying force.

4 Faced with increased demands for fish by the sports  
5 fishing sector, for example, habitat degradation, harmful  
6 DFO directives and devastating corporate and governmental  
7 decisions, industry workers have looked to each other for  
8 support.

9                   Shoreworkers and Tendermen:  
10 Historically, First Nations people have comprised the  
11 majority of workers in the fish plants and on packers and  
12 collectors. In the north coast area, including the Queen  
13 Charlotte Islands, there were at one time 40 to 50 fish  
14 plants. Cannery work was labour intensive, with large  
15 numbers of shoreworkers working long hours at tiring jobs  
16 for relatively low pay.

17                   However, through a number of periods of  
18 consolidation, the latest of which was in the early 1980's,  
19 companies merged or were bought out. Fish processing  
20 operations were consolidated and plants were shut down.

21 Today there are two fully functioning salmon canneries  
22 left on the north coast, and approximately eight other  
23 plants which butcher salmon for the canning or fresh fish

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 markets.

2 Technological change is also impacted  
3 severely on the number of people employed in the industry,  
4 their hours worked and the length of the season. Corporate  
5 decisions based on profit have lead to closures of marginal  
6 operations such as clam, crab and groundfish, which  
7 provided a lot of employment for people in the industry.

8 DFO regulations have compacted the fishing season into  
9 smaller and smaller time periods which has also shortened  
10 the length of work available for people in the industry.

11 Closures and consolidation, tech  
12 change, corporate processing decision and DFO regulations  
13 have all, therefore, negatively affected the employment  
14 of shoreworkers. Fewer shoreworkers work fewer hours for  
15 shorter seasons on fewer species of fish.

16 Tendermen have also been impacted by the  
17 same influences. Company consolidation, changes in the  
18 ability of fish boats to keep and pack quality fish, the  
19 shortness of the seasons and corporate decisions to reduce  
20 the packer fleet have lead to unemployment or lower incomes  
21 for this sector as well.

22 One of the recent changes that we are  
23 still living with the result of and we haven't seen how



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 far it's going to lead us, has been a result of the GATT  
2 fisheries decision and the Free-Trade Agreement. Under  
3 the GATT fisheries ruling, Canadians no longer have the  
4 right to legislate that Canadian fish must be processed  
5 in Canada. Prior to GATT we had Canadian laws that  
6 governed the export of unprocessed fish out of Canada and  
7 GATT struck those laws down.

8                   However, under GATT, we simply could  
9 have put on export taxes which would have done the same  
10 thing as legislative controls, but under the Free-Trade  
11 Agreement we are prohibited from doing that. Under the  
12 Free-Trade Agreement and under NAFTA, processing companies  
13 from the United States are allowed the same access to  
14 Canadian fish as processors located in Canada. This means  
15 that American companies can come up to B.C., buy our fish  
16 and take it to the U.S. for processing with impunity.

17                   Not only has this resulted in fewer fish  
18 for Canadians shoreworkers and tendermen to work on, it  
19 has also created a downward drive on shoreworkers wages  
20 and working conditions as Canadian located companies try  
21 to reduce our wages to American levels.

22                   Unionization in the shore and packing  
23 sections for the largest part took place in the 1940's

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 and early 1950's. With the Union, people were able to  
2 unite to fight the companies, and the discrimination based  
3 on race and discrimination based on gender which was really  
4 the standard in the industry, was negotiated out and equity  
5 based on seniority rights and equal wages was negotiated  
6 in.

7 I think probably if you speak to any  
8 shoreworker in the industry you will find that seniority  
9 rights are the things that they find are the nearest and  
10 dearest to their hearts because it has created equality.

11 Presently, the vast majority of north  
12 coast shoreworkers and tendermen belong to the UFAWU and  
13 work under our contracts. They enjoy the best wages and  
14 working conditions of any fishing industry workers in the  
15 whole of North America.

16 Fishermen: North coast fishermen  
17 participate in almost all fisheries; although they don't  
18 participate in all of them on an individual basis. Most  
19 fishermen up here will only hold one licence -- probably  
20 a salmon licence, while others may hold one or two  
21 additional licenses, usually herring or halibut. If they  
22 hold more than two licenses it's quite rare although  
23 fishermen also trawl for groundfish or shrimp, longline

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 or trap cod, fish crab, harvest clams, and have herring  
2 roe or bait ponds.

3                   Licensing changes such as limited entry  
4 licensing and individual transferable quotas, which are  
5 ITQs, and individual vessel quotas, IVQs, have certainly  
6 impacted northern fishers.

7                   North coast fishermen haven't had the  
8 same access to the larger more diversified southern markets  
9 and when the DFO has put in a threshold and you have to  
10 have so many pounds of deliveries registered in order to  
11 receive an ITQ or a limited licence, many of our people  
12 on the north coast have not met those requirements.

13                   Because of this, north coast fishers,  
14 both Native and non-Native, have been excluded from many  
15 fisheries which they had previously participated in before  
16 ITQs were limited entry fisheries even though they had  
17 participated on a marginal basis from an economic point  
18 of view. From their own point of view, they participated  
19 in a meaningful way.

20                   Because of the DFO licensing policies  
21 limited entry, area licensing and ITQs have increased the  
22 cost of fishing, because in order to participate in a  
23 fishery, boat owners must now buy or lease a licence or

May 26, 1993

26

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 quota for practically every fishery. This has placed  
2 fishing for more than one species of fish out of the range  
3 of many fishermen because they have to invest in licences.

4                   Area licensing on roe herring and ITQs  
5 on halibut have also reduced the employment opportunities  
6 for deckhands. Many north coast fishers, First Nations  
7 people and others, have made a good living supplementing  
8 their salmon income by deckhanding on herring seiners or  
9 halibut vessels. These licensing changes and area  
10 licensing cut seine jobs by around 50 per cent and halibut  
11 deckhand jobs have been cut in the past year by over  
12 one-third.

13                   Another rising cost of the fishery is  
14 the companies insistence on quality product. The  
15 companies have demanded a number of changes, one of which  
16 that fishermen invest and change their holds over from  
17 -- where you ice fish down to slush holds or brine holds.

18                   Premiums are paid to those fishermen who can afford to  
19 do so and those fishermen that can't afford to do so receive  
20 less money for their fish.

21                   The companies and corporate policies,  
22 of course, have played a large role in determining the  
23 well-being of north coast fishermen. The companies for

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

27

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 many years owned large rental-boat fleets. A great number  
2 of First Nations people fished on these vessels, which  
3 in many cases were poorly maintained by the companies to  
4 the point of being death traps for a tragic number of  
5 fishermen.

6                   These fishers who ran these gillnetters  
7 were totally under the companies control. They were bound  
8 to deliver their fish to the owner-company who paid them  
9 less for their fish than the fishermen who owned their  
10 own boats. Many times the companies were less than honest  
11 in settling the fisher's accounts, as well.

12                   Many Native fishermen lost their halibut  
13 licences due to the rental boat fiasco. The First Nations'  
14 fisher would apply for and receive a halibut licence, which  
15 would be then attached to the vessel. If the company then  
16 fired the person, in the case of a rental boat or a repossess  
17 of a privately owned vessel, the licence would remain on  
18 the boat and the individual would lose that right.

19                   The companies were also notorious for  
20 lending money to fishermen to buy their own vessels then  
21 repossessing the boats when, after a few bad years, the  
22 fisher was unable to meet his loan payments. The companies  
23 would finance the purchase of a vessel -- in many cases

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 they owned the vessel to begin with. They would lend a  
2 lot of start up money to the vessel owner at the beginning  
3 of each season then after a period of a few years of poor  
4 prices and low or no bonuses, which were conditions  
5 generally controlled by these same companies, they would  
6 call the loan.

7                   Stories of questionable company  
8 accounting practices abound in these cases too. A great  
9 number of the large Masset First Nations seine fleet was  
10 lost in this manner.

11                   The sale of the company rental gillnet  
12 fleets drove many north coast First Nations fishermen out  
13 of the industry. Even though the licences and vessels  
14 were purchased by two Native owned organizations, the  
15 Gitksan Industries and the Northern Native Fishing  
16 Corporation, many fishermen who previously rented the  
17 boats from the companies found that these old vessels were  
18 just too expensive to maintain.

19                   The Union, and in some years in  
20 conjunction with the Native Brotherhood of B.C., --  
21 although not recently -- have negotiated fish prices with  
22 the four major companies. These minimum prices, as I've  
23 said before, apply to all fishermen who deliver to these

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 companies whether they are members of unions or not.

2 In some years the prices are negotiated  
3 without a struggle. In other years, fishermen are forced  
4 to strike for better prices. First Nations fishermen have  
5 been involved in this fight for decent prices along side  
6 everybody else.

7 The issue of allocation is also a very  
8 important one to fishers. Allocation determines who gets  
9 what fish. There are two kinds of allocation, one is  
10 between gear types -- troll, gillnet and seine and the  
11 other is between user groups.

12 The traditional three user groups have  
13 been commercial, sports and the First Nations food fishery.  
14 With the impending settlement of some First Nations claims  
15 and with the advent of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy  
16 (AFS), a fourth user group, the First Nations Commercial  
17 Fishery has entered the picture. Traditional commercial  
18 fishers are understandably concerned with this  
19 development, because another allocation reduces the  
20 available fish to be caught by the present commercial  
21 fishers.

22 Prices and volume of fish available to  
23 be caught are the two main variables which determine the

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 well-being of all fishermen. Reduce one or reduce the  
2 other and commercial fishers will be driven out of the  
3 industry. Some of those will undoubtedly be First Nations  
4 fishermen.

5                   Resource: There is a great myth  
6 perpetuated by the DFO that fish will be in danger of  
7 extinction as long as it remains a common property resource  
8 owned by the people of Canada. In fact, the opposite has  
9 proven to be true. It's industry workers who have been  
10 the people who time after time have rushed to the defense  
11 of fish and their habitat.

12                   Fishermen, tendermen and shoreworkers  
13 have worked in coalitions with First Nations and  
14 environmental groups to protect fish habitat from hydro  
15 projects, oil tankers, pesticides, poor logging practices,  
16 mining and drilling projects and industrial and municipal  
17 pollution.

18                   Fishermen have fought to conserve salmon  
19 runs even if it has meant the closure of fishing areas  
20 and the lowering of immediate incomes. Fishers have  
21 opposed ITQs, not the least of the reasons is for  
22 conservation and management -- ITQ fisheries world wide  
23 have shown to lead to highgrading and stock reduction.

StenoTran



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   Stock enhancement and a decent budget  
2 for scientific studies have long been on industry workers'  
3 agenda. However, many stocks have been enhanced through  
4 management which has meant the foregoing of present fishing  
5 opportunities in order to build stocks for the future.  
6 Unfortunately, in many cases when the stocks have been  
7 rebuilt to the point of allowing a fishery, these fish  
8 are allocated to another user group, and the commercial  
9 industry workers do not share in the run which they have  
10 helped to rebuild.

11                   Ancillary industries: Really dealt  
12 with two ancillary industries which were the largest in  
13 Prince Rupert for a long time and -- as boat shops and  
14 net lofts. Now there exists very few due to corporate  
15 decisions, company boat shops being closed down -- they  
16 were closed down in the early '80s for the most part, and  
17 also at the same time the companies closed down the net  
18 lofts and self-employing net workers.

19                   Out of the four privately owned boat  
20 shops in Prince Rupert which operated in the 1980's only  
21 two remain and both boat shops are feeling the economic  
22 pinch. The Masset ship yard which built many vessels  
23 closed long ago, after so many vessels were repossessed

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 by the companies that it was no longer economically viable  
2 to keep the boat shop going.

3                   One reason for the lack of work in these  
4 boat yards now is that so many boats are built with  
5 materials that are relatively maintenance free. However,  
6 the fact is that many fishermen now find it economically  
7 necessary to perform their own work and that many fishermen  
8 have moved away from the north coast taking their vessels  
9 with them are also major contributors to the loss of those  
10 two industries.

11                   Skilled boatshop tradespersons and  
12 networkers who use to have steady employment at union wages  
13 and conditions are now, for the most part, unemployed and  
14 having to try to drum up work on an individual contract  
15 basis. Many of these people were First Nations people,  
16 in fact, most of them were.

17                   Valuable skills that First Nations  
18 people could have passed on to their children, such as  
19 mechanics and ship building, ship righting, are now being  
20 lost. People with these skills rely on a healthy  
21 commercial fishery for employment opportunities. If more  
22 commercial fishermen leave the industry, fewer people in  
23 the ancillary industries will be able to make a living.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   In conclusion of this first part of our  
2 presentation, the north coast fishing industry workers  
3 have shared the ups and downs of the industry. But because  
4 First Nations people have been so involved in the industry  
5 from its inception, they have been more affected by the  
6 changes which have occurred than many other groups in  
7 society.

8                   Corporate decision, made without heed  
9 to the needs of the north coast, have left unemployment  
10 in all industry sections in their wake. DFO and other  
11 governmental policies have increased the costs of working  
12 fishermen, decreased fishing opportunities and decreased  
13 the amount of fish that could be available for catching  
14 and processing.

15                   For the most part commercial fishing  
16 industry workers, regardless of race, have been united  
17 on the major issues. We all need to make a living in the  
18 industry and so we share common goals.

19                   The second part of this report is called  
20 division and discord.

21                   Workers in the commercial fishing  
22 industry are concerned with the reallocation of fish to  
23 band and tribal councils both through the negotiations

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 of claims settlements and the Aboriginal Fisheries  
2 Strategy. These occurrences are bringing disharmony and  
3 fear to the industry. Workers are concerned about their  
4 jobs. Most of the north coast industry workers are First  
5 Nations people, and they share the worry of an uncertain  
6 economic future.

7                   Shoreworkers and Tendermen: If there  
8 is one message which shoreworkers and tendermen have been  
9 receiving from the companies loud and clear is that in  
10 order for the corporations to be able to compete and  
11 maintain healthy profit levels is that they must reduce  
12 their costs.

13                   One of the costs the companies maintain  
14 is the cost of excess plant capacity. To this end, every  
15 10 to 15 years the companies go through a period of  
16 corporate consolidation and plant closures. The last  
17 major consolidation period was in the early 1980's when  
18 four out of eight fish plants in the Prince Rupert area  
19 closed down.

20                   Signs are showing that we may be just  
21 beginning another period of rationalization. B.C.  
22 Packers closed their Steveson cannery and is engaging in  
23 joint operations with Canadian Fishing Company. The

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Prince Rupert Co-op is looking for new corporate partners.

2                   The companies are presently investing  
3 heavily in new technology and work processes which will  
4 also reduce jobs in the name of efficiency and cost  
5 reduction.

6                   Shoreworkers and tendermen have fought  
7 hard to maintain their wages and working conditions. In  
8 the face of brutal concession demands in 1989, when the  
9 companies used GATT and the Free-Trade Agreement and tried  
10 to force shoreworkers to reduce their wages and working  
11 conditions closer to American levels, the shoreworkers  
12 went on strike for almost three weeks.

13                   North coast shoreworkers and tendermen  
14 lost the majority of their season. Many workers lost more  
15 than 75 per cent of their annual earnings in order to defend  
16 their contracts.

17                   I want to say here that the rejection  
18 votes were at least 95 per cent up to the day that the  
19 union finally had a settlement even though people were  
20 losing their seasons.

21                   The union workers were vindicated in  
22 their stand by the Industrial Inquiries Commissioners  
23 Report which studied the issues for a year after the strike

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 ended and said at that time there was no need to reduce  
2 shoreworkers' wages and working conditions -- although  
3 they said in the future, American competition may lead  
4 to that.

5                   However, the major companies and through  
6 them their employees, rely on large volumes of fish in  
7 order to be viable. The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy  
8 and claims settlements talk about reallocating fish from  
9 the existing commercial sector to new plants located in  
10 First Nation villages. Any large reallocation of fish  
11 away from the present fish plants to new plants will have  
12 devastating effects on the existing operations and the  
13 workers who have made their living from them.

14                   This will be reallocation of fish from  
15 one group of workers who have made their lives from the  
16 industry to another group of workers who have not been  
17 involved in the industry. It doesn't make much sense.  
18 If the major companies are consolidating because they say  
19 too much processing capacity already exists, it does not  
20 make sense to create more processing capacity.

21                   Seventy-five to eighty per cent of the  
22 shoreworkers and tendermen on the north coast are members  
23 of the First Nations. They work for good wages by any

May 26, 1993

37

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 standards. New companies generally do not pay union rates  
2 of pay and if this is the case then the reallocation of  
3 fish may bring less wealth to Native people as earnings  
4 per fish decline.

5                   Fishermen: Fishermen face a similar  
6 fear. They have also invested their lives in the industry.  
7 A reallocation of fish from existing commercial fishers  
8 to a new commercial fishery employing new commercial  
9 fishermen only succeeds in dislocation and unemployment.

10                   Many fishers, including many First  
11 Nations fishermen, have heavily invested in licences,  
12 boats, nets and gear. They have put much time in learning  
13 the skills which make them good fishermen. Most of these  
14 fishers have no skills that are readily transferable to  
15 another industry, but they are quite able to make a decent  
16 living from what they are able to do best, which is fish.

17                   A large part of the north coast community  
18 is built on the fishing industry. If commercial fishers  
19 are forced out of the industry through reallocation of  
20 fish, ancillary industries will also die. Much has been  
21 said about the value of fish; and it is true, the best  
22 quality salmon is caught in the salt water.

23                   The fish companies are very concerned

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that they process the highest quality of fish as it obtains  
2 the highest price in the market place. The high quality  
3 of fish brings about 96 million dollars into the Prince  
4 Rupert and area economy each year. North coast fishers,  
5 the majority of whom are Native, share in this value.

6                   Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy: The  
7 policy which is responsible for creating the greatest  
8 amount of division and discord in the industry is the  
9 Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy. It is the brainchild of  
10 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. It was first  
11 instituted in the summer of 1992 and the results were  
12 predictable. Due to many reasons, the major being the  
13 lack of enforcement, this new commercial fishery went out  
14 of control. Spawning stocks on the Skeena and Fraser were  
15 in some cases fished to the point of danger; no one really  
16 knows how much fish was taken and where it was sold.

17                   Although the AFS was supposed to be a  
18 communal band or tribal council fishery, in some cases  
19 individuals took advantage of the confusion and lack of  
20 enforcement and poached fish. Up river that meant  
21 catching and selling fish for individual profit. In the  
22 salt water, it meant that some fishermen caught fish during  
23 the commercial closed periods and sold it to the companies



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 as legitimate commercially caught fish.

2                   Industry workers were angered by the  
3 policy. Racist charges and counter-charges were made by  
4 both Native people and non-Native people. On the north  
5 coast much of the harmony which has existed within the  
6 commercial industry was destroyed.

7                   The whole process of the AFS could not  
8 have been better designed to create worse results. And  
9 the process which is taking place for the 1993 season is  
10 not any better. The AFS is being developed behind closed  
11 doors without any regard for commercial industry workers.  
12 The secrecy of the AFS negotiations and the fait accompli  
13 tenor of the deals has left no place for any legitimate  
14 discussions with the commercial sector.

15                   Commercial industry workers look upon  
16 the AFS as a straight forward reallocation of fish from  
17 the traditional commercial sector to a new commercial  
18 fishery. Fishermen fear that unscrupulous individuals  
19 will continue to take fish during commercially closed times  
20 and sell them as commercial fish, placing those who are  
21 not fishing during the commercial closings at a major  
22 economic disadvantage.

23                   The AFS is not tied into the claims

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 process. It exists in a machiavellian world of its own  
2 created by the federal government. It has not helped  
3 create understanding between First Nation peoples and  
4 other Canadians; in fact, it has driven divisions where  
5 few existed before. The process has no legitimacy, the  
6 results have questionable value -- indeed many would say  
7 a negative value. The federal government should drop the  
8 AFS and instead place the money and effort involved in  
9 the AFS into creating a real process for meaningful  
10 dialogue in the settlement of First Nations claims.

11                   Treaty Negotiations: The Nisga'a  
12 claims settlement is presently being negotiated. It too  
13 has had problems with the process, however in the case  
14 of the Nisga'a -- as different from the AFS -- there is  
15 a third party input into the negotiations and a dialogue  
16 is taking place.

17                   The commercial industry is represented  
18 in the third party process at both provincial and federal  
19 levels. However, again, the overriding secrecy and the  
20 lack of specifics have hampered understanding between  
21 those in the commercial fishery and the Nisga'a  
22 negotiators. The commercial fishing sector has little  
23 faith in the government's desire to adequately represent

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 the commercial sector at the bargaining table. It would  
2 prefer a process similar to that established in the Canada  
3 - U.S. Salmon Treaty negotiations where industry  
4 representatives sit at the table and observe the  
5 negotiations.

6                   The effects of a final settlement of the  
7 fish component will be far reaching. It will be hard for  
8 it not to set a precedent, whether it is a precedent in  
9 fact or not. This tends to make the Nisga'a treaty  
10 negotiations even more significant for all parties, and  
11 thus is being very closely monitored.

12                   Working Together: The UFAWU has always  
13 recognized the legitimacy and importance of a fair and  
14 equitable comprehensive settlement of First Nations  
15 Claims. We have felt that the dragging of feet by the  
16 federal and provincial governments in negotiating fair  
17 treaties has created just cause for frustration and anger  
18 by all First Nations peoples. However, any settlement  
19 must be seen as fair by all responsible parties and each  
20 side must feel that their concerns have been adequately  
21 addressed in the final treaty.

22                   Many groups within the commercial sector  
23 believe that because fish are a very complicated resource

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 to manage with different stocks of fish travelling together  
2 and being fished coastwide at different times and different  
3 places and by different gear types, that stock specific  
4 and area specific claims settlements are virtually  
5 impossible to negotiate without disrupting the entire  
6 commercial fishery.

7                   One of the alternatives proposed is the  
8 industrial model. The Union believes that this model  
9 could create the benefits that the First Nations want to  
10 achieve from the fishery while maintaining a healthy  
11 commercial fishing industry.

12                   Whatever the terms of the treaties are  
13 finally negotiated, it must be recognized that during the  
14 process of negotiations that different solutions will be  
15 proposed by the different parties and interest groups.  
16 It does no one any good to be inflexible and not to treat  
17 serious proposals to complicated problems with respect  
18 and consideration. The Union is committed to taking part  
19 in an open and respectful dialogue.

20                   Fish are a valuable and delicate  
21 resource. Fish is an important food source and treated  
22 in a proper manner and under good stewardship should  
23 continue to feed many nations. First Nations people and

May 26, 1993

43

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 other Canadians must together ensure that we take this  
2 task on seriously.

3 We must also work together to create a  
4 vibrant fishing industry which is measured by the health  
5 of the stocks and by the employment and economic returns  
6 it can create for our communities and the people in them.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
8 very much for your presentation.

9 I will begin by asking Commissioner  
10 Wilson for her comments or questions.

11 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** You  
12 referred in your presentation to many undesirable policies  
13 that have had an adverse impact on fishermen, including  
14 Native fishermen, and you've mentioned -- we, of course,  
15 are always looking for recommendations in terms of ultimate  
16 policies that would be fairer and would be more acceptable  
17 to all parties affected by them and I see you mention here  
18 that one of the alternatives to the AFS is the industrial  
19 model.

20 Could you give us an idea just what that  
21 is and how it works?

22 **JOY THORKELSON:** I don't think it has  
23 been proposed as an alternative to the AFS because the

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 AFS is a process that really is outside the basis of claims  
2 settlements. However, the industrial model is a model  
3 that says that we should not allocate certain stocks of  
4 fish to First Nations because of the difficulty of  
5 separating those stocks of fish and delivering them to  
6 the territories in which they are to be fished.

7                   What it is is to say that band councils  
8 and tribal council's peoples who are involved in this  
9 claims settlement should be guaranteed a space in the  
10 industry. They should become more involved in the  
11 industry. There have been a number of suggestions such  
12 as allocations of licenses to bands. There have been  
13 suggestions of ensuring that there is enough shoreworker  
14 participation. There have been suggestions of royalties  
15 being paid to bands for the use of fish.

16                   There have been all sorts of suggestions  
17 within that framework of an industrial policy, but what  
18 it is is not to take fish out of the existing commercial  
19 industry and change the face of the existing commercial  
20 industry. It is to involve more Native people in the  
21 commercial fishery and involve more First Nation people  
22 in the managing of the fishery, in the protection of the  
23 habitat, of the enhancement of salmon stocks, in the

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 scientific aspect of salmon research and those kinds of  
2 areas where employment would be within the industry, but  
3 not alienating fish from the commercial fishery which is  
4 a really complicated process.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I see that  
6 the Union supports this kind of model.

7 **JOY THORKELSON:** Yes.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm  
9 wondering is it documented anywhere?

10 **JOY THORKELSON:** It certainly has been  
11 discussed. It has not just been discussed within the  
12 Union, it has been discussed within many fishing industry  
13 organizations. I think that there is nothing really hard  
14 and fast. If anybody has made a written presentation,  
15 I haven't seen it.

16 I would think it would be more along the  
17 general lines that this is where perhaps they would be  
18 able to come to some kind of an agreement which would answer  
19 some of the concerns regarding the employment  
20 opportunities of First peoples involvement in the fishing  
21 industry and control or involvement of the management of  
22 the resource without displacing and creating a real problem  
23 for the whole coastal community.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   So, I think there is a lot of room to  
2 look at different specifics in that model, but it would  
3 appear to be two models, one of which is the industrial  
4 solution and the other of which is what I call an alienation  
5 solution which is alienating fish from the commercial  
6 industry to be targeted on by a band fishery or a tribal  
7 council fishery in a tribal council or band council area.

8                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** The reason  
9 I'm pursuing it is that in the course of our hearings we  
10 have, of course, heard about a lot of government policies  
11 in a whole variety of different areas that have had negative  
12 impact on Aboriginal people.

13                   The Commission, of course, has to say  
14 something about these policies and the preferable thing  
15 would be if we didn't just stop at criticizing the existing  
16 policies and pointing out their negative impact, but be  
17 able to go on and make constructive suggestions as to what  
18 kind of policies should replace those.

19                   That's what is prompting me to make the  
20 inquiries because in your brief, it comes through to me  
21 that quite clearly that there are many aspects of the  
22 existing government policies that the Union heartedly  
23 disapproves of and thinks are most unfair. Of course,



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 it would be helpful to us if we could come forward with  
2 constructive suggestions as to what would be better  
3 policies in this area which is why I was inquiring about  
4 this alternate policy that you've referred to.

5 I'd like to know whether it would be  
6 possible for us to have a more detailed description of  
7 what was involved in that so that we could feel confident  
8 saying that the Commission has heard of the negative impact  
9 of the existing strategy and it has been suggested that  
10 this would be preferable.

11 So, if there is anything that would shed  
12 more light on this suggested alternate strategy, it would  
13 be very helpful.

14 **JOY THORKELSON:** I believe Dennis Brown  
15 is going to be including that in his presentation.

16 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Great.  
17 That's good.

18 **JOY THORKELSON:** One of the things that  
19 I want to point out is that fish are not like trees. They  
20 migrate. They move. They come and in some years they  
21 will come in certain migratory routes and other years they  
22 will come in other migratory routes. The stocks return  
23 in different strengths and they can be late or they can

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 be early. They can be mingled with some stocks that they  
2 don't normally mingle with or with regular stocks that  
3 they come in with.

4                   What we believe needs to happen is there  
5 really needs to be a real open discussion on how we think  
6 the industry can be developed. There are many things that  
7 are wrong with the industry is developed at the moment  
8 that is bad for the Native people in the industry as well  
9 -- it's just bad for industry, commercial industry,  
10 workers, regardless of who you are.

11                   It's things like: Why is the government  
12 allowing fish to be exported from Canada when we need that  
13 for processing jobs here? Why is the government being  
14 allowed to privatize a resource by selling chunks of it  
15 called quotas to individuals who now sit back in armchairs  
16 and let other people go out and fish for that stock for  
17 a pittance?

18                   Those type of policies are devastating  
19 to workers in the industry. We need to have a look at  
20 processing what it means in the industry. Would an answer  
21 to employment in the industry be one plant that canned  
22 crabs in the north coast because maybe it's not  
23 economically viable for three or four canneries to do it

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 -- maybe it would be economically viable for one?

2                   We should be looking at trying to look  
3 at this industry as a whole from one end of the coast to  
4 the other end of the coast to see how it could provide  
5 the most employment while at the same time protecting the  
6 resource. But if we were to parcel off pieces of it then  
7 for the future we never will be able to look at the whole  
8 to decide how we can best maintain an economically viable  
9 fishing industry and utilize all of our resources in the  
10 processing.

11                   That just hasn't taken place. We have  
12 asked the provincial government to look at processing  
13 capacity on the coast. We have asked the federal  
14 government to do that as well. We have said that we really  
15 need to get a handle on what is going on. Why are these  
16 plants being closed? What is that going to mean to  
17 communities and what is it going to mean to the people  
18 who are employed?

19                   If B.C. Packers had chosen to shut down  
20 the Prince Rupert operation, it would have thrown 1500  
21 people out of work instead it chose to close down the  
22 Steveson operation -- it could have closed down either  
23 or, but that would have had tremendous and absolute

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 devastating effects on First Nations people here because  
2 they are employed 80 per cent of that cannery.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** So that  
4 is really your primary recommendation that some kind of  
5 an overview of the whole industry should be conducted in  
6 which all interested parties presumably would be involved  
7 and heard.

8 **JOY THORKELSON:** There was an inquiry  
9 that went around that was commissioned by a number of  
10 fishing industry organizations. It was called -- Don  
11 Cruickshank went around and made a Cruickshank Report and  
12 it was in response to what the federal government's vision  
13 is for the fishing industry which is privatization of a  
14 resource, of parcelling the coast up into tinier and tinier  
15 pieces and into passing off a lot of their costs on to  
16 commercial fishermen. At the same time, reducing the  
17 fleet while increasing the capital costs to those who are  
18 left in the industry. Reducing the fleet means reduced  
19 employment.

20 The Cruickshank Report -- Don  
21 Cruickshank went up and down the coast and heard  
22 submissions not from companies, but from working fishing  
23 industry workers, from fishermen from all sections

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 regardless of whether they belonged to an organization  
2 or didn't belong to an organization.

3                   He came up with a policy and program that  
4 has been looked at by the industry and although not  
5 everybody likes everything in it -- certainly, we don't  
6 like everything in it, it is something that is a much more  
7 worker-oriented blue print that we feel the federal  
8 government should take which would solve a lot of the  
9 problems that fishermen have in trying to exist in the  
10 industry. A lot of those problems are created not because  
11 of lack of fishing opportunities although that is a  
12 problem, but because of the licensing policies of the  
13 Department of Fisheries.

14                   Certainly, we don't need to go through  
15 another -- we go through these it seems like every five  
16 years the federal department goes through another set of  
17 -- dusts off its old report and puts it out in another  
18 form, whatever it wants to call it and sets out to implement  
19 more of the recommendations in that report under a  
20 different name.

21                   The Cruickshank Report is really the  
22 working people in the industries response to that and it  
23 deserves to be looked at and those proposals deserve some

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 serious thought for implementation purposes.

2                   On the other hand in the processing  
3 sector, certainly there is a monopoly in the industry.  
4 If you look at 80 per cent of herring and 75 per cent of  
5 salmon being processed by four major processors, two of  
6 which have now joined ranks in joint processing operations  
7 in Canada and in Alaska are practically married, if they  
8 are living common-law in Canada, they are married in  
9 Alaska. If you look at Canadian Fish and B.C. Packers  
10 together they must control well over 50 per cent of the  
11 production on the coast.

12                   We are dealing with four companies of  
13 such a tremendous size they have real impact, of course,  
14 on government policy. We need to have somebody that is  
15 going to have a look at the industry from a community and  
16 worker's perspective to see what the best return of the  
17 resource is going to be to the people that are in the  
18 communities.

19                   On the small coastal communities, a  
20 large number of the people who are employed in the industry  
21 are First Nations people, whether you look at Port Hardy,  
22 whether you look at Ukilit (PH), whether you look at Dafino  
23 (PH), whether you look at Port Alberny (PH) or whether

May 26, 1993

53

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 you look at Prince Rupert and Masset.

2 I believe we really need to get a handle  
3 -- and not just let capital make decisions for what the  
4 face of the industry is going to look at. I think somehow  
5 when we do that that First Nations have to be involved  
6 in that process as well -- involved heavily in that process  
7 to have a look at where we, as working people in this  
8 industry, want to make a living from this industry -- to  
9 see how we want to see it developed.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** When the  
11 brief is being submitted in Vancouver, is there a  
12 possibility that we might get copies of this Cruickshank  
13 Report?

14 **JOY THORKELSON:** I think I have a number  
15 in my office. I can actually bring down one.

16 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Could you?

17 **JOY THORKELSON:** Yes.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We would  
19 appreciate it.

20 Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
22 for your presentation it was particularly interesting.

23 For me the subject matter is largely new.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 It reminded me of a number of occasions where doing my  
2 work I would come across an entirely new situations  
3 including some entirely new terms that I have to come to  
4 grips with.

5 I remember one time reading a case, for  
6 example, about a situation -- I think it was a meat packing  
7 plant and there was an expression there. A worker had  
8 been injured and I think it was an action for compensation  
9 for damages for the injury and the expression was: The  
10 worker had been engaged in a process to pith and fiddle  
11 the beast. And I still have not found out what that means.

12 So, I wonder if you could tell me what  
13 is a tendermen?

14 **JOY THORKELSON:** Sorry.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I have a  
16 guess, but I wonder how close my guess might be to what  
17 it is.

18 **JOY THORKELSON:** There are vessels  
19 which are called collectors or packers and what they do  
20 is they are vessels that go out and collect fish from the  
21 fishing boats on the grounds and bring it into the fish  
22 plants. Some of those vessels used to be called tenders,  
23 as well. So, the workers who work on board those vessels



May 26, 1993

55

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 are called tendermen.

2 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That's  
3 pretty close to my guess.

4 Thank you very much for that.

5 On to more important matters, your  
6 presentation raises some very significant issues that have  
7 to be met and Madam Wilson has already discussed some of  
8 the issues that I also would have liked to raise.

9 I have particularly keen interest in the  
10 industrial model that you have referred to and I will be  
11 concerned to inquire into the view of First Nations about  
12 the model. At the moment I have no information about that.

13 I will be looking keenly to studying these issues and  
14 also, of course, following the presentation that will be  
15 made in Vancouver.

16 It seems to me at first blush that the  
17 circumstances that you present to us now raise some very  
18 central questions in a number of areas that touch our  
19 mandate -- some very difficult questions, for example about  
20 Aboriginal rights and the very nature of Aboriginal rights.

21 Also, it forces us to consider the  
22 function of Aboriginal peoples both as collectively as  
23 First Nations, as communities and as well, as individuals.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Not only that, with respect to their functions as  
2 individuals both within the Canadian community -- Canadian  
3 enterprise generally, if I can use that expression,  
4 distinct from functioning within their own community.  
5 I think you've detailed aspects of all these factors in  
6 your brief and I found it most interesting.

7 Of course, you have raised what appeared  
8 to me to be eternal dilemmas such as the tension between  
9 aspirations for efficiency and cost related to the  
10 conducting of commercial enterprises on the one hand, and  
11 job and home security on the other hand.

12 In that regard, I wonder if I might ask  
13 you a brief question which arises from your reference on  
14 the fourth page to a GATT policy. "Canadians no longer  
15 have the right to legislate that Canadian fish must be  
16 processed in Canada." You detail there the downward drive  
17 that results.

18 Are you aware of the federal governments  
19 reaction to the resulting dislocations? Is there a plan  
20 to deal with the economic dislocations, the loss of jobs  
21 that result from GATT rulings generally?

22 **JOY THORKELSON:** I get quite cynical  
23 when I start discussing what the government promised the

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 people of Canada under the Free-Trade Agreement that they  
2 would train all of those people who have lost jobs due  
3 to the Free-Trade Agreement.

4 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** There was  
5 such a promise.

6 **JOY THORKELSON:** There was such a  
7 promise made.

8 And, that this money would come out of  
9 general revenue. In fact, what did occur is that the money  
10 that came out for training programs was robbed from the  
11 Unemployment Insurance Program and the number of weeks  
12 that people needed to collect unemployment insurance  
13 increased and the number of weeks that they could collect  
14 unemployment insurance decreased. So, they robbed  
15 workers. And, which workers did they rob? They robbed  
16 the workers that are unemployed to pay for training  
17 programs.

18 In our industry I think I've been aware  
19 of four studies -- three or four studies on the need for  
20 training and retraining in our industry. I have not seen  
21 one government dollar come into the fishing industry to  
22 retrain our people -- not one.

23 I have seen a lot of government dollars

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 spent on taking people like myself and people like Jim  
2 Sinclair who works in our industry and other people in  
3 our industry to travel back to Ottawa for two-day seminars  
4 or travel to the eastcoast for two-day seminars or travel  
5 to Vancouver for two-day seminars to discuss the need for  
6 it, but I haven't seen any money come into our industry  
7 for any training programs whatsoever.

8 I think that the federal government has  
9 not the money nor the political inclination to deal with  
10 the effects of the Free-Trade Agreement and GATT in our  
11 industry or the Free-Trade Agreement in general.

12 If we lose our fish to Americans because  
13 they can process it at five dollars and fifty cents an  
14 hour or six dollars an hour American, what a travesty for  
15 this country. What a travesty for the workers in the  
16 industry that the only way that they could keep their fish  
17 would be to cut their wages to American levels so they  
18 could live in greater poverty in order to keep Canadian  
19 fish in Canada.

20 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
21 for your response to that. I must confess that the  
22 particular policies that you have referred to have been  
23 a source of total bewilderment to me.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   You've also, in your brief, emphasized  
2 to me the heavy onus that lies on us to examine these issues  
3 as they pertain to Aboriginal peoples, but I think you  
4 emphasized that many of these issues are in very complex  
5 ways interrelated to some other general fundamental  
6 issues. That is certainly a large challenge that we must  
7 tackle in the best way that we can. I assure you that  
8 I will do my part to tackle it in the best way that I can.

9                   I appreciate the comments that you made  
10 in regard to the response of the dislocations. We have  
11 a challenge before us.

12                   Again, I thank you very much for a most  
13 interesting and very helpful presentation and we will look  
14 forward to the other ones to be made by your Union at a  
15 later time.

16                   Thank you.

17                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

18                   **JOY THORKELSON:** Thank you very much.

19                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Our  
20 agenda provides for a short rest break here, so we will  
21 reconvene at about 11:20 then.

22                   Thank you.

23 --- Upon recessing at 11:10 a.m.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 --- Upon resuming at 11:20 a.m.

2 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Ladies  
3 and gentlemen. We're about resume the hearings of the  
4 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

5 I will now call on Mr. Frank Parnell to  
6 make his presentation on behalf of Tricorp, the Tribal  
7 Resources Investment Corporation.

8 Mr. Parnell, please.

9 Welcome and please proceed whenever  
10 you're ready.

11 **FRANK PARNELL, TRICORP:** I'm not too  
12 sure of the proper way to address you.

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We have  
14 been addressed in all kinds of ways -- some complimentary  
15 and some less so, but Commissioners is fine. It's mutual.

16 **FRANK PARNELL:** Commissioners, I would  
17 like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to address  
18 a very specific area that effects our people which is  
19 economic development.

20 I realize that when you talk about  
21 economic development you can't avoid to recognize that  
22 education, social development and cultural development  
23 are keys to the formula of succeeding in economic

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 development.

2                   So, I would like to state that I am going  
3 to make an assumption here that you've heard people that  
4 have made their positions and their opinions known to you  
5 that relate to our cultural development, social  
6 development and education. I don't want to give you the  
7 impression that when talking about economic development  
8 that I'm talking about it without any kind of occurrence  
9 to the other sectors that effect our people because overall  
10 we can't succeed in economic development without  
11 succeeding in the other areas that effect our people at  
12 the community level.

13                   With that, I also through my  
14 introductions I have to my right Cliff Anderson who works  
15 along with me. Cliff is an Tsimshian from Hartley Bay  
16 who lives in Prince Rupert.

17                   I'm from Masset from one of the Haida  
18 village on Haida Gwaii. My family moved to Prince Rupert  
19 around 1960 mainly because of economic reasons that there's  
20 any place in the involvement in our village in the fishing  
21 industry.

22                   I would like to give an overview of  
23 economic development in how it evolved in the northwest

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 here right from our involvement from the village that I'm  
2 from to where we are at today and then what I have is just  
3 basically four general recommendations that I would like  
4 to put on record.

5                   Our people in the northwest have always  
6 felt that self-reliance and working towards independence  
7 and self-government was a key before anybody recognized  
8 that this was the way that we should be going today. Our  
9 people in the '50s and the '60s have always strived for  
10 that.

11                   The village that I'm from that I spent  
12 the first 10 years of my life and my family are from, it  
13 is and was a fishing village. In the '40s and '50s our  
14 people were 95 per cent employed by the fishing industry.  
15 This percentage of employment was year-round employment.

16                   They would fish in the summertime and  
17 the majority of our people were involved in the fishery  
18 called the seine fishery which is the larger boats of the  
19 fishery that takes place on the coast here. Our village  
20 had a population of approximately 500 people and we had  
21 approximately 25 - 30 seine boats that were owned by our  
22 people in the '40s and '50s.

23                   Through the involvement of the

StenoTran



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 government and through the lack of education provided to  
2 our people the large fishing corporations moved into our  
3 community and provided financing to our people at very  
4 large interest rates. They provided the financing through  
5 what appeared to be gifts from the company during the winter  
6 months, then as they had our people more in debt they then  
7 proceeded to take over the boats that our people owned  
8 and our people built during the winter months which had  
9 provided employment.

10 Our village was self-sufficient in the  
11 '40s and had a couple of hotels. It had about four  
12 restaurants. It had a couple of rec centres for young  
13 people. Our people owned a Cooperative which was  
14 self-sufficient. They worked by themselves. Then  
15 through the involvement of the federal government and  
16 Indian Affairs in the '50s, the Department of Indian  
17 Affairs started to integrate into the economic development  
18 process that our people built up over the last 20 - 30  
19 years and the introduction of Indian agents appeared to  
20 our village.

21 They actually put in an Indian agent  
22 within our village to -- what they said was to actually  
23 run the affairs of our village in a village that

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 self-sufficient at the time. Within a 10 year period our  
2 people lost all their boats with the exception of two or  
3 three. The employment from what was 95 per cent was now  
4 reversed to unemployment of 90 - 95 per cent. Our people  
5 were put on welfare on what we called welfare slips at  
6 the time. They weren't allowed to handle money, they were  
7 given slips that would be turned over to the store.

8                   Through the involvement of Indian  
9 Affairs and the successful Cooperative that our people  
10 built up, again, the government through Indian Affairs  
11 felt that their involvement with this Cooperative would  
12 be beneficial to our people so they encouraged our people  
13 to hire outsiders to manage their cooperative. Up to 1955  
14 the Cooperative ran successfully, then outsiders start  
15 coming in and managing it. Within a five year period that  
16 Cooperative was transferred out of our reserve and into  
17 the white community that was next to our reserve, where  
18 they built a successful Coop which is still in existence  
19 today.

20                   I say this because I want to make it clear  
21 that economic development is not a new thing to our people.  
22 Our people have been involved in the fishing industry,  
23 have been successful fishermen and have been taken

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

65

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 advantage of by fishing corporation and even to the point  
2 where that the unions in this province felt that the control  
3 of the Aboriginal fisheries in the '40s and the '50s were  
4 threatened, therefore, they set up a process in which  
5 Native people and the Japanese people would be in conflict.

6                   It's very clearly written in history  
7 that the strategy that the unions used in this province  
8 to gain control over the fisheries. Our people suffered  
9 in the fishing industry. They pretty well lost control  
10 over whatever fisheries they had by the time the 1960's  
11 came along.

12                   It is recognized by some of our leaders  
13 in the northwest here that something had to be done about  
14 this -- that we had at the most five per cent of the fishery  
15 in the Province of British Columbia, on the coast, and  
16 that our leaders felt that we needed more involvement and  
17 we needed to get our people back into the fisheries.

18                   Therefore, they negotiated with the  
19 government, again, in the '60s to initiate a program the  
20 Indian Fishermen's Assistance Program. This program was  
21 operated by the Department of Indian Affairs. It is an  
22 equity program that provided fishermen an opportunity to  
23 purchase fishing boats on the coast and to get back into

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 the fishing industry. It was a repayment program that  
2 was set up. The first revolving fund that was set up,  
3 as far as I know, in this country.

4 This program proved very successful as  
5 far as the repayment and the revolving fund was building  
6 itself up. Then for no reason given at the end of the  
7 1960's the federal government decided to cancel this  
8 program.

9 Our feeling is that if the federal  
10 government kept this program in tact as a revolving fund,  
11 it would be a program that would be operating on its own  
12 and be a vital venture today. It increased some of our  
13 people's involvement in fisheries, but it wasn't around  
14 long enough to involve all of our people.

15 In the 1970's, again our people in the  
16 northcoast looked at ways that we could be self-sufficient.

17 There was also a new initiative by the Department of Indian  
18 Affairs that they felt that our communities should start  
19 looking more at community economic development planning.

20 So, they provided money to the communities to set up  
21 community economic development committees and also, to  
22 provide some money for feasibility studies, but there was  
23 no money provided for actual funding of any kind of business

May 26, 1993

67

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 or any kind of ventures.

2                   So, what we had for about a five year  
3 period is that we had money for our bands to set up  
4 committees and to basically put ideas down on paper and  
5 nothing happened after that. There were just no results  
6 out of that. A lot of reports were produced and were sent  
7 into the Indian Affairs office in Prince Rupert and in  
8 Vancouver -- no results.

9                   The economic development program in the  
10 '70s was controlled by the Department of Indian Affairs  
11 and there was no evidence that there was any kind of  
12 successful initiatives that were completed through the  
13 control of this program under the Department of Indian  
14 Affairs. They did not take into consideration the needs  
15 of the communities. They had the typical Indian agents  
16 attitude of going into a community and saying, "This is  
17 what's good for you."

18                   They actually went into some of our  
19 communities on the coast and attempted to turn them into  
20 farming communities. That's one of the biggest insults  
21 to our people on the coast. Our people on the coast are  
22 fishermen and that's where we have our income from and  
23 that's where our comfort zone is. Our people were insulted

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 when they wanted to turn them into farmers -- nothing  
2 against farmers.

3                   Again, our people looked at ways of  
4 becoming self-reliant. In the '70s, all our communities  
5 in the north coast got together and looked at a way that  
6 we could best utilize some of the money that was around  
7 through the federal government and initiated a large  
8 project called the Port Simpson Cannery Project. The idea  
9 behind that was that we would gain control over our fishery  
10 through establishing a fishing fleet and also through  
11 establishing a processing plant that would be controlled  
12 by our people in the north coast.

13                   Although it didn't work at the time, I  
14 feel it was not a failure. It was a way in which our people  
15 showed that we wanted to be self-reliant and we would do  
16 anything that we can to achieve that.

17                   In the 1980's we looked at economic  
18 development from a different point of view. We looked  
19 at what happened with economic development under the  
20 control of the Department of Indian Affairs in the '70s  
21 and decided that the only way that economic development  
22 can work in our areas was that we gain control over the  
23 program that was operated by the Department of Indian

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Affairs.

2                   So, through a negotiation process in  
3 1980 and 1981, we arrived at an arrangement with the  
4 Department of Indian Affairs to control the economic  
5 development program. The seven communities of the north  
6 coast decided to pool their money rather than have their  
7 money operate as individuals pools for each community.  
8 Through this pooling we established an equity fund of  
9 \$500,000 a year that we made available to individuals and  
10 to band community programs, economic development programs.

11                   We felt that through our involvement and  
12 through recognizing the needs of our communities that we  
13 were now beginning to see some success with some of the  
14 businesses that were established through our involvement,  
15 but most importantly out of the exercise is that our people  
16 were in control and our people were making decisions in  
17 relationship to any kind of business development that was  
18 occurring at our community level.

19                   In 1984, through the North Coast Tribal  
20 Council, we established a development corporation called  
21 the North Coast Economic Development Corporation under  
22 the business name of Tillicum Business Development.  
23 Through negotiating through its Canada Employment

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Commission, we received approval to set up this corporation  
2 and financing for five years.

3 To date, we are operating on our seventh  
4 year now and we have built up a fund of about \$1,500,000.

5 With the model that we have established with Tillicum  
6 Business Development we then started discussions with the  
7 Nisga'a Tribal Council, the Tsimshian villages and the  
8 Council of Haida Nation and looked at a larger based  
9 corporation through which we had two years of discussions  
10 between the three tribal groups to establish some  
11 parameters in which we could operate.

12 We had to deal with conditions from the  
13 federal government which was very difficult to deal with.

14 I will give you one example and it's still an example  
15 of the government interfering with how we want to run our  
16 affairs.

17 Our people in the north coast are  
18 matrilineal people. We recognize that the women in our  
19 society are a key part of our society. That they are the  
20 leaders of our communities as far as our society is  
21 concerned. When negotiating with the federal government  
22 to set up a Tribal Resources Investment Corporation which  
23 comes under the Aboriginal Capital Corporation Program.

StenoTran



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 The federal government insisted that we have as part of  
2 our mandate women to be recognized as a special interest  
3 group within Tricorp.

4 It is very difficult for our political  
5 leaders to handle that condition because we already  
6 recognize the importance of women within our society.  
7 They have a leadership role within our society and we felt  
8 that by recognizing that condition that the federal  
9 government was putting forward to us, we were degrading  
10 our women in our society -- that we were putting them down  
11 at a lower level than men within our society and our society  
12 doesn't allow that to take place.

13 So, there was a very difficult decision  
14 that our leaders had to make when negotiating the  
15 conditions of establishing this corporation under the  
16 federal government.

17 We put it in there for one reason and  
18 that was to access the funding so that we could set up  
19 this corporation. We felt we could establish our own  
20 criteria when we gained total control over it while making  
21 it clear amongst ourselves -- between the three tribal  
22 nations -- that though this condition was there that we  
23 were only doing it for the purpose of the agreement between

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Tricorp and the federal government and it was not going  
2 to effect how we recognize women within our societies.

3           So, we have always been hindered by the  
4 conditions that the federal government has put forward  
5 to us when dealing with economic development. Economic  
6 development is a key area for our people. We have been  
7 left out of the economic development and the economy of  
8 northwest in putting together our plan, we felt that the  
9 least that we needed for our people to be able to build  
10 themselves up so that they're parallel and even with the  
11 other people of the northwest that we required a  
12 capitalization of \$30 million.

13           The federal government, in our opinion,  
14 when we put together our proposal and we sat down with  
15 them, felt that they didn't even take into consideration  
16 our proposal. They took a position that they had \$4  
17 million available for us and that was all they would give  
18 us. It didn't matter what kind of justification that we  
19 put forward.

20           We have a lot of shortfalls that have  
21 occurred in developing the economies of our communities  
22 and in developing our economies for our tribal nations.  
23 We have a long way to go. We have our people who are

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 starving within the fishery industry. They are, again,  
2 being pushed out through the pressures that are being put  
3 on the federal government.

4                   We have tourism that is taking place,  
5 and again our people are being pushed aside because of  
6 lack of capitalization. So, we need a lot of work in that  
7 area.

8                   Although we have established this  
9 organization, Tribal Resources Investment Corporation,  
10 under the federal program called the Aboriginal Capital  
11 Corporation Program, it was established as a result of  
12 our people not having the access to the commercial lending  
13 institutions.

14                   The government felt that there needed  
15 to be some way in which our people could borrow money to  
16 set up small businesses. In doing so, because our people  
17 are unable to access commercial lending institutions  
18 through the establishment of the Aboriginal Capital  
19 Corporations are people are being punished for not having  
20 been able to access commercial lending institutions.

21                   We are required through our conditions  
22 that we have with the federal government to lend out money  
23 at a higher interest rate than the commercial lending

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 institutions. Today we are lending out probably at about  
2 five per cent higher than the lending institutions would  
3 lend to any normal individual.

4                   Therefore, for getting this special  
5 program called Tribal Resources Investment Corporation  
6 which is supposed to help our people out, we are in effect  
7 putting them at a disadvantage when establishing  
8 businesses. This disadvantage is causing a lot of failure  
9 and a lot of frustration amongst our people.

10                   If the government is truly interested  
11 in making our people viable and making our people  
12 self-reliant, they would look at the problems that are  
13 occurring between our communities and commercial lenders  
14 or establishing equivalent organizations that can offer  
15 equivalent services as far as lending to establish small  
16 businesses. By setting up an institution such as Tricorp,  
17 where we have to lend five per cent above commercial lenders  
18 it's not helping our people at all.

19                   I feel that it's a very important factor  
20 that has to be remembered and put forward to the people  
21 that are in power of this program. Even though we are  
22 lending to a lot of our people, they are put under a lot  
23 more pressure than the normal citizens of this province.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   The attitude of the business community  
2 in the northwest, and particularly, in Prince Rupert is  
3 that our people get into business because they receive  
4 grants. That is not so.

5                   Although there is money around that our  
6 people have access to, it eliminates our people from having  
7 any access to any provincial funding once they receive  
8 any kind of contribution from the federal government.  
9 Therefore, any kind of gain that we have put forward in  
10 relationship to the CAGE program or in relationship to  
11 Tricorp is neutralized by the provincial government coming  
12 out with low interest loans out to the regular business  
13 communities.

14                   We have not gained anything. We are  
15 still losing so far as participating in the development  
16 of our economies. We are still having the outsiders  
17 providing services to our communities. We are still  
18 having our fishermen having to sell their fish to the large  
19 corporations.

20                   Until the government recognizes that we  
21 need that extra push and by having that extra push doesn't  
22 mean that you make money available at a higher interest  
23 rate and by providing a contribution to individuals or

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 to communities, but not having it available were that in  
2 one year after applying for that contribution, you are  
3 still no further ahead than the first month that you  
4 applied. In the meantime, somebody else has established  
5 that business.

6 Economic development in the northwest  
7 has not been very good to us. It hasn't been very good  
8 because the federal government has not looked at economic  
9 development from a realistic point of view. The realistic  
10 point of view of economic development to us is providing  
11 that extra push so our people can take advantage of money  
12 that's available and can take advantage of increasing their  
13 capacity to producing a fishery industry, a tourism  
14 industry and a service industry.

15 In this community alone we have 30 to  
16 40 per cent Native population and there are not enough  
17 of our Native people that are involved in the business  
18 community. We are increasing it slowly, but we should  
19 be moving a lot quicker.

20 So, as far as economic development is  
21 concerned we need a structure from the federal government  
22 that can help our people move ahead. The only way that  
23 we can do that is that it comes under Native control right

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 from the national level to the provincial and the regional  
2 level. If there is no recognition that our people need  
3 this extra push by the federal government and by the  
4 provincial government, we are going to be no further ahead  
5 10 years from now.

6                   The only advantage that I see with  
7 Tricorp is that we are establishing an institution that  
8 can be used as a model when land claims is settled. When  
9 our people negotiate at the table and they come to some  
10 kind of settlement that our people will have a model in  
11 which to use to establish their own financial institutions.

12       That is one of the few advantages that we have in regards  
13 to Tricorp.

14                   Our government, a couple of years ago,  
15 through the pressures of our Native people and recognizing  
16 from the pressures of our Native people that our  
17 communities were fishing communities and our communities  
18 live and die through the fishing community. There is a  
19 fishery that takes place annually here in the north coast  
20 and on the B.C. coast referred to as the roe on kelp herring  
21 industry.

22                   Through the pressures of some of our  
23 communities we have an agreement through the Department

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 of Fisheries to allocate a licence to our people and three  
2 of our villages in the north coast benefitted from that  
3 licence at least as an allocation of receiving the licence.

4 But as usual the federal government had conditions  
5 attached to it. The roe on kelp herring industry has the  
6 possibilities of a band developing an equity base where  
7 they could be build economic development and move into  
8 other areas such as community development and social,  
9 education and cultural.

10 It is an opportunity for our people to  
11 have an economic base in which we can build these things.

12 Therefore, they went after it. But what did the federal  
13 government do in allocating these licences? They put in  
14 a condition that each year these licences had to lease  
15 what is known as Herring Licences which is a fishery licence  
16 that is owned by individuals.

17 The conditions on these licences was  
18 that they had to be Native owned licences and they had  
19 to be either leased or purchased by our fishermen.  
20 Therefore producing possibly eight positions in the roe  
21 on kelp licence, which are taking away six licences that  
22 employed six to eight people.

23 The other factor is that these people



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that received the licences started off at a disadvantage.  
2 Each licence that they leased was going to cost them  
3 \$12,000 - \$15,000 a year and there were six licences that  
4 they had to lease in order for them to go out. If they  
5 wanted to purchase the licences which they could, it was  
6 going to cost them \$65,000 - \$85,000 each to purchase.

7                   You can see there is a disadvantage to  
8 these people who received these licences as compared to  
9 the people that hold the licences prior to the communities  
10 that receive these. Prior to the allocation of these  
11 licences approximately 15 years ago the roe on kelp  
12 licences were issued out to some community individuals  
13 for nothing. There were no conditions attached to it.

14                   Our communities felt that they needed  
15 this economic base. It was taken away from them by the  
16 condition of having to pay for these licences through a  
17 lease on an annual basis or to purchase them from \$65,000  
18 - \$85,000 each. It was taken away from them.

19                   Again, our people were neutralized as  
20 far as increasing the economic base for their communities.

21                   I stress to the Commission that  
22 something needs to be done about these licences. It is  
23 very unfair to these villages that want to build an economic

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 base and that appears that they were given an opportunity  
2 and it was taken away by these conditions that were put  
3 forward to them.

4 Two of our villages this year were unable  
5 to access the licenses required so that they could go out  
6 and roe on kelp because they couldn't afford it. One of  
7 our other villages is in debt from last year and is in  
8 more debt this year.

9 So, what is taking place again is  
10 something that is unfair to our people. We have an  
11 opportunity to give our communities an economic base  
12 through this one area of a fishery.

13 I want to talk a bit about Prince Rupert.  
14 Because we have four or five of our communities that are  
15 referred to as satellite communities of Prince Rupert,  
16 Native communities, they come into Prince Rupert and they  
17 do all their spending in Prince Rupert. They do all their  
18 purchasing for their houses, all their purchasing for their  
19 furniture, all their groceries in the City of Prince  
20 Rupert. What has the City of Prince Rupert done for our  
21 communities? They have done nothing.

22 As a matter of fact, our people when  
23 buying furniture have to go down to an open dock which

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 is improperly structured, which is unsafe, and they have  
2 to pile their furniture out in the open -- if it's raining  
3 or snowing there is nothing to cover them up. You would  
4 think the community of Prince Rupert would appreciate that  
5 our communities do their shopping in their community, but  
6 they haven't shown the appreciation.

7                   This is the type of treatment that our  
8 people receive in Prince Rupert. All our communities on  
9 the coast who are satellite communities of Prince Rupert  
10 are referred to also as fly-in or boat transportation  
11 communities.

12                   In the early 1970's, up to the 1970's,  
13 the federal government had a freighting system in place  
14 that stopped in our communities and provided a shipping  
15 arrangement for our communities so that they were able  
16 to receive their groceries and any other materials that  
17 they would require for building homes or any other  
18 equipment that they required.

19                   That was taken away in the late '70s and  
20 replaced by B.C. Ferries. My understanding is that the  
21 subsidy that is provided to the B.C. Ferry System as a  
22 result of this service that is provided on the north coast  
23 -- they have an access of about \$7 million a year that

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 is relocated and used for the ferry service in the south  
2 coast. Yet, two of our communities on the coast, Kitkatla  
3 and Hartley Bay, are not connected by any ferry service  
4 by the provincial government.

5                   These people have to provide their own  
6 services to get back and forth by boat or they have to  
7 pay high prices to catch the seaplanes that travel back  
8 and forth. Even the seaplane service has deteriorated  
9 this past year. So, we seem to be going backwards as far  
10 as our people are concerned in the area.

11                   As you know transportation is a key part  
12 of economic development. Purchasing power is a key part  
13 of economic development. Our money is filtering out to  
14 the communities such as Prince Rupert and nothing is given  
15 back. That has to change. I hope that through this  
16 process that is brought forward and is recognized and  
17 pressure is put on the different governments, the local  
18 government in Prince Rupert, that they should recognize  
19 that our people are spending money in their community.

20                   I would like to say in summary, we've  
21 had a long history as far as working towards self-reliance,  
22 to be self-sufficient. We saw our communities, and the  
23 community that I'm from, go from a community that was

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 prosperous to a community that is a welfare state  
2 community. It's very frustrating to see that.

3 I see our communities in the north coast  
4 fighting for whatever they can to improve the situations  
5 in their communities, picking up leftovers from the federal  
6 government, receiving nothing from the provincial  
7 government because we are not recognized as citizens of  
8 British Columbia because our people live on reserves.  
9 So, we are in a sorry state right now. We need some changes  
10 to occur fairly soon. Our people are very frustrated.

11 This frustration is going to come out  
12 more and more. We have more younger people that are  
13 becoming more educated and more of them want to move back  
14 to our communities, but because of economic reasons are  
15 unable to. If that doesn't change they are going to be  
16 taking positions in regards to making changes at our  
17 community level and at the regional, provincial and federal  
18 level.

19 I would like to say again, basically,  
20 these were my remarks and I touched on the recommendations  
21 that I said I would touch on. So, basically, that's all  
22 I have to say for now.

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** It's

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 evident that you have support there.

2                   Is Mr. Anderson going to make a  
3 presentation now before we offer to make comments or ask  
4 questions?

5                   **FRANK PARNELL:** Mr. Anderson is here to  
6 help me respond to any questions that you have.

7                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In that  
8 case I will ask Commissioner Wilson if she has comments  
9 or questions.

10                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
11 for a very interesting presentation on what has happened  
12 to individual communities over the years and how they have  
13 moved from self-reliance to, as you say, a welfare state  
14 situation due to very bad government policies that have  
15 created problems for them.

16                   I must confess I didn't quite follow or  
17 understand the point you were making about the conditions  
18 attached to the allocation of licenses that have the effect  
19 of frustrating development. I'm wondering if you could  
20 explain that to me. I just didn't quite grasp what the  
21 problem was there.

22                   Could you elaborate on that? You  
23 mentioned these roe on kelp licenses and the conditions

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 that were attached to them. Perhaps you could explain  
2 that more fully to us.

3 **FRANK PARNELL:** Two or three years ago  
4 the Department of Fisheries allocated approximately 10  
5 roe on kelp licenses on the B.C. coast and three of them  
6 came in to our area, which was Skidegate, Hartley Bay and  
7 Metlakatla.

8 They attached a condition that they had  
9 to utilize six existing herring licenses and these licenses  
10 are referred to here as herring gillnet licenses. They  
11 belong to individuals and each year they go out on herring  
12 and they guillnet herring. The roe on kelp is done through  
13 what is referred to as a pond fishery. They set up a pond  
14 and capture the herring and as the herring is put into  
15 this little pond that is set up and the herring spawns  
16 in their own kelp.

17 Why it is a disadvantage is because there  
18 are other roe on kelp licenses that exist that were given  
19 out to individuals and to other communities, but many to  
20 individuals -- this happened about 15 years ago -- and  
21 were given to them for nothing.

22 The licenses which were provided to the  
23 villages were provided for, I believe, economic reasons

May 26, 1993

86

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 to improve the economy of our villages, but by having these  
2 conditions where each roe on kelp licence holder would  
3 have to lease six licenses which is going to cost them  
4 \$12,000 - \$16,000 a year -- at the high point of \$16,000  
5 you're looking at approximately \$350,000 that they are  
6 in debt before they start. Right away they are at a  
7 disadvantage compared to the other fishery.

8                   They have also eliminated six people out  
9 of the herring guillnet licence fishery. So, it has not  
10 only cost them \$350,000 -- they have eliminated six  
11 guillnet licenses.

12                   **CLIFF ANDERSON, TRICORP:** That \$350,000  
13 is what it would cost to purchase if they all came to Tricorp  
14 to purchase these licenses, we are looking at over a million  
15 dollars for finance pieces of paper which is a good portion  
16 of our portfolio anyway.

17                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I wonder  
18 if I might just intervene to get a further clarification  
19 on this -- from someone who comes a long way from the coast.  
20 Can you explain a bit more about this roe on kelp? What  
21 is that?

22                   **FRANK PARNELL:** It's the herring eggs  
23 -- they catch the fish live. They put them in the pond.



May 26, 1993

87

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 Kelp is just seaweed. The herring spawn in the kelp and  
2 they sell that basically to the Japanese.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** They sell  
4 weeds with eggs on them.

5 **FRANK PARNELL:** Yes.

6 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I see,  
7 okay.

8 **FRANK PARNELL:** It's a delicacy in  
9 Japan.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** You  
11 mentioned that people from all these villages do their  
12 shopping in Prince Rupert and that Prince Rupert didn't  
13 do anything for Native people in return.

14 I'm wondering is there any Native  
15 representation on the Municipal Council of Prince Rupert?  
16 Or any opportunity for any Native people to become  
17 involved in the running of the community?

18 **FRANK PARNELL:** I will answer, not yet.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Not yet.

20 **FRANK PARNELL:** We have an election  
21 coming up in November.

22 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** So, there  
23 are Native people running or a Native person running.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **FRANK PARNELL:** We are hoping that we  
2 have at least one person that will be running.

3                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Good.  
4 Great.

5                   My other question had to do with this  
6 absence of any ferry service connecting two of the Native  
7 communities. Has anybody tried to have the province  
8 remedy that? What, if anything, has been done to date  
9 to try to get these communities connected up to the ferry  
10 service?

11                   **FRANK PARNELL:** There has been a number  
12 of meetings in the past with the old government and also  
13 recently with the new government to attempt to establish  
14 some type of ferry service to Kitkatla and to Hartley Bay,  
15 but as far as I know they say they are looking at it  
16 favourably, but there is no indication that anything is  
17 going to be done.

18                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** They give  
19 any reason?

20                   **CLIFF ANDERSON:** We met with them last  
21 fall with a number of issues and ferries was one of them.  
22 Their basic response to just about everything was, "We  
23 will consider it, but we are in financial tough times right

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 now." So, basically it's financial.

2 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
4 very much.

5 I'm learning a lot about the industries  
6 in the area and I thank you for your presentation which  
7 I thought was very informative for me. You certainly  
8 exposed the complexity of these issues that you are  
9 involved with and revealed some quite shocking issues.

10 We have heard a lot around the country  
11 about the administration of federal policy in the past  
12 and in more recent times and it seems that many people  
13 are very much concerned about institutions which involve  
14 jobs for public officials whose jobs depend on the  
15 existence and continuing existence of misery and poverty  
16 and I think it's one of the complexities that we have to  
17 look at.

18 I think you have given us some other  
19 examples here today to add to the ones that we've already  
20 heard about.

21 I mention for the purposes of drawing  
22 the attention of our staff here these particular issues  
23 that you have raised with us, that is the requirements

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that the federal government program under the Aboriginal  
2 Capital Development Corporation Program or something like  
3 it and the condition respecting women that you described  
4 to us which requires examination.

5                   Also, the 1960's policy that you  
6 referred to as a revolving fund and the history behind  
7 that. As well as the third issue, that of the particular  
8 requirements of the Aboriginal Capital Development fund  
9 which requires you, as you say, to charge higher interest  
10 rates thereby having the effect of setting you up to fail  
11 in that you have a built in disadvantage in relation to  
12 other similar enterprises in the area.

13                   Of course, there is the other matter of  
14 the licensing system which you have taken care to explain  
15 to us.

16                   These matters must be looked into.  
17 There is one point I would like to ask you about. You  
18 related to us the history of your communities involvement  
19 in economic development in the fishing industry, you refer  
20 to this model in the 1960's -- I understood you to describe  
21 it as a revolving fund and I didn't understand that well,  
22 but that's fine. Then you referred to your community  
23 wanting control in the 1980's and now in the 1990's.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   My question is this: I wonder if you  
2 could clarify for me the attitude of your community now  
3 -- assuming that you have the kind of control that you  
4 would like to have and maybe that is the wrong assumption  
5 and I would like you to explain that. Is it of any benefit  
6 for your community to go back to this fund of the 1960's  
7 that you described as very successful? That is, if it  
8 was very successful in the 1960's could it similarly be  
9 very successful in the 1990's or is that possibility now  
10 gone for whatever reason.

11                   So, the question is: Now that you have  
12 control -- and that's an assumption that you may like to  
13 reject -- what is your position with respect to the formerly  
14 successful scheme of the '60s? That's my question.

15                   **FRANK PARNELL:** The economic  
16 development organizations that we've established -- at  
17 least the two main ones which are Tricorp and Tillicum  
18 Business Development, has been modeled after this  
19 revolving fund program. So, what we've basically done  
20 is established our own revolving fund. We've taken that  
21 and saw it as a model that we get to use as far as developing  
22 our own institutions.

23                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 explains that very well. Thank you for that, I was missing  
2 that connection and trying to follow the story of something  
3 that was obviously complex and new to me.

4 I thank you also for bringing to our  
5 attention the circumstances of the neighbouring First  
6 Nations spending their money in the City of Prince Rupert  
7 and the other conditions that you have brought to our  
8 attention.

9 We have heard about similar issues and  
10 it certainly raises the question: What of the relations  
11 between municipal governments and Aboriginal people  
12 generally?

13 I think you are telling us here that one  
14 mechanism that's being contemplated is having people run  
15 for election and we've seen that happen in some municipal  
16 governments across the country, but we heard this morning  
17 from the City of Prince Rupert that people have an interest  
18 and apparently legitimate interest in the land question.

19 They do say there goes our equity and honour in dealing  
20 with these issues and it seems that you're saying from  
21 your side that you have a similar interest in the activities  
22 of the City because of the fact that you are active  
23 participants and spending money here.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   It seems that there should be some  
2 prospects for getting together if you have the same goal  
3 of resolving these issues with equity and honour.

4                   Am I understanding correctly that there  
5 are now no regular institutions whereby First Nations  
6 communities in the area have any form of relations with  
7 the City Government? That is are there regular or  
8 occasional meetings between your organizations and the  
9 City Council, for example, or other municipal  
10 organizations?

11                   **FRANK PARNELL:** Not that I know of.

12                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Again,  
13 thank you very much for your presentation.

14                   **FRANK PARNELL:** Thank you.

15                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** We have  
16 now come to the point on the agenda which reads lunch break.  
17 So, we are scheduled to resume here at 1:30 this afternoon  
18 when we will hear from the Northwest Urban Aboriginal  
19 Society of Prince Rupert.

20                   Thank you very much -- until 1:30 then.

21 --- Upon recessing at 12:15 p.m.

22 --- Upon resuming at 1:35 p.m.

23                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Ladies

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 and gentlemen, we will be resuming this afternoon's session  
2 of the hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal  
3 Peoples in a moment.

4 Good afternoon. I now call on the  
5 representatives of the Northwest Urban Aboriginal Society  
6 of Prince Rupert. Vern Brown and Fred Anderson, if you  
7 would like to come forward to make your presentation,  
8 please.

9 I will revise that to Vern Brown, Fred  
10 Anderson and friends.

11 Welcome, gentlemen. Whenever you're  
12 ready to go. If you would like to at some time early on  
13 introduce yourselves for the record.

14 Please proceed whenever you're good and  
15 ready.

16 Thank you.

17 **VERN BROWN, NORTHWEST URBAN ABORIGINAL**  
18 **SOCIETY OF PRINCE RUPERT:** Thank you very much.

19 I'm Vern Brown, President of the Prince  
20 Rupert Local of the Council of Haida Nations. To my right  
21 is the Vice-President of the Nisga'a Tribal Council of  
22 the Prince Rupert area; and to his right is Bill Wright,  
23 the Vice-President of the Prince Rupert Council of Haida



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Nations Local; and to my left is Fred Anderson, he is the  
2 Executive Director of the Prince Rupert Friendship Centre.

3 To begin with I would like to just voice  
4 a concern over the time that we were given to prepare for  
5 this and also other matters. We were sort of informed  
6 about five weeks ago that this Commission was coming to  
7 town to hear the feelings of Aboriginal peoples in urban  
8 areas. Therefore, we do not believe that we had enough  
9 time to properly put together a full report for you. We  
10 are just etching on parts of what we think are very  
11 important for the urban peoples of Prince Rupert.

12 I also see here a piece of paper that  
13 was just given to me as we came in the door that it says  
14 here, "The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was  
15 established to encourage access and participation in the  
16 Commission's public review process. This program provides  
17 financial assistance to eligible organizations so that  
18 they can prepare for and participate effectively in the  
19 Commission's public hearings and consultations."

20 To start with we were not given  
21 sufficient time. We had no idea that we also were eligible  
22 for funding to have people put together a proper  
23 presentation. As all of this here on this panel are

May 26, 1993

96

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 working men, working people in this community, we could  
2 not put our full time towards developing this presentation.

3 I just wanted to make that clear for the  
4 record.

5 You have a copy of our summary. Would  
6 you wish me to read it out or are we just going to go with  
7 that and I can speak on whichever subject we wish to deal  
8 with first.

9 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Right now  
10 I'm just trying to find the copy of your presentation.  
11 How would we identify it?

12 **VERN BROWN:** It is Northwest Urban  
13 Aboriginal Society of Prince Rupert.

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We don't  
15 have that.

16 **VERN BROWN:** You don't have it. I do  
17 believe I have a spare copy here somewhere.

18 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes, we  
19 have located what appears to be a summary of your paper.

20

21 **VERN BROWN:** Yes.

22 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** We invite  
23 you to take the time you need to make your presentation.

May 26, 1993

97

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1

2

**VERN BROWN:** Thank you.

3

4 I think what our main concern here is  
5 -- if you just read the first page that just gives an outline  
6 of what we're going to speak about.

7

8 I think what we'll do is go directly to  
9 page 2 and deal with the educational and cultural ---

10

11 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** If I may  
12 intervene just to let you know what it is that we have  
13 before us. What we have is apparently a one-page summary.

14 It's fine. Just so you know that we don't have the exact  
15 words that you might have before you. We have what appears  
16 to be a one-page summary. I just wanted to let you know  
17 that to assist you in deciding how you want to make your  
18 presentation.

19

20 **VERN BROWN:** So, you just have the first  
21 page from A to I.

22

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** No, it  
appears to be a summary that someone wrote.

24

**VERN BROWN:** Okay, I have it here.

25

Thank you.

26

27 Well, we will just give you a little bit  
28 of statistics here. We have approximately 7,000 - 8,000

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 urban Aboriginals living in Prince Rupert which  
2 constitutes approximately 40 - 45 per cent of the  
3 population of Prince Rupert. In the local schools, we  
4 have approximately 1300 students which constitutes 38 per  
5 cent of all students in Prince Rupert -- are of Aboriginal  
6 decent.

7                   So, we will begin with the educational  
8 portion which I will try and enlighten you on some of the  
9 facts and what we would like to see as recommendations  
10 and/or solutions.

11                   In Prince Rupert, there are 230 teachers  
12 and 20 administrators. Of that, Aboriginal peoples are  
13 represented by five school teachers of which one is on  
14 loan to the Northcoast Tribal Council which represents  
15 less than two per cent of the total teachers in the Town  
16 of Prince Rupert.

17                   We have two counsellors to facilitate  
18 all of these students. One being in the Prince Rupert  
19 secondary school and one being in Charles Hayes High  
20 School. We have no counsellors for students from primary  
21 to grade 10.

22                   We have support staff of six, possibly  
23 nine, of Aboriginal decent working in 11 schools in Prince

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Rupert. There is an alternate school here -- I just don't  
2 have the numbers in front of me of how many are attending  
3 the alternate school, but according to my fact findings,  
4 99 per cent of the students in alternate schools are of  
5 Aboriginal decent. There is not one support worker and  
6 there is not one teacher at this alternate school. The  
7 district staff of 52 have one First Nations Family Support  
8 worker for all of Prince Rupert.

9 So, you can see from these few little  
10 stats that I have brought forward to you that we have a  
11 very very large shortfall in representation of Aboriginal  
12 peoples in Prince Rupert.

13 We have in First Nations training  
14 programs 12 First Nations adults enroled in the language  
15 teaching training program. We do not have a facility to  
16 assist these people in carrying out their wishes for  
17 language teaching in this town.

18 We also have in the educational support  
19 worker program -- it's a 10 month training program where  
20 there are 16 First Nation adults who will graduate in June  
21 of 1993. That's the second year of their program that  
22 will be complete then. The program will not happen next  
23 year. We would like to know why.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   Sixteen completed that same program last  
2 year. Six are employed by the district. Five are  
3 employed in other jobs because they couldn't get jobs with  
4 the education program that they are qualified for. We  
5 also want to know why there. Is it that maybe our school  
6 district doesn't recognize the Aboriginal peoples? They  
7 obviously have to because there are 38 per cent of  
8 Aboriginals attending the schools in Prince Rupert.

9                   Maybe it's time we changed some policy  
10 at the school board level. We don't know who sets their  
11 policies, how they're set or by whom. Therefore, we would  
12 wish to see some sort of policy change in order to get  
13 our educational system on a rational level with the  
14 percentage of students.

15                   Some of the recommendations that we  
16 would like to see:

17                   An increase in First Nations role models  
18 in the local schools -- obviously, we don't have that yet;

19                   We should have some First Nations on the  
20 curriculum programs in School District 52, Prince Rupert,  
21 to deal with all the First Nations attending the schools  
22 and through this we would also be enlightening  
23 non-Aboriginals as to the culture of Aboriginals which

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 would lead to the healing process by both cultures.

2                   We also have students going to school  
3 in the language program which I've said before -- there  
4 are no primary curriculums in Aboriginal curriculum in  
5 Prince Rupert; and

6                   Maybe we could set up some sort of a  
7 primary curriculum for our Aboriginal peoples to attend  
8 in primary school in order to develop themselves to know  
9 who they are, where we come from -- such as our clans,  
10 our leaders, so that we can be a prouder people when we  
11 start attending the integrated schools.

12                   It is very difficult, I believe, for  
13 someone to come out and have to be integrated. We have  
14 to be in Prince Rupert for many reasons and a lot of it  
15 deals with education. Housing I will get to later. As  
16 for one of the reasons that a lot of Aboriginals have to  
17 live in urban areas -- because of funding. A lot of people  
18 have to be here for medical reasons and lack of medical  
19 support at home in the Native land -- of which I must admit  
20 we are sitting on Native land here, Tsimshian land.

21                   What I would like to propose for the  
22 educational part -- while we are still on this subject  
23 -- to back up some of the recommendations, we need a

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 facility which is very important. This organization has  
2 been in contact with School District 52 in the last three  
3 weeks.

4 We understand that there is a school in  
5 Prince Rupert and it's called King Edward School which  
6 will come available for disposal by School District 52  
7 in September of 1994. This school has 11 classrooms, a  
8 large gymnasium, an underground kindergarten, an  
9 administration office, coffee rooms and library. We would  
10 much like to obtain this facility to facilitate our needs  
11 in a cultural sense and moreso in the educational sense.

12 In this town we do not have any area that  
13 our culture or our educational peoples can deal with  
14 themselves or help upgrade themselves in any fashion.  
15 Therefore, we believe suggesting a facility to give  
16 employment for our up and coming teachers in the next year  
17 or two to have a place to work with the urban Aboriginal  
18 nations of Prince Rupert.

19 The gymnasium can be used for an Assembly  
20 Hall, potlatches, dance groups practising, for putting  
21 on shows. It can be used for a memorial hall where we  
22 would all have a place in common to go. As it is now we  
23 are running around and nobody knows what's happening



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 because one place doesn't have room, it's booked up. We  
2 would like to have something that we can use at our booking  
3 times when we wish.

4                   The gymnasium can also be used for  
5 spiritual needs such as Sunday School for the Aboriginal  
6 peoples -- the healing process. We would like to use the  
7 school to facilitate a day-care centre, a place for  
8 cultural food storage, a carving area, a carving school  
9 with cultural aspirations. We would also like to  
10 facilitate this school with our housing program -- to look  
11 after our elders. Our elders -- we have a lot of elders  
12 in this town and also a lot of disabled people in this  
13 town. We should have a facility to facilitate and look  
14 after these people, our proud peoples.

15                   We should have in that facility, also,  
16 an educational centre to facilitate our language for all  
17 the nations to learn their own language. We've lost our  
18 language. Many many generations ago when we were  
19 suppressed from speaking our own language and dealing with  
20 our own culture -- it was all stripped.

21                   I, myself, do not know my own language.  
22 I would much like to learn it. In order to learn it I  
23 would have to move back to Haida Gwaii which is impossible

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 because my job is here. A lot of the people that live  
2 here, their jobs are here. We would all like to learn  
3 our own language, I'm sure, to employ our people as well.  
4 This school would facilitate that. We could start our  
5 preschool children off giving them a little bit of our  
6 language in order to keep them proud.

7                   It has a library that we would facilitate  
8 all Aboriginal materials. As a band room we could  
9 facilitate for the bands that we have here.

10                   It goes on and on what we could use this  
11 facility for. That's part of the solutions that I'm  
12 offering in the educational program.

13                   Eventually, when land claims come or  
14 before it even comes we are going to have to be able to  
15 look after ourselves and be self-sufficient, even in urban  
16 areas. Therefore, we need more funding. An extension,  
17 if I may use that word, from our homelands, our home  
18 reserves. We need extended funding in order for us urban  
19 Aboriginals to carry on our culture and become educated  
20 so that we may look after ourselves and become  
21 self-sufficient.

22                   On that I believe -- does anyone else  
23 have anything to add to that? Do you have anything else

May 26, 1993

105

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 to add to that, Bill? On the education side.

2                   That's our solution to you to the  
3 recommendations that we've made. We need more role  
4 models, like I said before, in the schools. We need  
5 counsellors in this facility also. We also would have  
6 a facility in there for our own counsellors. We should  
7 have our own Aboriginal counsellors i.e. not only for  
8 schooling and education, for sexual abuse, dealing with  
9 sexual abuse, dealing with alcoholism, dealing with family  
10 violence and the list goes on.

11                   These are things that we are  
12 recommending. We can recommend all we want, but unless  
13 we get a facility to carry out the recommendations and  
14 more funding to assist us in carrying out the mandate of  
15 this society in Prince Rupert, we won't be going anywhere.  
16 You will just be doing more studies and more studies and  
17 nothing will happen.

18                   I believe that is all I have on the  
19 educational side. I hope I haven't forgotten anything  
20 -- like I say, we haven't had that much time to prepare  
21 for it.

22                   I will just deal a little on the housing  
23 here. Like I said, the facility proposed there is such

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 a large number of Aboriginals living in Prince Rupert,  
2 we do not have any say on the housing. Most of it is social  
3 housing. We have a lot of working people here and we also  
4 have a lot of people on social assistance of which the  
5 social assistance people go and stay where they are told.  
6 They have no say in where in town they would like to live.

7 We have elders living far away from  
8 downtown -- busses, some elders have a hard time getting  
9 around. When they have to go downtown to get their  
10 medications and doctors appointments. What we need for  
11 our elders is a centre for elders, maybe one central area  
12 where we could have our own homemakers to look after them.

13 Homemakers being of Aboriginal decent so they know what  
14 they are dealing with and there would be no discrimination.

15 We need housing for our disabled people,  
16 as well. We have a lot of disabled people living in this  
17 town. If we had them living in a closer proximity we could  
18 also have homemakers looking after them as well as  
19 counsellors. Some people need counselling.

20 Also, dealing in housing -- like I said  
21 before, B.C. Housing looks after it all. Why could we  
22 not be an integral part of that in order to prevent  
23 discrimination from coming out as often as it does?

May 26, 1993

107

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Therefore, people would have a choice as to where they  
2 would like to live as there are so many different areas  
3 in town that B.C. Housing has developments for housing.

4 We have yet to get all the statistics  
5 from CMHC. There again that's from a shortage of time  
6 that we had for putting this program together for you.

7 Also, we would like to see off reserve  
8 housing reinstated. We do have a lot of Aboriginal peoples  
9 living in Prince Rupert that do have jobs, but these jobs  
10 pay what the Canadian standard calls just living on the  
11 poverty line. They are paying rent and a lot of times  
12 the rent is so high there isn't much left for anything  
13 else. They are proud peoples, they want to work for a  
14 living. That's where off reserve housing would come in  
15 handy. If we had more funding to support these people  
16 for down payments of these houses we would have a lot more  
17 home owners here -- becoming more self-sufficient.

18 Did I leave anything out?

19 From there, we will move on to medical  
20 and health which is a large portion of employment in this  
21 town of which very few are Aboriginal people dealing with  
22 it.

23 I received a letter from the Kashan House

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Society in Terrace just last week asking us if we had a  
2 facility to house a crisis line of which is very important  
3 for many people. We do not have a facility is what I had  
4 to reply. We do not even have family counsellors here  
5 that could assist in the crisis line. We do not have a  
6 facility or funds to even facilitate a crisis line.

7 Under medical, I have homemaker service  
8 for elders and disabled which I have discussed before.

9 We do not have a detoxification centre  
10 for the First Nations people. As we all know that is a  
11 problem.

12 Medical Services -- I just read in the  
13 paper the other day that they are going to help us with  
14 more travel expenses. That was one of the concerns.

15 We need to scrutinize billing in the  
16 Medical Services -- as in this town's newspaper stated  
17 the other day, "One clinic is charging eight dollars more  
18 per visit than another." The billing should be  
19 scrutinized.

20 We should have an alcohol and drug  
21 awareness facility which could be housed at the facility  
22 that I proposed to you earlier. The medical and health  
23 department -- that would have to take a lot of work, I

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 believe, to facilitate ourselves, but in the meantime we  
2 should have more representation for learning how to cope  
3 with all the problems by having Aboriginal peoples  
4 representing Aboriginal peoples in the medical and health  
5 department.

6 I have also a little to say on the  
7 Aboriginal Mobile Rights. I hear this morning someone  
8 else state that the Aboriginals are asking for so much,  
9 so much of the pie in the resource industries such as the  
10 fishing. When we were here ourselves we looked after it.  
11 We made sure there was enough fish coming back. We made  
12 sure there were enough ducks. We made sure there was  
13 enough beaver. We made sure there were enough bears.  
14 Everything was kept in balance.

15 We do not have off reserve allocation  
16 for First Nation peoples of traditional food to all  
17 species. It's been said that the government is trying  
18 to marry up cultural food with the fish that's saleable.  
19 Those are two separate identities. What we eat and what  
20 we consume is very important to the diet of the Native  
21 people. It's also part of our resource base. We need  
22 that, therefore it has to be kept a separate entity. Our  
23 hunting rights -- there is a problem with hunting rights.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

110

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 I see that they are going to redraft the hunting rights  
2 to reserve areas. They say, "Reserve areas."

3 To comment on that I will leave that to  
4 our Nisga'a nation friend who has something to deal with  
5 that when I'm finished with this segment.

6 The centre as I brought up before such  
7 as that school -- the cultural education centre could be  
8 used as a base for distribution of Aboriginal foods to  
9 the different nations that live in this city. The foods  
10 that come in downtown you need a permit just to park your  
11 boat down there to give your food to the Aboriginal peoples.

12 We need a distribution centre so that  
13 each nation's food will arrive on a different day and we  
14 can be a little more organized instead of all nations trying  
15 to scramble for their little bit of a share. This way  
16 we will all have equal opportunity to have our cultural  
17 food available to us.

18 The healing process of this -- what we  
19 need is more representation and education so that the  
20 healing process can begin right at the primary level.

21 The treatment of Aboriginals trying to  
22 find jobs -- I hear continuously, because we are of the  
23 wrong nationality it is harder to get jobs. I hear

StenoTran



May 26, 1993

111

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 continuously that the RCMP is discriminate and the  
2 harassment is still there whether it be in the schools,  
3 in our law systems -- this is where we have to start healing  
4 ourselves as well as letting the non-Aboriginals know that  
5 we are equals.

6 So, on the mobile rights are Nisga'a  
7 nation friends who are also in this program will read his  
8 portion.

9 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Before he  
10 does, Mr. Brown, let me try to clarify something for our  
11 purposes.

12 Are each of the four people at the table  
13 to make presentations?

14 **VERN BROWN:** This is all part of our main  
15 presentation. It's just that we have all the nations  
16 involved in this presentation as we are all trying to act  
17 together to develop a cultural centre so that we can all  
18 be represented here as Aboriginal peoples in the urban  
19 area which you would probably call off reserve -- which  
20 is what we are, but this is all part of the presentation.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I'm not  
22 concerned about that -- that is fine. For us it is a matter  
23 of agenda management. I'm given an agenda that you were

May 26, 1993

112

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 on until 2:15 so we will have other people waiting.

2 **VERN BROWN:** I'm basically finished  
3 with my portion of the presentation. I am just getting  
4 some support from the nations and from the Friendship  
5 Society in Prince Rupert and I hope you will bear with  
6 me. We have about 10 more minutes left, I believe, and  
7 I believe that's what it will take. Maybe 10 or 15 minutes.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That's  
9 very helpful.

10 **VERN BROWN:** I'm mean your concerned,  
11 Sir, if you hope I don't intervene here -- you give us  
12 a time limit because somebody else has to come on. I  
13 requested five days ago that we have our presentation on  
14 Thursday because we wished to have more time and also,  
15 one of our main speakers who comes from another nation  
16 wished to be here. Unfortunately, we were told that we  
17 could not have that right because not enough people were  
18 making presentations and now you're giving me a time limit.

19 Thank you.

20 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** What I'm  
21 doing is I'm passing on to you the information that is  
22 before me.

23 **VERN BROWN:** I'm just trying to make it

May 26, 1993

113

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 clear to you that we wished to be on the second day, but  
2 apparently there is no second day.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I  
4 understand that and I will come back to the matter you  
5 have raised about the short notice and so on after we have  
6 heard the rest of the presentation.

7 Please go on.

8 **VERN BROWN:** The longer we argue about  
9 this, the longer it's going to take, sir. Thank you.  
10 Johnny Stewart from the Nisga'a Tribal  
11 Council.

12 **JOHN STEWART, NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL:**

13 Thank you, Vern.

14 Like I said it's a long time coming for  
15 you people to come around and visit this area. I don't  
16 think there should be any time limit. You take one day  
17 and it could be 20 years before you guys come back again,  
18 maybe.

19 Submission to the Royal Commission on  
20 Aboriginal Peoples by the Port Edward and Prince Rupert  
21 Local, Nisga'a Tribal Council.

22 The Prince Rupert and Port Edward Local  
23 of Nisga'a Tribal Council is a local chapter of the central

May 26, 1993

114

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 government of the Nisga'a Tribal Council, the  
2 representatives of the Nisga'a nation. There are seven  
3 locals altogether. Three of these chapters are in the  
4 urban centres as follows:

- 5 1. Terrace;
- 6 2. Prince Rupert and Port Edward; and
- 7 3. Vancouver.

8 Each local hold a democratic election  
9 each year to elect officers to carry out the work of each  
10 local throughout the year on land and socio-economic  
11 programs available to their membership.

12 For several years, we have been  
13 concerned about the denial of rights and services to the  
14 urban or off-reserve Aboriginal peoples. So, we are  
15 pleased to have this opportunity to voice our concerns  
16 on legislations and statutes that affect our Aboriginal  
17 rights. They are:

18 The following terms contained in this  
19 Act shall be held to have the meaning hereinafter assigned  
20 to them, unless such meaning be repugnant to the subject  
21 or inconsistent with the context.

22 The 1763 Royal Proclamation: And  
23 whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our

May 26, 1993

115

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 interest and the security of our colonies, that the several  
2 Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom we are connected  
3 and who live under our protection, should not be molested  
4 or disturbed in the possession of such parts of our  
5 dominions and territories as, not have having been "ceded  
6 to, or purchased by us, are reserved to them, or any of  
7 them".

8                                   The British North American Act, section  
9 109: The Provincial Crown's ownership of land within the  
10 province is subject to any trust existing in respect  
11 thereof, and to any interest, other than that of the  
12 province, in the same.

13                                   The British North American Act, section  
14 91 (24) by its second branch, confers on the federal  
15 parliament legislative power over "lands reserved for the  
16 Indians". This phrase obviously includes the lands set  
17 aside as Indian reserves in various ways before and after  
18 confederation. However, it also includes the huge area  
19 of land recognized by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 as  
20 "reserved" for the Indians.

21                                   The phrase may extend to all land that  
22 is subject to unextinguished Aboriginal title. The words  
23 "lands reserved for the Indians" are, according to their

May 26, 1993

116

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 natural meaning, sufficient to include all lands reserved,  
2 upon any terms or conditions, for Indian occupation.

3 Indian perspective: Interpretation  
4 and meanings assigned to Indian Act is subject to Chapter  
5 28, section 2. 1880 Indian Act, which forbids  
6 interpreting the Indian Act in meanings that re Repugnant  
7 to Indian people. Chapter 28, section 2, protects Indian  
8 people from abuses of interpretation by lawyers, courts  
9 and any body of government which intent is to use the Indian  
10 Act against Indian people in an abusive and repugnant  
11 manner. This Rule of Law has been, and is presently being  
12 violated, causing constant divisions among Indian people.

13 Speaking for the Privy Council,  
14 Britain's highest court of appeal, Lord Denning told the  
15 Government of Canada that the treaty rights of the  
16 Indigenous peoples must be respected and where there were  
17 no treaties yet concluded, the honour of the Crown had  
18 to be maintained through equitable negotiations. Should  
19 there be any questions in interpreting Indian rights,  
20 decisions should come down on the side of the Indians.  
21 These rights were to be respected and recognized by the  
22 Crown for as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow."

23 Recommendations:

May 26, 1993

117

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

- 1                   1.    Non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals in  
2 government must respect the obligations assigned to them  
3 by the Crown;
- 4                   2.    Educate immigrants to Canada,  
5 past, present, future as to who are the real landlords.  
6    Perhaps a feather on the Canadian Flag;
- 7                   3.    Educational literature must be  
8 included in citizen's naturalization process;
- 9                   4.    Ongoing insults and abuses to  
10 Aboriginals by governments and bureaucrats should face  
11 consequences;
- 12                   5.    Interpretations of the Indian Act  
13 by non-Aboriginals must not be mean and narrow. Divide  
14 and conquer tactics are still evident;
- 15                   6.    Free trade and economic  
16 development ventures stripping natural resources impacts  
17 Indian culture, forests, lands and watersheds;
- 18                   7.    First Nations people in urban  
19 centres need support for housing for elders, and others.  
20    Funds for repairs of homes are needed;
- 21                   8.    First Nations people in urban  
22 centres need consistent funding for health and education;
- 23                   9.    All wealth flows from Aboriginal

May 26, 1993

118

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 lands and non-Aboriginal persons have benefits greatly  
2 at the expense of Aboriginal nations;

3 10. There is a need to address and amend  
4 statutes and legislations affecting Aboriginal rights.  
5 Some of these have never been reviewed since first contact  
6 with the Europeans; and

7 11. There needs to be a  
8 nation-to-nation relationship with the Crown just as there  
9 is a nation-to-nation relationship with other Aboriginal  
10 nations.

11 Conclusion: These are only a few of the  
12 concerns that we have as an off reserve urban local. We  
13 have several relating to economic development potential,  
14 land base for urban centres, funding for buildings to house  
15 economic ventures, social programs, local government,  
16 accessing parliamentarians, educational institute for  
17 urban members, food fishing, and the list goes on.

18 We will be pleased to speak to these  
19 issues.

20 Yours sincerely, Prince Rupert and Port  
21 Edward Local, Nisga'a Tribal Council.

22 Thank you.

23 **VERN BROWN:** Next we will have the



May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 Executive Director of the Prince Rupert Friendship Centre  
2 who will give you his portion of the input.

3 **FRED ANDERSON:** Thank you,  
4 Commissioners.

5 If I can I think I can abbreviate this.

6 I would simply like to underline the problem of time  
7 constraints that I sense that a lot of people have felt  
8 in making their preparations for this presentation and  
9 support them in their expression of their concern.

10 I recognize that many of the materials  
11 may have been sent to this area and we maybe should be  
12 farther ahead than we, in fact, are, but we are -- speaking  
13 for myself, I would say that we are used to receiving  
14 printed materials about what's happened in other places  
15 and when something comes and suddenly we are supposed to  
16 be involved, there is a time line in getting caught up  
17 with the process. So, there is a bit of a scramble in  
18 getting ready for this whole thing.

19 I would like to read briefly if I could  
20 the last two paragraphs of the letter that I have addressed  
21 to you and copies of which you have.

22 Having noted the problems of time  
23 constraints I would like to draw your attention to a matter

May 26, 1993

120

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that concerns a lot of Aboriginal people living in Prince  
2 Rupert. This city has one of the largest concentrations  
3 of urban Aboriginal people in B.C. Band Councils and  
4 Tribal Councils seem to have clearly defined  
5 responsibilities relating to people who live on reserve.  
6 Those who live in towns like Prince Rupert seem to be  
7 hard pressed to define how they will be administered or  
8 served.

9 Friendship centres across the country  
10 have often been seen as channels of service to urban  
11 Aboriginal people, but we are experiencing budget cuts  
12 and they are making serious in-loads on our ability to  
13 continue the present level of service. Some are venturing  
14 into community economic development -- some friendship  
15 centres and that certainly would have some merit, but the  
16 centre which I am associated has tended to feel pretty  
17 consistently that energy devoted to running a successful  
18 business could well detract from energy needed to provide  
19 valuable social services.

20 If the two thrusts are to prevail it  
21 would seem important that training opportunities for both  
22 styles of operation should be enhanced.

23 The other significant matter about which

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 many Aboriginal people seem to be concerned has to do with  
2 administration. How will their needs and concerns be met  
3 as the government moves towards settling land claims and  
4 implementing self-government? There already seem to be  
5 some successful models in small well-defined Aboriginal  
6 communities, but in larger urban centres the whole matter  
7 seems to present more serious problems.

8 I do not pretend to have any answers to  
9 these questions, certainly not at the present time. I  
10 simply flag them as matters of concern to Aboriginal and  
11 non-Aboriginal people alike and would suggest that the  
12 best solutions will probably be developed cautiously,  
13 carefully and with much consultations.

14 I thank you for the opportunity of making  
15 this presentation. I do it primarily as an individual  
16 who has worked with and among Aboriginal people. I do  
17 not make this presentation representing even the centre  
18 for which I work because we did not have time to develop  
19 a presentation.

20 Our centre made a conscious decision to  
21 coordinate whatever we would like to do with this group  
22 here representing urban Aboriginal people in Prince Rupert  
23 and it's on that basis that I'm here.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Thank you very much.

2 **VERN BROWN:** Thank you, Fred.

3 Our colleague to the far right, Bill  
4 Wright, has a few points to make here.

5 **BILL WRIGHT:** I welcome the Royal  
6 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to Prince Rupert.

7 Although it is fortunate that you are  
8 here, it is unfortunate that you are here at this time  
9 of the year when a lot of our people are working in the  
10 fish plants and are getting their boats ready for the  
11 upcoming fishing season.

12 Already stated by UFAWU about 1700  
13 Native people are working and not able to get time off  
14 to be here. At other fish plants who are not represented  
15 by UFAWU, there are also Native people working there.  
16 Other Natives at this time are gathering food that starts  
17 to become abundant for spring and summer for their winter  
18 use. I wish there were more First Nation people here not  
19 only to listen to what is being said, but to say what is  
20 on their minds.

21 On the fishing part of it, the fishing  
22 industry condemns the allocation of fish to the Native  
23 people for sale by Native people. The industry cried out

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 and called fowl, but the industry was first in line to  
2 buy the fish from the Native people to reap the benefits  
3 of processing more fish.

4                   We need to address off reserve issues  
5 which are not unlike reserve issues. We need to look at  
6 education, housing, medical, elders, youth and justice  
7 programs for off reserve Natives. We need to do this now.

8       These are the main items we need to address. There are  
9 also other issues that arrive out of these items.

10                   To summarize, to tell you how I feel  
11 about what is going on around Prince Rupert and probably  
12 around Canada. It seems that society will give anything  
13 to the Native population to keep them happy and out of  
14 sight, but don't ever give them something that is  
15 rightfully theirs and don't give them what they rightfully  
16 deserve.

17                   Then you would be helping to inform all  
18 these new groups and coalitions to start up and start  
19 saying, "We believe the Government of Canada should be  
20 settling and making right the wrongs that have been done  
21 to the Native people of Canada, but don't give them  
22 something or anything that would hurt the rest of  
23 communities or Canada financially."

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

124

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 All we want is to live our lives and to  
2 enjoy our lives and enjoy the lands and use of our lands,  
3 to live and enjoy our culture and our heritage. We have  
4 wealth in our lands, cultures and family. We do not want  
5 this destroyed any more, but we want to protect and build  
6 on it.

7 Thank you.

8 **VERN BROWN:** Thank you very much, Bill.

9 I believe that concludes our portion.

10 Again, I thank you for coming and listening. I don't  
11 know where this is going to go. I just hope that something  
12 comes out of it. I understand that we have been studied  
13 to death for years and we are offering just a small solution  
14 to the first step in self-sufficiency for us urban  
15 Aboriginal peoples, also known mostly as off reserves.

16 So, I thank you once again for listening  
17 and we will be pursuing our efforts here.

18 Thank you very much.

19 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank  
20 you, all of you. Do you mind if we take a brief time to  
21 perhaps offer some comments or ask some questions on your  
22 presentation?

23 **VERN BROWN:** Certainly.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I will  
2 begin by asking Commissioner Wilson if she has any comments  
3 or questions.

4                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.

5                   First of all, I would like to apologize  
6 for any inconvenience that you've been caused by the  
7 arrangement that were made for these hearings. I can tell  
8 you that the logistics of organizing these sessions in  
9 communities all across the country are quite complex and  
10 every now and again things do get off the rails and I'm  
11 sorry if this has proved a problem for you and we will  
12 certainly check up on what went wrong, with our staff,  
13 when we get back to Ottawa.

14                   It's particularly disappointing because  
15 we were very well aware of the fact that there are terrific  
16 problems in connection with offers of people, and of  
17 course, we are very interested in receiving presentations  
18 on how the issues that urban Native people encounter should  
19 be dealt with. Obviously there are big jurisdictional  
20 problems in relation to Native people living in urban  
21 areas.

22                   We have heard as we've gone into urban  
23 areas the same story of passing the buck and the federal

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 government saying this is a provincial responsibility and  
2 the provincial government saying this is a federal  
3 responsibility. And, the result of that jurisdictional  
4 dispute is that Native people living off reserve always  
5 seem to lose out.

6                   So, we are very well aware of that  
7 problem and we will certainly be attempting to address  
8 that in our report.

9                   More specifically, I'm interested in the  
10 education aspect about what you say as to the King Edward  
11 School becoming available in September of 1994. Obviously  
12 that would be a wonderful facility for urban Native people.

13 I'm wondering if you have taken any steps or what's steps  
14 have you taken to indicate that you're interested in this  
15 facility? To date, what have you done about it, I guess,  
16 is my question?

17                   **VERN BROWN:** To date, I've had a meeting  
18 with the CEO of School District 52 and there is only one  
19 other institute in town that has expressed any interest  
20 in the facility. We have a letter being drafted at this  
21 time to be sent to the School District 52 letting them  
22 be aware that our group is interested in the facility and  
23 we will be giving him a summary as to what we would be



May 26, 1993

127

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 using it for. We will be giving recommendations as to  
2 why and what we would be using it for.

3 I've also been in contact with the  
4 operations manager of School District 52 who informs me  
5 that the facility is of sound condition. The roof has  
6 just been done. So, we know that the facility will last  
7 another 20 years. This is a facility that we could  
8 possibly add another storey onto it rather than going to  
9 have to build more facilities to facilitate the goings  
10 on of the Society in the future which is cost effective.

11 As far as I know the facility has a boiler  
12 problem, but he suggested to us that we either fix the  
13 boiler system at a cost of approximately \$500,000 or we  
14 could convert to gas and use a gas system in each large  
15 classroom which would probably cost about half the price.

16 So, we have options in that.

17 This facility would be used by all  
18 nations of the urban Aboriginal peoples in Prince Rupert  
19 -- all First Nations.

20 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** What does  
21 it ---

22 We have also contacted -- pardon me for  
23 interrupting, but we've also contacted a consultant who

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 would be doing a feasibility -- he is trying to get funding  
2 to do a feasibility study on the building once he has our  
3 summary and our recommendations for usage of the building.  
4 That's how far we have come now. So, we are actively  
5 trying to pursue this venture.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** What does  
7 it look like? Does it look as if the prospects are hopeful?

8  
9 **VERN BROWN:** We always have to be  
10 optimistic because this is one step in the process for  
11 self-sufficiency in an urban area which is going to be  
12 very detrimental, I believe, to land claims settlements  
13 in the future. We must be looked after. That's why I  
14 explained before that we need extensions for funding from  
15 our homelands which you would call reserves. We are still  
16 sitting on a reserve -- a large reserve.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.

18 **VERN BROWN:** The site where the school  
19 is located is on Tsimshian land. We have contacted the  
20 hereditary chief who is from this area who has rights to  
21 that portion of land and we've requested use of that area  
22 for our business -- through letter. His name is Shashak  
23 (PH), Hereditary Chief Shashak from the Tsimshian nation.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Is there  
2 any possibility that we could get copies of any  
3 correspondence that you've had on this matter. It sounds  
4 like such a wonderful idea to get hold of that school.  
5 I don't know whether we can be of any help, but it would  
6 be interesting if we could be put in the picture as to  
7 what's going on.

8                   **VERN BROWN:** Yes, this is why we made  
9 such an effort to try and put this proposal together on  
10 such short notice is because we thought we might get some  
11 recommendations through the Royal Commission for our  
12 efforts. We will, ASAP, try and get you all the materials.

13                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
14 very much.

15                   I wanted to comment on what you said  
16 about the primary school level because this is something  
17 that has been raised with us a great deal the issue of  
18 an appropriate curriculum for primary school Native  
19 children. We've had a few wonderful ideas for appropriate  
20 curricula for preschoolers in Native language immersion  
21 starting at age 2 and 3 years old and going on to teach  
22 the primary level something about the Native culture and  
23 traditions and moving on from that to talk about the role

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 of the elders and Native spirituality and then at a later  
2 stage the role of the Chief.

3 In terms of some of the presentations  
4 that have been made in terms of a circle working from the  
5 centre out showing how gradually these small children will  
6 be given the appropriate kind of instruction at each level.

7 The interesting thing about this to me is that in most  
8 cases the curriculum has been devised by teachers, parents  
9 and elders sitting down together and working out what would  
10 be the appropriate curriculum.

11 I just mention that because obviously  
12 a lot of thought has been given in many places to this  
13 and the explanation that we've been given for why this  
14 is so terribly important is that at the present time when  
15 the children move to the higher level they really have  
16 to have a very strong sense of identity and pride in their  
17 people and their history in order to be able to withstand  
18 the racism and the discrimination that they're going to  
19 encounter out there in integrated schools and so on.

20 It is what you might need to make sense  
21 to the extent that you are able to give that sense of  
22 identity and pride. It would be very basic in helping  
23 these young people to face the obstacles that they're

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 obviously going to encounter.

2                   So, I just mention that this is something  
3 that we've heard right across the country, the importance  
4 of starting right at the preschool level on this process  
5 particularly on the language immersion aspect. So, I just  
6 mention that.

7                   **VERN BROWN:** Thank you very much because  
8 as I mentioned before the first language teacher training  
9 program in Prince Rupert, we have 12 First Nation adults  
10 enroled and through that teacher training program they  
11 can establish curriculums which we would like to make use  
12 of in the facility that we've proposed to you.

13                   Very important, we could use one  
14 classroom for each nation here to have our preschool  
15 curriculum put into use. I have all the documents here  
16 from that as well which I will -- I will probably take  
17 a day or two to get everything together and I will send  
18 it to a mailing address of your choice.

19                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We would  
20 appreciate that very much.

21                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I also  
22 would like to say that it is troubling to hear that you've  
23 had some difficulties in making suitable arrangements to

May 26, 1993

132

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 make a presentation before us and you have our apologies  
2 for that and the matter is on the record so that our staff  
3 in Ottawa is made aware of the circumstances.

4 I want to say that the circumstances of  
5 Aboriginal peoples in the cities and towns is a very  
6 important part of our mandate. We are concerned to  
7 initiate a number endeavours in order to try to deal with  
8 these issues. There was a national round table on urban  
9 issues held in Edmonton in June of 1992. One of the  
10 directors of our research program is assigned to deal  
11 exclusively with urban Aboriginal issues. His name is  
12 Donavon Young. It certainly is a matter that must form  
13 an important part of the recommendations that we make.

14 I'm trying to be helpful here and  
15 thinking out loud about some of the prospects that you  
16 might like to consider in preparing yourselves to make  
17 further submissions in accordance with the discussion you  
18 just had with Commissioner Wilson or in any other way that  
19 you might contemplate.

20 I might mention the existence of the  
21 intervener participation program that you yourself earlier  
22 referred to. I note that the program was established to  
23 provide funding and as I understand it, has indeed provided

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 funding to a number of organizations concerned with urban  
2 issues. One happens to be the National Association of  
3 Friendship Centres and the funding was designed for  
4 national, provincial or regional associations.

5                   So, I'm wondering you may belong or you  
6 may not -- this is something you know -- belong to a larger  
7 urban association -- I do not know or you may have some  
8 association with. So, the point I'm making is that the  
9 IPP has provided funding for regional associations and  
10 it may be worthwhile investigating who amongst regional  
11 associations with shared interests with you may have this  
12 type of funding that might be of some assistance in  
13 facilitating your endeavours in making recommendations  
14 to this Commission.

15                   Again, you would be able to find out  
16 these matters by contacting the Commission and their staff.  
17 We would be happy to assist you in trying to do that.

18                   Again, thank you very much for making  
19 the presentation that you have today and we look forward  
20 to receiving further information from you.

21                   **VERN BROWN:** Just one question. How  
22 long will it be before a transcript of this day's  
23 proceedings will become available?

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** May I  
2 suggest that question to Les Clayton over there wearing  
3 the nice new tie. I was telling him how much I like that  
4 tie. He is the expert on those things. He will be able  
5 to tell you and he will be able to provide arrangements  
6 for you to receive a copy of the transcript as soon as  
7 it's available.

8                   **VERN BROWN:** Thank you very much.

9                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank  
10 you.

11                   I call now the North Coast Tribal Council  
12 Education Department represented by Christie Clifton to  
13 make the presentation.

14                   Please take your time. Whenever you're  
15 ready you may begin.

16                   There you go. You have all had time to  
17 settle in.

18                   Welcome and when you're ready please  
19 proceed with your presentation.

20                   **CHRISTIE CLIFTON, NORTH COAST TRIBAL**  
21 **COUNCIL EDUCATION CENTRE:** Thank you.

22                   I would just like to make one correction.  
23 It's the North Coast Tribal Council Education Centre.



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 We are a branch of the Tribal Council not a department.

2 My name is Christie Clifton and I'm  
3 speaking to you on behalf of the North Coast Tribal Council  
4 Education Centre this afternoon. I'm the centre Director.

5 The North Coast Tribal Council is  
6 comprised of six local bands and they represent three  
7 tribes: Haida; Tsimshian; and Nisga'a. The North Coast  
8 Tribal Council has been operating an education centre on  
9 a project by project basis since 1987. The initial  
10 programming focused on job re-entry and office skills  
11 programming. Targeted primarily at First Nations women  
12 who required upgrading and retraining. A lot of these  
13 women were former cannery workers that were looking for  
14 alternatives because of downturns in that industry.

15 Over the five year history of the centre  
16 we have steadily increased the number and variety of  
17 programs we have offered and currently enrol 50 full-time  
18 students.

19 Our centre is located in Prince Rupert  
20 and we also offer courses on an outreach basis to outlying  
21 communities. We are offering adult education to both on  
22 and off reserve Aboriginal people throughout the Northwest  
23 region.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   We have graduated 220 students over five  
2 years from a variety of programs, among these are: the  
3 education support worker program which trains people to  
4 work in the public school system as para-professionals;  
5 The addiction resource worker program which has provided  
6 some alcohol and drug counsellors for the region; business  
7 office skills and family day care.

8                   Our average completion rate exceeds 80  
9 per cent which is much higher than any other post-secondary  
10 institute in this area.

11                  Also, students experience a high degree  
12 of employment upon completion of our programs -- sometimes  
13 exceeding 50 per cent. That's partly due to how we design  
14 our programs. We carefully consult with our communities  
15 about the kinds of employment opportunities that are coming  
16 available. Also, we talk quite often with Canada  
17 Employment at our Regional Office.

18                  Our success over this five year period  
19 can be attributed in part to our philosophy and guiding  
20 principles which create an education environment that is  
21 controlled by First Nations, serves First Nations and  
22 incorporates the traditional ideologies and contemporary  
23 issues of the communities we serve.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   As well, our careful matching and  
2 monitoring of community employment requirements has  
3 ensured a high degree of success for our students after  
4 graduation. The demand for our service exceeds our  
5 current ability to serve our communities. Last year, we  
6 turned away 135 students.

7                   We provide a safe, comfortable  
8 environment for First Nations adults to tackle serious  
9 educational course work. Each program employs a  
10 coordinator who teaches and monitors student progress  
11 overall. Coordinators also provide informal counselling  
12 and coordination of services students may require.

13                   Carefully designed programs of study  
14 which incorporate First Nations ideology and provide a  
15 form of discussion of First Nation's history and issues  
16 contributes enormously to developing the sense of self  
17 First Nations adults need to be successful learners. The  
18 vast majority of our students succeed drawing support from  
19 high quality staff members and from fellow First Nations  
20 learners.

21                   Many of our students have gone on to  
22 further post-secondary education and are currently enroled  
23 in teacher education programs and other community college

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 programs.

2                   We've utilized a variety of affiliation  
3 models with our local community college. This has  
4 required surrendering some autonomy, but it has allowed  
5 students to gain some transfer credits. This is one of  
6 our dilemmas in the area of affiliation and accreditation.

7       Presently, in order for our courses to be credited we  
8 have to sort of turn over control to one of the local  
9 colleges or universities. That issue has been recognized  
10 certainly in provincial forums.

11                   We are frustrated by our inability to  
12 fully accredit our programs. We have designed some  
13 excellent and innovative programs which have no precedent.

14       Indeed, other community colleges are modelling some of  
15 their programming after our approach and specifically our  
16 education support worker program has been cloned in several  
17 places. No mechanism exists for us to accredit our own  
18 programs. This is very frustrating.

19                   However, our biggest frustration is our  
20 funding situation. We have relied solely on Canada  
21 Employment Funding through the District Advisory Board  
22 which now is called the Skeena Aboriginal Management Board.

23       This is the Federal Pathway's Program. This has dictated

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 a type of programming that is not capable of meeting the  
2 range of educational needs of our communities.

3                   Project based training is short term.  
4 It doesn't allow for the development of long-term  
5 educational programs to develop individual skills to  
6 professional levels. Project based training is geared  
7 to employment and does not provide for upgrading and adult  
8 basic education that is required by many First Nations  
9 adults before they can consider new training or employment  
10 opportunities. The essential building blocks of adult  
11 basic education are missing from this Pathway's program.

12                   No opportunities to fund  
13 non-traditional programs, for example programming in the  
14 area of personal development and in the area of parenting  
15 skills or cultural programming exists within this  
16 Pathway's framework. In addition, there has been an  
17 erosion of training allowances occurring over the last  
18 couple of years and no operational or capital monies are  
19 available to us through this CESC, Aboriginal Management  
20 Board Structure.

21                   So, we have been very restricted by this  
22 lack of basic operating funding. We have managed to date  
23 only by charging each program an administrative fee and

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 this makes it difficult to retain staff members on a  
2 year-to-year basis because we don't know from one year  
3 to the next -- we have no assurances that we are, in fact,  
4 getting any funding. It makes it difficult for us to pay  
5 wages comparable to public institutes and almost  
6 impossible to do any long-term planning when the future  
7 is so uncertain.

8                   We desperately need more resources to  
9 support our courses, but no source of funds for capital  
10 expenditures is available to us. We need capital to  
11 develop adequate infrastructure and to expand student  
12 services to include academic counselling, day care and  
13 curriculum development.

14                   We are currently housed in a small rented  
15 facility. The North Coast Tribal Council has recently  
16 started a feasibility study to see if we can, in fact,  
17 relocate and expand in the area of an education and cultural  
18 centre, but nothing conclusive has come out of that study  
19 to date.

20                   At the root of our funding problem lies  
21 our lack of recognition and lack of direct funding  
22 relationship with any level of government. Both the  
23 federal and provincial governments have failed to address

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 the reality of First Nations institutes such as ours.

2                   Despite recommendations from previous  
3 Commission such as provincially we had an Advisory  
4 Committee on Post-Secondary Education for Native Learners  
5 in 1990. No clear policy has emerged. A very few  
6 institutes in B.C. have been granted some funding based  
7 on full-time equivalent status, but the granting of this  
8 status is irregular and reflects, again, no clear policy.

9                   Likewise small grants are allocated  
10 provincially to some institutes for specific projects,  
11 but no guidelines exist. It's an extremely frustrating  
12 situation for us. This does nothing to address our  
13 problems in the area of operating costs or capital  
14 expenditures. The only thing that seems to be around for  
15 us is project to project funding and not necessarily  
16 funding that runs for more than a year.

17                   This is evident in the First Nations  
18 Language Teacher Education Project that is currently  
19 offered in Prince Rupert. One of the recommendations out  
20 of the 1990 Provincial Commission was to prioritize  
21 provincial funding of First Nations Language Teacher  
22 Education Programs and we have had to apply annually for  
23 funding for this four year program. We are up to year

May 26, 1993

142

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 two now and it's very much been done on a year-to-year  
2 basis. Again, it's very difficult for us to do long-term  
3 programming and planning.

4                   Although students can access federal  
5 funding directly through the Post-Secondary Student's  
6 Assistance Programs which, of course, have been cut back,  
7 this does not address again our need for core funding.  
8 The ISSP monies have proved to be inadequate for our  
9 purposes. We have only accessed a small grant in support  
10 of a single program over the last five years.

11                   With our high success rates and ability  
12 to respond to communities we are part of the solution you  
13 are seeking. Our own people recognize this and support  
14 our educational endeavours through their participation.

15                   Government recognition and funding is long overdue for  
16 our institute. Both federal and provincial jurisdiction  
17 must address our existence.

18                   I urge you and your Commission to  
19 translate talk and recommendations, and recommendations  
20 that have been made over and over again in the past, and  
21 to turn them into action. We represent Indian control  
22 of the Indian education. However, it's very difficult  
23 to obtain without operating in capital monies.

StenoTran



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Direct funding of First Nations  
2 post-secondary institutes such as our North Coast Tribal  
3 Council Education Centre will ultimately create strong  
4 people to create strong autonomous First Nations  
5 communities.

6 Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank  
8 you. Do you mind if we ask you questions or make comments?

9 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** No, go ahead.

10 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I will  
11 ask Commissioner Wilson if she has comments or questions.

12 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm just  
13 wondering you mentioned about having to turn to a college  
14 for accreditation, is that Simon Fraser?

15 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** We've made different  
16 arrangements depending on the program. Simon Fraser is  
17 who we are affiliated with in terms of the Language Teacher  
18 Education Program. There would be no hope of getting any  
19 funding without that kind of affiliation.

20 This is a big issue that all First  
21 Nations institutes are struggling with. Let me give you  
22 an example that's very close to me. We have designed this  
23 Education Support Worker Program and it is like a career

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 college program. The courses are great. We have been  
2 able to affiliate three courses to carry university  
3 transfer. The rest of the courses are equally demanding,  
4 but because there is no precedent for them and they are  
5 not offered by any of the big public institutions, we have  
6 no basis for comparison and there is no way for the  
7 government to recognize them within current structures.

8                   Another example is in all our courses  
9 we have built in a course called First Nations Studies  
10 into each of our programs and it's a really critical and  
11 important course. It goes to developing sense of  
12 identity. It goes to exploring traditional organization.  
13 It goes right through to examining contemporary issues.  
14 There is no mechanism for having that recognized.

15                   So, this is something that some level  
16 of government has to address. I mean most accreditation  
17 is handled through provincial ministries of advanced  
18 education. So, I think it's at that level that we need  
19 some movement. Some mechanism has to be designed to  
20 address courses that fall outside the traditional confines  
21 of western academia.

22                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** When you  
23 apply for accreditation is it just a proforma thing or

May 26, 1993

145

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 is it complex? How do they decide?

2 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** Again, there are no  
3 hard and fast rules here. For instance, some institutes  
4 in B.C. will charge an institute like ours X number of  
5 dollars to put a stamp on their courses that say they're  
6 okay. Some institutes will only do it if they provide  
7 the staff members to teach the course. There is a range  
8 of possibilities and that really takes away your autonomy  
9 when someone else is doing your staffing and all of that.

10 I understand that we have to have  
11 standards in education -- it's a given, but we need  
12 flexibility here and we need, perhaps, new models.

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** So, is it  
14 legislation from the province that's required to achieve  
15 your goal?

16 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** Well, my  
17 understanding is that legislation is required to provide  
18 direct funding and the provincial government has been  
19 addressing this. Recently they sent around yet another  
20 consultant to speak to all of us and we have all been saying  
21 the same thing that's in this 1990 report. I don't know  
22 if we are getting any closer or not, but certainly just  
23 having the opportunity to express that frustration here

May 26, 1993

146

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 I think is a good one for us. I wouldn't be surprised  
2 if you've heard the same thing elsewhere.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I notice  
4 that you have four job re-entry programs. What kind of  
5 success do the students when they graduate from these  
6 courses have in finding jobs?

7 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** The way we have  
8 designed our programs, all students during their 10 months  
9 with us they do at least a month of -- placement and often  
10 that leads to employment. Again, it works because we're  
11 a small community and we're able to maintain good relations  
12 with potential employers.

13 The job retraining often gets people  
14 into sort of a basic albeit not high paying type of job  
15 and then we often see those people come back to the centre  
16 for specific training a couple of years down the road.  
17 It's a stepping stone and it's designed to be a stepping  
18 stone.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** So, the  
20 community is quite supportive, is it?

21 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** To a certain degree  
22 I would say so. Yes.

23 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
2 for your presentation.

3                   It does bring up a number of issues that  
4 we have heard about across the country and programs that  
5 indicate some foundation for the view of some people that  
6 is really the boot of this day is really upon the knack  
7 of the Aboriginal peoples in these circumstances.

8                   Someone has said that there is a very  
9 high price being paid for some meagre resources and all  
10 the pride you can eat, which was an expression used by  
11 an Aboriginal writer.

12                  I would like to ask for a bit more detail  
13 about one or two aspects of your presentation, if I may.

14       I understood the difficulties that are associated with  
15 trying to establish an educational enterprise that is based  
16 on a project-by-project basis. That is quite plain.

17                  One of the origins of the programs was  
18 targeted for women, I think you said, I'm just wondering  
19 if you might elaborate on that a bit. Was that a program  
20 that grew out of a federally initiated general policy to  
21 get women into the work force and that this was not a program  
22 for Aboriginal people specifically, but simply an aspect  
23 of a generally available program that you were able to

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 seize upon. I wonder if you might elaborate on that a  
2 bit?

3 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** That brings up a very  
4 important issue. Our programming has had to be driven  
5 by funding sources instead of the other way around --  
6 instead of being driven by community needs. So, that would  
7 spring out of Canada Employment saying, "This year we are  
8 targeting First Nations women" or "This year we are  
9 targeting whoever". So, that's the reason for some of  
10 our program directions.

11 Personally, I would like to see it the  
12 other way around where we could do good community  
13 assessments and really get to the educational needs of  
14 the community, but our hands are really tied until we can  
15 get some sort of direct funding and recognition.

16 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** What  
17 about the nature of some of these job entry programs.  
18 I believe they have been referred to here -- alcohol and  
19 drug counsellors, for example. I think these are 10 month  
20 courses. I know very very little about the nature of such  
21 courses and little about the work that would be involved.

22 I wonder if you could assist me to  
23 understand this by explaining a bit more the kind of work

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that is done by these counsellors and your opinion about  
2 the kind of qualifications that can be gained during a  
3 10 month course when assessed directly against the kinds  
4 of tasks that the graduates will be expected to do. It's  
5 quite a mystery to me how -- given the assumption I make  
6 about the role of a person involved in counselling  
7 presumably people with drug addictions. I wonder if you  
8 could give us your view on the feasibility of these sorts  
9 of programs.

10 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** Let me address that  
11 in a couple of ways. First of all I would consider these  
12 people to be para-professionals and not professionals at  
13 the end of their training. I would also say that their  
14 program contains academic content such as sociology and  
15 psychology at a level comparable to a community college.  
16 Those are the kinds of courses that we would accredit  
17 or affiliate with a college.

18 I think to cut to the quick are these  
19 people adequately trained is your question. I think there  
20 are two answers there. I think one answer is no in that  
21 the jobs they do are exceedingly difficult and often times  
22 complicated by the fact that they are dealing with their  
23 own relatives. It's a tough area to work in.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   I guess it goes to are those people more  
2 adequately qualified than people coming outside into  
3 communities? That's often what will happen if people  
4 aren't trained locally -- you will have people come into  
5 small communities in this area and they will stay for a  
6 year, on average, and you have absolutely no continuity  
7 in the kind of delivery.

8                   I think this is in some ways were not  
9 offering major social solutions here, but we are moving  
10 people towards controlling some of the services in their  
11 communities. It's not perfect right now, but it's  
12 certainly an important first step to getting there.

13                   I think you will find that a lot of people  
14 will continue -- they will work for a couple of years and  
15 then they will come back and continue to pursue more  
16 education in that area.

17                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That's  
18 very helpful on that score. I think a cynic before us  
19 at one time told us something like this that these jobs  
20 are created by programs which themselves are funded by  
21 monies taken from the unemployment program so that they  
22 are dealing with the effects of not having a job and the  
23 program being funded by those who don't have a job. It



May 26, 1993

151

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 seems to be a vicious circle.

2                   You said something about a program  
3 wherein no guidelines exist. I missed that part. Towards  
4 the end of your presentation you said, "No guidelines  
5 exist." That seems to be a serious concern.

6                   **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** I remember saying  
7 that in the context of affiliation agreements, I believe.

8                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** You said  
9 I think that the provincial government is now addressing  
10 that issue and it seems to be an issue that needs to be  
11 addressed. I understand that there are arrangements in  
12 place in the United States with respect to the American  
13 Indian Colleges. I'm not sure what the situation is in  
14 other provinces, but I recognize the seriousness of the  
15 issue.

16                   Your reference was later towards the end  
17 of your presentation, you were talking about a kind of  
18 program and you said that there were no guidelines in  
19 existence.

20                   **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** Where I say this it  
21 says, "Likewise small grants are allocated to some  
22 institutes for a specific projects, but no guidelines  
23 exist." This is provincial money that I'm talking about

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that seems to come in dribs and drabs and you just have  
2 to get in there and fight for some.

3                   There is no clear policy at the  
4 provincial level here as to their relationship with us  
5 as First Nations institutes. So, this is kind of money  
6 to keep us going until some policy comes along. It's not  
7 a good situation because there are some institutes in B.C.  
8 that have been operating for 20 years -- First Nations  
9 institutes and then there are some younger than us that  
10 are younger than five years old -- there are no guidelines  
11 there as to how these little bits of money are being  
12 allocated. They are not major operating monies. Again,  
13 they are program specific and that really puts us at a  
14 disadvantage.

15                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** My last  
16 comment is to say that our job, of course, is to make policy  
17 recommendations to the federal government. So, one of  
18 the complexities of our task involves digesting the matter  
19 that you presented to us and trying to figure out how we  
20 can translate this into helpful federal policy  
21 recommendations.

22                   It occurs to me that it might be possible  
23 for organizations like yourselves perhaps to, if it's

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 possible, associate with other organizations. There are  
2 some national Aboriginal educational organizations and  
3 I'm wondering out loud if it might be possible to get some  
4 submissions to us on how some of these problems which appear  
5 to be local or provincial might be situated in such a  
6 context that they might usefully be the object of federal  
7 policies. It's one of the dilemmas that we have. If you  
8 in your capacity are able to do anything to assist that  
9 way I think it would be very helpful. We would like to  
10 hear from you.

11 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** There is an  
12 organization that's brand new -- an organization of First  
13 Nation Institutes of British Columbia. There are about  
14 six members. Again, no monies are available for us to  
15 meet or anything like that, but we are trying to work as  
16 a lobby group to address some of these issues. I think  
17 this goes back to transfer payments and allocations that  
18 way.

19 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank  
20 you.

21 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

22 **CHRISTIE CLIFTON:** Thank you.

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** We will

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 now take a very brief break to go stare out the window.

2 Back in four and a half minutes.

3 --- Upon recessing at 3:20 p.m.

4 --- Upon resuming at 3:30 p.m.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Ladies  
6 and gentlemen, we will be resuming the afternoon session  
7 of the hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal  
8 Peoples momentarily.

9 I invite now the representative of the  
10 Skidegate Caregivers, Mary Anne Wilson to please make her  
11 presentation.

12 Welcome and please proceed with your  
13 presentation whenever you're good and ready.

14 **MARY ANNE WILSON, SKIDEGATE CAREGIVERS:**

15 Thank you.

16 My name is Mary Anne Wilson and I'm a  
17 community health representative working out of the  
18 Skidegate Health Centre. We just heard about this  
19 Commission coming a few weeks ago so we quickly prepared  
20 a presentation.

21 To start with I'm just going to talk a  
22 bit about our reserve and the people that work there and  
23 some of the programs that we have going and the problems

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that we're running into right now.

2 Skidegate is a small reserve on Haida  
3 Gwaii, Queen Charlotte Islands. We are 50 miles off the  
4 westcoast of B.C. The population is approximately 550  
5 on reserve with 200 households. Our local government is  
6 the Skidegate Band Council, which is made up of five  
7 councillors and a chief councillor.

8 The Council is responsible for programs  
9 in Skidegate which include: municipal services; social  
10 development; education; salmon enhancement; band  
11 membership; health; outreach; job training programs; on  
12 reserve housing and renovations; alcohol and drug program;  
13 economic development; Haida Gwaii Watchman Program; a  
14 recreation program; and capital management and  
15 administration.

16 This presentation is a collection of  
17 information obtained from the Skidegate Caregivers Team,  
18 under the title of health in the above listed programs.

19 The health needs in the community of  
20 Skidegate are met by the Skidegate Caregivers Team. The  
21 team is comprised of: two community health  
22 representatives; a homecare nurse; a medical services  
23 nurse; a band social worker; victim assistance worker;

May 26, 1993

156

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 mental health counsellor; domestic violence worker;  
2 personal care worker; band office manager; nursery school  
3 teacher; research and advocacy worker; youth worker;  
4 alcohol and drug worker; and a justice of the peace.

5 I'm just going to give you a little run  
6 down of the caregivers. The caregivers meet each Monday  
7 and Wednesday mornings and the function of the caregivers  
8 is to: keep in touch with each other to build a firm  
9 foundation and team support to further the healing of our  
10 community; to plan and discuss upcoming health related  
11 events; to evaluate current programs; to apply to various  
12 agencies for funding for various projects; in-service  
13 things happen and we call in RCMP or justice of the peace  
14 or domestic violence -- different people come in and do  
15 short presentations to our team; we support each other  
16 to prevent burnout; and we provide support to people in  
17 crisis.

18 A Healing House is a main priority at  
19 present. The people of Skidegate are at the beginning  
20 stages of a healing journey. Our caregivers have accessed  
21 funding for various programs and as a result many of our  
22 people are being helped. Listed below are some of the  
23 areas that a Healing House could cover:

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   1.    The Brighter Futures Initiative:  
2    The Brighter Futures initiative was announced just over  
3    a year ago.  There was funding made available through  
4    Medical Services for Skidegate to hire a coordinator to  
5    work with our people to get a five year plan together for  
6    funding.  Public meetings were held to see what the  
7    community saw as it's needs.  The community meetings were  
8    held to get direction for the Brighter Futures Initiative.

9                   In a public meeting, the children of the  
10   community of Skidegate identified drugs and alcohol,  
11   education and the Haida culture as the three most important  
12   issues that need addressing.  In the 93/94 year, Skidegate  
13   will concentrate on a Holistic Healing Camp or a Back to  
14   the Wilderness Camp through Brighter Futures.

15                  We feel it is important for as much  
16   healing as possible to take place on Haida Gwaii.  The  
17   camp would also be a place for children to get in touch  
18   with themselves and the land.  The children will learn  
19   survival skills and more about their culture.  They will  
20   learn how to live off the land, what types of food are  
21   out there and how to harvest it.

22                  From Brighter Futures public meetings,  
23   focus groups were held with elders, parents and teens.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 As a result of these focus groups the following are now  
2 a reality:

3 A parents support group has been formed;

4 A Gwaii Haanas Wilderness Committee  
5 which is made up of interested people who are willing to  
6 push to make the program happen by looking into funding,  
7 gather supplies, and set up a wilderness program for this  
8 summer; and

9 Homework sessions have been started with  
10 time donated by teachers and interested parents.

11 2. Haida Gwaii Diabetes Project:  
12 Focus groups of elders, diabetics, community leaders and  
13 caregivers were held to get direction for the Haida Gwaii  
14 Diabetes Project.

15 3. Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is a  
16 familiar crisis in our community and to the caregivers  
17 team. This community has been in crisis over sexual abuse  
18 for some time now. Many disclosures over the last several  
19 months found us feeling like we needed help dealing most  
20 effectively with the effects of sexual abuse on victims  
21 and the families and the offenders as well as the community.

22 Since there were no experts to turn to  
23 we had to train ourselves. Six of the Skidegate Caregivers



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 completed training from the Justice Institute in Child  
2 Sexual Abuse Intervention, Counsellor and Therapist  
3 Training. Much work has to be done on this issue before  
4 our community can heal from this painful reality. We are  
5 in the process of breaking the cycle.

6                   The Skidegate Caregivers obtained funds  
7 from the Aboriginal Advisory Committee for four programs  
8 during the last year. The programs are: Domestic Violence  
9 Intervention Program; Intertwined Roots, previously  
10 called Post Healing; a Youth Program; and Healing the  
11 Healers.

12                   Here is a summary of each project:

13                   1. Domestic Violence Intervention  
14 Project: This project has one paid employee who is  
15 available to provide support for those involved with  
16 violence and abuse. The worker provides support for the  
17 victims, children and the offender. He works with the  
18 Caregivers to design a treatment plan for those wanting  
19 help and support. The Domestic Violence worker is a man  
20 and part of his focus is to provide support to men by setting  
21 up mens groups and educating and increasing awareness  
22 through workshops, for example, anger management.

23                   2. The Intertwined Roots, previously

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 known as Post Healing: This program was formed to provide  
2 the following services:

3 a. A counsellor to provide care for  
4 families involved in sexual abuse, victim offender  
5 treatment, grieving and family violence;

6 b. To work within the community  
7 cooperatively with caregivers to help increase the number  
8 of families functioning at a positive level; and c.

9 To conduct healing sessions with  
10 families as well as individuals.

11 This program also received money for  
12 somebody from the community to train with the therapist.

13 It hasn't begun yet, but it's starting soon.

14 3. The Youth Program: This project  
15 employs one worker who designs and supervises activities  
16 for youth in Skidegate. These activities are designed  
17 to raise self-esteem and cultural awareness with emphasis  
18 on drug and alcohol free living. The Youth Program is  
19 called Haida Gwaii Watchkids. The activities under this  
20 program include: singing; drumming and dancing the  
21 traditional Haida way; the youth also do crafts; carving;  
22 art; et cetera.

23 4. Healing the Healers: Skidegate

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Caregivers realized that because of the intensity of our  
2 work we have to care for ourselves to prevent burnout so  
3 we can help the community members in need most effectively.

4 We held a five day retreat on Hotsprings Island in early  
5 May. There were 16 community caregivers who attended.  
6 The retreat was called: Nurturing Ourselves. We  
7 returned to work replenished and refreshed.

8 Another goal of our Caregivers is to keep  
9 the elders at home as long as possible. We have a support  
10 team made up of two CHR's, a home care nurse, personal  
11 care worker, homemakers and adult day programs nurse to  
12 assist the elders and their families. Our elders are our  
13 most valuable resource. We want to keep them in our  
14 community -- not institutionalized and not isolated from  
15 all that is familiar and comfortable to them.

16 The Healing House could also be used for:

17 A gathering place for support groups of  
18 our elders, adult day program, social assistance  
19 recipients, Ala-non, Alateen and Alcoholics Anonymous,  
20 alcohol and drug counsellor, domestic violence, teen  
21 programs, elder programs, men's and women's groups,  
22 offenders, long-term care, diabetic program, women's  
23 clinics, AIDS education, Fetal Alcohol Effect and

May 26, 1993

162

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Syndrome, eating disorders, homemakers, public and  
2 long-term care nurse, general workshops on self-esteem,  
3 et cetera;

4                   For counselling; people returning from  
5 treatment centres, art and play therapy, positive Indian  
6 parenting programs, healthy baby programs, pre and post  
7 natal.

8                   Skidegate has been successful in  
9 obtaining funds to address some of our health and social  
10 needs, but is facing the problem of finding space. Our  
11 Health Centre and Band Office are inadequate to serve a  
12 safe, therapeutic, culturally sensitive program. There  
13 are no other rental spaces available in Skidegate and as  
14 a result, we have had to rent facilities off reserve.

15                   Self-government is inevitable in the  
16 path of recovery and health. By taking responsibility  
17 for ourselves we can break the cycle of dependency. Too  
18 long our people have been dependent on DIA and other people.  
19 Our strength and pride in ourselves and our culture is  
20 returning through healing.

21                   Illness comes when one or all of body,  
22 mind or spirit are sick. Through self-government, a  
23 healing house, a youth centre, recovery camp, education

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 and awareness, we feel Skidegate can become a healthy  
2 community.

3 I felt it was important that we let you  
4 know what kind of programs we have set up in our community  
5 and the problem that we're running into is finding dollars  
6 to have a healing house. Right now the Health Centre was  
7 built about close to 20 years now and there is room for  
8 two CHR's, a nurse and maybe a doctor's clinic. It's in  
9 a trailer and the walls are not even -- it's not a good  
10 place for counselling.

11 We hear there is money out there, but  
12 not enough. Very few places get funded in a year -- we  
13 meet every three months with representatives from DIA and  
14 Medical Services and Social Services and the RCMP and  
15 everybody that works in this Skidegate area or on the Queen  
16 Charlottes and we haven't been successful in finding out  
17 where some dollars can be made available for a building.

18 There seems to be a lot of money out there to begin  
19 programs, but there is nowhere for us to work out of.

20 We just felt that it was important that  
21 we come and say that at this time while you're in this  
22 area.

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 you.

2                                Would you mind if we ask questions or  
3 offer comments?

4                                **MARY ANNE WILSON:** No, go ahead.

5                                **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I will  
6 ask Mrs. Wilson if she has any questions or comments to  
7 make.

8                                **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Clearly  
9 you are operating a vast range of different kinds of  
10 programs for different groups. I didn't get how many  
11 people -- how many people do you have on permanent staff?

12                               **MARY ANNE WILSON:** It must be close to  
13 40 for the band.

14                               **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** At the  
15 moment you are working out of this unsatisfactory old  
16 premise.

17                               **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Yes. When we hold  
18 workshops we rent whatever space is available. The  
19 church, the community hall, wherever we can find space  
20 when it's a workshop. We've had to rent office space for  
21 the counsellor out of the reserve because there isn't  
22 anywhere because the Health Centres there walls are so  
23 thin you can hear through the walls.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Is there  
2 a building that you have your eye on to rent? Is there  
3 a place?

4                   **MARY ANNE WILSON:** There isn't a place  
5 right now on the reserve. They are renovating an old  
6 school right now, but the parents went together and they  
7 want that as a youth centre. So, it's gone to the youth.  
8 That was about the only place.

9                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Where  
10 would you see the caregivers operating out of?

11                   **MARY ANNE WILSON:** On the reserve, but  
12 not right in the middle of the reserve. You know, on the  
13 reserve, but just a little bit off on it's own. We do  
14 have a plan and we hope someday that it will be in a  
15 long-hall style and all these programs would run out of  
16 one building.

17                   Right now the band social worker has an  
18 office and she shares an office with domestic violence  
19 and research and advocacy and the youth worker is working  
20 out of the band administration office, but sitting in the  
21 middle of -- we say, the pit. It's a long-hall style  
22 building with an open meeting room and that's where they  
23 work out of right now.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** It would  
2 have to be a fairly extensive building in order to  
3 accommodate all these different types of activities.

4                   **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Yes. We are working  
5 on this, but I think my main -- I was coming with a message  
6 that if possible more funding should be made available  
7 to bands that are working hard to heal the community.  
8 There should be proper accommodations to be able to do  
9 that if a community is willing and wants programs like  
10 that.

11                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm  
12 interested -- have you submitted a proposal to anywhere  
13 or anybody?

14                   **MARY ANNE WILSON:** No. We're in the  
15 middle of getting the proposal together. It's in roughed  
16 out, but it's not -- everywhere we ask there is no money  
17 for capital and there's no money for a building, but there's  
18 money for programs. We're not going to give up. We're  
19 going to keep trying. We thought we would just bring this  
20 to the Commission and hopefully it could be in your  
21 recommendations.

22                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Could you  
23 send us a copy of your proposal when you do get one put



May 26, 1993

167

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 together. That would be helpful to us if we were able  
2 to do anything to support it if we knew exactly what it  
3 was that you were proposing.

4 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Yes, okay.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

6 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In trying  
8 to understand the circumstances that you're describing  
9 to us and particularly because we have a very broad mandate  
10 and I think it's important to understand the relationship  
11 between the various parts of our mandate. I'm learning  
12 a lot about a lot of issues that I know very little about.

13 So, let me ask then one or two questions  
14 which might go some way in assisting me in understanding  
15 your work and the recommendations we might be able to make.

16 You have a list of different occupations  
17 here. There is a band social worker and a domestic  
18 violence worker. I wonder if you could explain for me  
19 what is it that a domestic violence worker does and how  
20 is that different from what a social worker does? How  
21 does one prepare to be a domestic violence worker? What  
22 does one do? Where does one go to school or what does  
23 one do to get to the point where one gets the job doing

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 whatever it is that they do?

2 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** He took quite a long  
3 course. He was an alcohol and drug counsellor before he  
4 took on this job.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I wasn't  
6 asking about this particular individual -- I want to make  
7 that clear -- just generally whatever the job involves.

8 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** He's on call 24 hours  
9 a day and he is called whenever there is violence or stuff  
10 happening in the home. He goes in and calls the RCMP or  
11 whoever else needs to be called and makes sure that the  
12 family or mother or somebody is out of the home. We're  
13 trying to -- if it's the man who is being abusive, we are  
14 trying to make sure that it's the man who is taken out  
15 of the home and not the wife and the children sent off  
16 the island to the homes where they take the wife and  
17 children off when there is violence involved.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Shelter.

19 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Yes. In the past it  
20 has been the women and the children who have had to leave  
21 the island. There isn't a place on the island where they  
22 can go so they are sent off to Rupert on a plane.

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** There is

May 26, 1993

169

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 no such women's shelter on the island you're saying, right?

2 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Not anywhere on the  
3 island right now. There weren't any programs in place  
4 for men. That was why a man was hired and he does a lot  
5 of workshops for men dealing with anger.

6 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** The  
7 qualifications, are they obtained through one of the kinds  
8 of courses that were described earlier -- I don't know  
9 if you were here earlier in the afternoon?

10 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Not just that -- I  
11 believe it was a degree program through a college or  
12 university.

13 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That's  
14 very helpful.

15 Thank you.

16 If I may ask one more question? It's  
17 getting a little late in the day -- I don't remember if  
18 it's you, but I know that some people in quite a number  
19 of places have referred to ideas or Aboriginal peoples  
20 to provide services in a holistic environment. It seems  
21 that characterization applies to what you're describing  
22 to us here today.

23 We are informed that generally Canada

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 is not organized that way. If we look around at various  
2 government departments there are strict guidelines that  
3 apply for those who would obtain funding for their  
4 particular programs and we're told that this causes all  
5 sorts of problems for people who have a holistic approach  
6 to the provision of services such as you're talking about.

7                   If we look around across the country at  
8 the way school are organized and separated from sports  
9 institutions, from elder's homes, from child care centres,  
10 we see that there are splits everywhere. If I understand  
11 these matters many Aboriginal people are looking forward  
12 to organizing neighbourhoods in a different way. They  
13 are encountering these obstacles with the way that federal  
14 governments are now established and the way that school  
15 divisions are established, sports organizations are  
16 established.

17                   I wonder if in your area if you have given  
18 any thought to establishing structures that would reflect  
19 a holistic approach to education, defining education in  
20 a broad way involving elders, and teaching of languages,  
21 for example, to young people and day care centres along  
22 with the schools. So bringing all the resources of the  
23 community to bear on providing a good and appropriate

May 26, 1993

171

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 curriculum content for the local people.

2                   So, I'm trying to understand how  
3 different people cross the country, what their vision is  
4 of a better organized neighbourhood -- better than we have  
5 now in Canada. One that accords better with the views  
6 of Aboriginal peoples towards a holistic view of delivery  
7 services because we hear of all these problems.

8                   I wonder if you might like to take a bit  
9 of time in giving us your thoughts on how that might be  
10 structured. I'm saying what is it that we could do to  
11 assist in -- what could we tell the government -- what  
12 could it do to assist, if you have such a vision. So,  
13 I wonder if you might like to talk about that a bit.

14                   **MARY ANNE WILSON:** I just want to tell  
15 you right now that first we don't have a public school  
16 on the reserve. It's going to be built next year. So,  
17 Skidegate has a curriculum done up on paper, but I haven't  
18 been involved in the education group. We have that  
19 opportunity now because a school is being built on reserve  
20 next year. I believe that's what that Committee is pushing  
21 for -- more of our traditional way and using our own people  
22 in school more.

23                   We see using the rediscovery camp down

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 in South Morrisby -- we see using most of our elders down  
2 there, too.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In your  
4 field are sports and recreation programs a significant  
5 part of the activities that you might have to assist in  
6 the development of a healthy neighbourhood? Do you have  
7 sports programs? Do you have any experience or has that  
8 been helpful? Do you have any such things in your  
9 community?

10 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** There is a recreation  
11 coordinator who organizes stuff and events for children.  
12 We have a big gymnasium that's being used almost every  
13 night.

14 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
15 very much.

16 **MARY ANNE WILSON:** Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I now  
18 invite Ken Harris of the Meensganist Housing Society to  
19 make his presentation.

20 Before Mr. Harris does that I just want  
21 to say that some travel requirements of mine in order to  
22 meet other Commission commitments are going to require  
23 me to leave a little early this afternoon, at 4:30.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   I mentioned that now, Mr. Harris, so that  
2 if I have to leave during the course of your presentation  
3 I wanted you to know the reason for it, but I'm comforted  
4 not withstanding the difficulty that the hearing will be  
5 in the most capable hands of Commissioner Wilson.

6                   Whenever you're ready please, Mr.  
7 Harris.

8                   **KEN HARRIS, MEENSGANIST HOUSING**

9 **SOCIETY:** My name is Ken Harris and I'm the General Manager  
10 of the Meensganist Housing Society. It's a non-profit  
11 low-rental organization and we're not affiliated with any  
12 tribal councils or villages or tribes. We are actually  
13 independent.

14                   We sent this summary and requested from  
15 Ottawa as kind of our -- we weren't going to present any  
16 briefs until this urgent matter came up and we decided  
17 to bring it up.

18                   I will read this out.

19                   Social housing and the very recent  
20 federal budget cuts which includes the Meensganist Housing  
21 Society low-rental non-profit housing for needy urban  
22 Native families, the federal government in its recent  
23 budget announced that the Urban Native Housing Program

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 would receive no more new housing allotments after January  
2 1st, 1994, as per attached documents.

3                   The background: While The Government  
4 of Canada has had various social housing programs since  
5 the '60s and '70s and within these programs the Vancouver  
6 group did get a unit allocation in the 1980's, however,  
7 it was not until 1985-86 that the government started the  
8 Urban Native Housing Program. Since then, 20 urban Native  
9 societies have grown up in the Province of British  
10 Columbia.

11                   Meensganist Housing Society was  
12 incorporated in 1986 when we received our first phase  
13 consisting of 10 units in 1987. Since then we have only  
14 received in total 55 units in the Prince Rupert area and  
15 we've received no allocations for a few years now.

16                   Discussions: Since the creation of the  
17 Meensganist Housing Society we have seen changes in the  
18 urban Natives which have been positive such as improvement  
19 in their living standards with pride developing within  
20 them especially in gatherings. There has been significant  
21 visible improvements with the teens especially those  
22 attending secondary school and self-esteem has increased  
23 greatly.

StenoTran



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   The majority also take pride in looking  
2 after their homes. Many have also broken the silence and  
3 started being vocal in discussions concerning aspects of  
4 the housing program and their homes.

5                   The Society has relied upon the  
6 continued support and growth of the Urban Native Housing  
7 Program. Our current waiting list for homes numbers over  
8 500 families which represents approximately 1800 people  
9 who now live in inadequate or very expensive housing.

10                  With the budget cuts, these families  
11 will go without housing. Also, with the budget cuts the  
12 lives of the present Urban Native Housing Societies  
13 throughout B.C. is questionable. Some people talk of a  
14 new partnership, but in this small city we are not capable  
15 of drawing on great wealth like the larger cities which  
16 gives them an advantage over the smaller housing societies.

17                  Others say that CMHC will be able to do  
18 direct financing projects, but this means that the houses  
19 will be like private ownership. Even with the reduced  
20 interest rate the average person on the waiting list will  
21 not be able to get a home now or in the future.

22                  Recommendations:

23                  1. That the Urban Native Housing

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Program receive new unit allocations in 1994 and into the  
2 future as per our brothers on reserve. These on reserve  
3 allocations are continuing; and

4 2. That we as a Society have more  
5 freedom in decisions regarding purchase of homes, repairs  
6 or renovations. Also, with respect to expenditures,  
7 administrating funds without having to continually and  
8 constantly requesting and having to receive permission  
9 from CMHC official 500 miles away before we can accomplish  
10 the desires and needs of the society. This is called local  
11 autonomy.

12 Questions:

13 1. Why are we of Native ancestry  
14 suddenly being treated differently?

15 2. Can the government explain why it  
16 is looking like the Natives are being downgraded and being  
17 denied assistance especially with the land claims issues  
18 that are in progress to date?

19 3. Why are the Native housing programs  
20 being targeted and non-Native programs are continuing?

21 That's the one we faxed to Ottawa. This  
22 one is one you see from Lu'ma Housing -- the next page  
23 here. I won't go into all of those. I will just read

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 portions that are here.

2                   Background: The federal government  
3 today announced details of its 1993 budget. The budget  
4 counsellor continues spending cuts to overall government  
5 operations as well as measures effecting CMHC  
6 specifically.

7                   Measures announced today include: the  
8 federal government will continue to fund all its existing  
9 social housing obligations. Special purpose housing for  
10 the housing components of the family violence initiative  
11 and persons with disabilities will continue. New  
12 commitments for Native on reserve housing will also  
13 continue.

14                   As of January 1st, 1994 and except for  
15 the above, no new commitments will be made via 35 year  
16 subsidy commitments under all other CMHC social housing  
17 programs. For instance, non-profit, REP, rural Native  
18 housing, emergency repair program and rent supplement.  
19 Commitments for new units under these programs will  
20 continue until December, 1993.

21                   I would like to adlib here. We are quite  
22 concerned with the rent supplement being put in there  
23 because we are subsidized under this low rental from the

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 CMHC and it appears here that we are being privatized or  
2 whatever you want to call it, and that would mean that  
3 the rents would jump from where they are now up to the  
4 economic rent from in town -- the regular rentals.

5 Here are the facts -- this information  
6 was leaked out of Ottawa and we received it and finally  
7 a person out of the Honourable Aylmer McKay's office,  
8 Minister of Public Works, finally admitted that the fact  
9 that the leaked document was absolutely correct. It was  
10 sent out to all the people of authority in the CMHC and  
11 the CMHC branches. So, it is in the works.

12 The next one here is that budget measures  
13 pertaining to housing -- this is the one that was received  
14 by Urban Native Housing via Ottawa and was faxed to us  
15 and other Native societies about 10 days ago. So, you  
16 will probably hear more about this as you go through the  
17 Province.

18 The provisions in the April 26th federal  
19 budget effecting housing are as follows. It says, "Budget  
20 measures pertaining to housing." The federal government  
21 will continue to fund all existing social housing  
22 obligations, some 652,000 households, at a cost of  
23 approximately \$2 billion annually -- \$2 billion. Funding

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 for the family violence initiatives, The Next Step Program,  
2 and the national strategy for the integration of persons  
3 with disabilities, HASI, will continue as planned.

4                   New funding for commitments for Native  
5 on reserve housing, Next Step, and housing adaptations for  
6 senior's independence will continue as planned. Grants  
7 and contribution expenditures will be reduced by another  
8 five per cent in 1995-96 and an additional five per cent  
9 in 1996-97.

10                   As of January 1st, 1994, and except for  
11 the above, no additional funding for new commitments under  
12 all other CMHC social housing programs will be provided.

13                   Commitments for new units under these programs will  
14 continue until December 31, 1993.

15                   Savings from efficiencies and  
16 modifications in the finance and delivery of CMHC programs  
17 will be reinvested in social housing to maintain the  
18 existing social housing stock in good condition and to  
19 provide some scope for new commitments beginning in 1994.

20                   Some potential initiatives for savings  
21 have already been identified. For instance, CMHC has  
22 obtained a legislative authority to enter into the direct  
23 financing of social housing whereby it would be able to

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 borrow in financial markets and in turn lend to social  
2 housing sponsors. The resulting interest rate savings  
3 over the next five years could be in the range of \$100  
4 million. Governments and stakeholders will be consulted  
5 with respect to developing innovative and appropriate new  
6 ways of responding to social housing needs.

7                   That is as far as I'll go with that  
8 documents I still have another one here. I will go on  
9 with the one that we presented this morning.

10                   We have a problem with CMHC direct  
11 financing of Native social housing. Why should it not  
12 be operated similar to private housing mortgages whereby  
13 CMHC guarantees the loan for the bank for administration?  
14 Our local autonomy would be a minimum as it is now should  
15 CMHC act as a financier. We would be denied profits from  
16 operations.

17                   CMHC should remain responsible for all  
18 maintenance and repairs as the houses our society is forced  
19 to purchase by CMHC, namely 31 units, are lemons and need  
20 vast amounts of repairs to bring them up to par. This  
21 society has been trying to get CMHC to listen to us with  
22 these old homes and it has only been in the last year that  
23 CMHC top officials are finally listening and are aware

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 of the facts and know now that we weren't lying.

2 At present, CMHC Vancouver is operating  
3 the Meensganist Housing Society from their office. We  
4 cannot do anything without first obtaining permission from  
5 CMHC and the Board of Directors are in name only.

6 CMHC is desperately trying to make our  
7 Society, as well as others throughout B.C., to be  
8 incapable, incompetent to use and even illiterate. It  
9 appears to be a communist rule where one person in  
10 Vancouver, CMHC, makes all the decisions over the heads  
11 of her superiors even though she has confessed her  
12 knowledge concerning house structures is very limited and  
13 almost nil.

14 Even though a Society and Board of  
15 Directors have many years of carpentry experience, CMHC  
16 constantly challenges the Society concerning repairs  
17 and/or renovations, decisions, et cetera, more or less  
18 continually calling lack of education. This is very  
19 frustrating to all employees and the Board of Directors  
20 of the Society and feel it is a losing battle trying to  
21 stand up to government departments and/or officials that  
22 have the funds to make us look stupid for their own  
23 benefits.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   Most Native families move to Prince  
2 Rupert from surrounding villages for two reasons. One  
3 is to get good education for their children and themselves  
4 and secondly, it's for employment reasons as there is no  
5 work on reserves and many don't want to be on welfare.

6                   The education on reserve is below  
7 standard and this has been proven by one of our employees  
8 who went to school and then graduated in New Aiyansh.  
9 She entered school for advanced office training as a  
10 bookkeeper. She had to withdraw due to her grade 12 only  
11 being equivalent to grade 10. She now must upgrade herself  
12 from grade 10 to grade 12 before she can begin the training.

13                   With all those surrounding villages  
14 coming to Prince Rupert there is a very high demand for  
15 low income affordable housing. Our Society supplies that,  
16 however we only have 55 units and we have a waiting list  
17 of over 500. Our Society has been overlooked for three  
18 years now for allotment of homes. They say, "Poor  
19 management", but they are saying that to the most  
20 successful urban Native housing society throughout B.C.

21                   For your information, every urban Native  
22 housing society in B.C. has been classed as incompetent  
23 by this lady that came in from Saskatchewan under CMHC.



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 She has put down every one and there is something behind  
2 her move. We don't know -- it could be that she is trying  
3 to hang onto her job with these cutbacks or get into this  
4 financing business through CMHC money.

5 We don't know, but there's something  
6 behind her actions because some of the larger housing  
7 societies, Prince George, Vancouver, Victoria, they are  
8 all incompetent -- incompetency is there. There is no  
9 doubt this Commission will hear more when you get to  
10 Vancouver and the larger ones where some of the heads of  
11 the housing societies are lawyers. We had a meeting in  
12 Prince George last weekend and we've gone over this, but  
13 I had to submit this on our behalf here in Prince Rupert.

14 Our Society has been overlooked for  
15 three years now for allotment of homes. They say, "Poor  
16 management". They are saying that to the most successful  
17 urban Native housing society throughout B.C. These  
18 societies have over 300 units and there are 22 societies  
19 in B.C. and we are all being attacked.

20 When we first were attacked by CMHC, they  
21 first claimed misappropriation of funds. Then embezzling  
22 funds through a contractor. Then conflict of interest  
23 as families working together. Then poor management,

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 without education and abuse of tenants. CMHC is trying  
2 to justify their actions of removing \$2 million out of  
3 Prince Rupert. They cancelled a \$2 million project here  
4 on one persons authority -- and this is something that  
5 I've submitted in this draft.

6 I feel that before any cancellations or  
7 withholding of subsidy money that an independent  
8 arbitrator or whoever it may be should sit in with the  
9 Board of Directors and management of the society, plus  
10 the CMHC officials, to come to this action -- not just  
11 one person.

12 We have met with the President of CMHC  
13 twice in Prince Rupert at meetings and each time that the  
14 Board has told them what this officer has done and said,  
15 she used extortion, intimidation, everything else with  
16 the Board and they said and the answer that we got from  
17 both top officials of CMHC in B.C. was, "We weren't there  
18 to hear her. We can't answer. We don't know." But they  
19 take her word as gospel.

20 In other words, they were telling us we  
21 don't believe a word you say, you're just a bunch of liars.

22 So, this lady tells the truth, et cetera, et cetera.

23 We are not very happy with that at all.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   We need our local autonomy restored and  
2 the Board of Directors command the society's destiny  
3 instead of being treated as children and as thieves and  
4 as illiterate Indians. I comment on the minutes by a CMHC  
5 official was that when you get two Indians together they  
6 are going to steal. So, you can see what the urban Native  
7 housing societies have to deal with on a daily basis.

8                   Secondly, we resent the decision to be  
9 excluded on future housing allotments. This is confirmed  
10 from information recently received and this includes urban  
11 Native low-rental non-profit societies.

12                   Thirdly, we are strongly opposed to one  
13 CMHC official having sole control and power over the whole  
14 life of the society. This person uses this power to try  
15 and manipulate us and constantly uses that if we don't  
16 go with her decisions, orders, et cetera, that the  
17 subsidies for the present units will be cancelled  
18 immediately and no future allotments. This is the threat  
19 that she has over us.

20                   If we do follow, then our subsidies  
21 continue and we will be considered for future allotments.

22                   We have gone through seven audits and have balanced to  
23 the penny, then CMHC comes back and says, "We only need

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 a brush up of management, but the funds are not there for  
2 education". They tell us to look elsewhere for the funds  
3 to upgrade ourselves.

4 Questions:

5 1. Why are the Natives being  
6 segregated?

7 2. Why are only reserve Natives being  
8 considered for housing?

9 3. Why are officials trying to herd  
10 the Natives back to the villages in order to get homes?

11 4. Why are all other housing programs  
12 remaining as is and Native programs are being cut back  
13 completely or very drastically?

14 5. Does all this targeting of Natives  
15 have something to do with elections coming up? Are they  
16 using the Natives for their benefits?

17 6. Is the reason the off reserve and  
18 urban Native housing programs being cancelled out  
19 completely because of the self-government and land claims  
20 issue?

21 7. Why are the Natives once again  
22 being treated as second-class citizens?

23 We, as Natives, must band together to

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 show the governments that we are people of distinct  
2 cultures and languages that will not go away and by treating  
3 us as special target groups, with respect to the housing  
4 programs, we must act fast as a duty for no more commitments  
5 from CMHC except for January 1st, 1994. We can change  
6 the government's mind as this is an election year. By  
7 using the right pressures we can do something.

8 Remember also that this is supposed to  
9 be the international year of the Indigenous peoples. CMHC  
10 is trying to keep everything quiet and there has not been  
11 one notification of their decision to cut out the housing  
12 program completely. CMHC has also been asked for  
13 confirmation and to date, nothing has been received by  
14 any housing societies.

15 What are we going to do? Our housing  
16 programs are in jeopardy and it's important that we all  
17 participate in efforts to keep the housing programs alive.

18 We must see to it that we keep the government from going  
19 ahead with the proposed cuts. We must be strong and fight  
20 for affordable housing for our people.

21 Submitted by Ken Harris.

22 Now, this is the memorandum that Mr.  
23 Flichel, President of CMHC, read at a big meeting in

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Vancouver on December 10th. It's on the back of that  
2 summary.

3                               It says here in the second to last  
4 paragraph, "The Corporation will be actively participating  
5 in the international year in partnership with our  
6 Aboriginal association. We have developed some initial  
7 suggestions and ideas for discussions with the  
8 associations in the weeks ahead. The Corporation's Native  
9 Advisory Group has already provided some ideas and we  
10 anticipate that they will play a role as we develop our  
11 plans for events.

12                              As CMHC employees, we are all well aware  
13 of the importance of good housing conditions in providing  
14 an environment in which individuals can realize their  
15 fullest potential while recognizing that much more needs  
16 to be done to ensure that housing conditions among Canada's  
17 Indigenous people are brought to the levels enjoyed by  
18 most Canadians. I believe that we at CMHC can see some  
19 tangible results that have been achieved with the resources  
20 that have been made available to us.

21                              In the year ahead, as always, we will  
22 be looking for ways to improve how we work with and serve  
23 our Native clientele. I encourage those of our staff

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 involved in Aboriginal housing programs to bring forward  
2 suggestions. The success of the international year will  
3 be judged by improvements, the impact of which goes beyond  
4 the 12 months set aside.

5 E.A. Flichel, President of CMHC."

6 Now, five months later, a secret  
7 document goes out that they are going to be cutting back  
8 on urban Native housing which is absolutely contradictory  
9 to the big speech he made amongst all the Indigenous people  
10 from all over the world. We just don't know what to think  
11 of this. There is something in the background that we're  
12 very much afraid of -- that CMHC is going into private  
13 business because there will no longer be a low-rental  
14 non-profit organization.

15 In other words, they are trying to make  
16 us look bad in order that we do privatize, they are saying  
17 that we haven't got the intelligence or whatever to work  
18 as a company rather than a non-profit. This appears to  
19 be what they are saying to us. We need them at the head  
20 where they will continue to draw there vast large salaries  
21 and still be over us. Right now we cannot do a thing  
22 without having to phone CMHC and they have to -- they just  
23 set out a new book for us to follow on this.

May 26, 1993

190

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   We're accused of poor management for not  
2 collecting rent and not evicting our tenants when they  
3 don't pay the rent on the first of the month. After five  
4 days -- after the fifth of each month, we are then supposed  
5 to go after them and get them out. How are you going to  
6 kick people out when they are waiting for an unemployment  
7 cheque or having problems with welfare or whatever?

8                   You have a family sitting there that is  
9 blowing out here, howling gale, and you're going to kick  
10 those people out. They always pay the rent before the  
11 end of the month. We're accused of poor management for  
12 that -- for giving our own Native people a break on their  
13 rents.

14                   So, they are using every type of excuse  
15 on all the urban Native housing societies in the province  
16 -- to downgrade the management of the Board and what not.

17                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Do you  
18 mind if we make comments or ask questions?

19                   **KEN HARRIS:** Yes, go ahead.

20                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Maybe  
21 I'll go first because I have to go very shortly.

22                   Mr. Harris, I thank you for your  
23 presentation. You've certainly asked some very



May 26, 1993

191

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 challenging questions. I myself had heard in the past  
2 that the Aboriginal housing association in the Vancouver  
3 area -- I don't remember what it's name was, but it was  
4 a model of success for the country. So, these are  
5 challenging questions that you are asking about these  
6 changes.

7 I wonder if it could be possible to  
8 obtain a copy of the minutes that you referred to on page  
9 3?

10 **KEN HARRIS:** Pardon?

11 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Would it  
12 be possible to obtain a copy of the minutes that you  
13 referred to on page 3 of your memo?

14 **KEN HARRIS:** Which minutes is that?

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** On page  
16 3 you referred to some comments in minutes by a CMHC  
17 official who made some uncomplimentary remarks about  
18 people generally.

19 **KEN HARRIS:** Thank can be done. We can  
20 send it to you because we have kept everything for the  
21 last year and a half, two years now.

22 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That  
23 would be helpful.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   **KEN HARRIS:** Then this woman, this CMHC  
2 official -- we were allowed to tape this because after  
3 we got in trouble we insisted that from now on when we  
4 meet with CMHC officials that we put it on tape and that's  
5 what we have done. Then one tape this lady says, "We would  
6 like you to have good houses, but not so good a house."  
7 What is the terminology of not so good a house? We have  
8 two homes that are 81 years old, plus. We have others  
9 that are pre-war.

10                   They are accusing us of poor management  
11 because it's costing us so much to upkeep these, but they  
12 have rot and everything else on there -- carpenter ants.  
13 Once we open the wall of a house, these old houses, we  
14 don't know what we're getting into. It's like a can of  
15 worms. They don't seem to understand -- this lady in  
16 charge that's doing all this doesn't have a clue on housing,  
17 construction work or anything.

18                   Definitely, I will get the girls to look  
19 that up.

20                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Mr.  
21 Harris, I want to apologize for having to leave now and  
22 I will pass the hearing over to my colleague, Commissioner  
23 Wilson.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 Thank you very much.

2 My apologies for having to leave.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** As I  
4 understand it the effect of the budget is to cut the funding  
5 for off reserve low cost housing, but to continue the  
6 funding for on reserve low cost housing. Am I right about  
7 that?

8 **KEN HARRIS:** That's just what it says  
9 there.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** That's the  
11 effect of it.

12 **KEN HARRIS:** Yes.

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Has anyone  
14 been in touch with any federal government officials to  
15 ask why they would be adopting a policy that is obviously  
16 embedded in equality between the on reserve and off reserve  
17 people? Has anybody asked what the reason for that is?  
18 You've speculated as to a variety of possible reasons,  
19 but has anybody approached the federal government to ask?

20 **KEN HARRIS:** Time has been so short from  
21 this meeting and from the time that we received the  
22 gentlemen of yours that came around to meet me in Rupert  
23 to ask if we were going to make a presentation, I said

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 no. But since that time this has come up. So, the time  
2 element in there hasn't given us much time to do much of  
3 anything.

4 We have only 55 units and we're more or  
5 less depending on the larger housing groups in Vancouver  
6 -- there is two in Vancouver and one in Victoria and one  
7 in Prince George, they are the large groups that can be  
8 self-sustaining if they cut off all funding. The rest  
9 of us could go down the drain or be privatized.

10 We have to depend on these larger housing  
11 societies with our contacts to give us this information  
12 because we don't have the funds as compared to them.

13 You see, on the first phase there was  
14 10 houses. We worked from July through to November before  
15 we received \$2,000 from CMHC and we didn't have any funding  
16 for organization before that point. We had a white man  
17 for a consultant and he had drawn out all the funding  
18 including his consultant fees when he left. We used our  
19 operating fund and at the end of the month sometimes we  
20 had \$150 leftover, maybe \$200, and that's what the girl  
21 received in the office.

22 I received nothing. I received \$160 a  
23 month for gas on the 1st of January, 1989, that was the

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 first bit of money I received. Up to that point I was  
2 working for nothing and fortunately, I was the carpenter  
3 foreman and working steady at that time and so, we were  
4 able to have funds for things like paper, stamps and  
5 whatever. Darlene, our office manager now, was supplying  
6 the papers and what not also.

7                   Darlene just gave me a note here that  
8 Lu'ma Housing which is the large housing in Vancouver --  
9 I guess 300 or 400 units, wrote Flichel in Ottawa -- that's  
10 the President of CMHC -- to question it, but to date no  
11 response. I think that was when this brief was made that  
12 their keeping everything quiet as usual. We don't hear  
13 anything until the last minute.

14                   We are treated like little children,  
15 like little orphans. They think that we don't know  
16 anything and this is why we're very concerned. If they  
17 should take over the financing we would be in further  
18 trouble than what we are now. I mean not only us, but  
19 the other smaller groups in the province. Like I say,  
20 the four largest housing societies can survive with money  
21 coming in for administration -- they can survive with the  
22 amount of units they have, but the smaller ones, we have  
23 to have approximately 150 units before we can be

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 self-sustaining.

2 We are a long ways from that. We are  
3 95 units away from that. We had people in Prince George  
4 last week at the meeting I attended -- some have 40 units,  
5 some have 20, some have 30. We are all facing extinction,  
6 so to speak, and being sent back to reserves because it's  
7 the only place that's going to be given the homes.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm glad  
9 you came and spoke to us. We will try to find out why  
10 the federal government would adopt a policy in its budget  
11 that clearly discriminates against off reserve Native  
12 people. We'll try to get some answers if we can when we  
13 go back to Ottawa.

14 **KEN HARRIS:** Yes, when Mr. Flichel even  
15 stated in his speech in Vancouver -- in the Indigenous  
16 people meeting and people there from all over the world.  
17 He painted everything rosy. Five months later he's  
18 putting us down in the gutter. There's something wrong  
19 somewhere.

20 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We will  
21 try to find out and let you know.

22 **KEN HARRIS:** Thank you.

23 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 very much for coming.

2 The next presenter is Louise Smith for  
3 the North Coast Tribal Council. Is Miss Smith here?

4 **LOUISA SMITH, NORTH COAST TRIBAL**

5 **COUNCIL:** Yes.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Anytime  
7 you're ready to begin.

8 **LOUISA SMITH:** Thank you.

9 I do want to thank the Commissioners for  
10 allowing us to have this time to make this submission.

11 My name is Louisa Smith. I am one of  
12 two counsellors for the Social Services Department of the  
13 North Coast Tribal Council.

14 I want to elaborate a little bit on the  
15 summary of presentation. When the Royal Commission came  
16 around, the Native Advisory Committee made a submission  
17 as to some of the problems with the education of our Native  
18 people within the Prince Rupert area.

19 At the time of the submission, Barry  
20 Sullivan indicated that our problems were not unique in  
21 our area. He really wanted to make sure that the problems  
22 that we discussed would be highlighted on his summary of  
23 findings -- which he did.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   He also indicated at the time that should  
2 things -- he wanted to make sure that things changed  
3 according to the wishes of the Native people and that he  
4 would do everything in his power to ensure that, but  
5 unfortunately Mr. Sullivan passed away and could not carry  
6 through with that particular wish.

7                   In his comments, he stated:  
8 "Few educational matters engaged the Commission's  
9                   attention as much as our  
10                  consideration of what is required  
11                  to provide a sound education for  
12                  First Nation's children. Past  
13                  experiences with residential  
14                  schools, current socio-economic  
15                  problems, the mixed records of our  
16                  school system in providing  
17                  successful experience and the  
18                  appallingly low rate of graduation  
19                  are sad chapters in a tragic  
20                  story."

21                  Once this came out we also made a  
22 response to this particular Royal Commission and again  
23 we made a submission in 1988 to Tony Brummet, the Minister



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 of Education at the time. We stated that it was with great  
2 hope that the Royal Commission on Education would be the  
3 answer to address the desired results of equal opportunity  
4 and quality for First Nation learners.

5 We indicated that time would tell  
6 whether the Commissioner's report and recommendations  
7 would disperse the ever so subtle discrimination practices  
8 that deprive First Nations of educational opportunities.

9 This practice is evident in the high  
10 dropout rate, streaming of First Nation students into  
11 courses without a time line to close the gap, promotional  
12 passing based on chronological age rather than  
13 developmental criteria. Damaged and stereotyped images  
14 of Native people are the hiring practices of first year  
15 teachers for the village schools to save the school  
16 district money along with poor hiring practices of  
17 teachers.

18 Based on the concerns we asked the  
19 following questions of Tony Brummet: What format will  
20 be implied to measure the success of the recommendations?

21 How will you monitor the recommendations of what  
22 recommendations are acted on and what actions can be taken  
23 if the recommendations are not acted on or simply ignored?

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 He couldn't answer any of these things. He had no answer  
2 and none of these questions have been answered to this  
3 day.

4 Based on these two submissions -- at the  
5 time, I was employed by the School District 52 as a  
6 counsellor for the junior and senior secondary school.  
7 Because of the submissions that I made at the time, the  
8 Director of Instruction admittedly told me that he was  
9 trying to cap me, to put a lid on me.

10 He didn't know where the fine line was  
11 in terms of my employment with School District 52 and being  
12 a Native spokesperson within the district. Needless to  
13 say, I was devastated. I looked for information from my  
14 colleagues and the lawyer for BCPF indicated that there  
15 was no reason for the district to reprimand me for making  
16 the submissions to the Commissioner and to Tony Brummet.

17 I was told that I had to clear any public  
18 report that I was to make to the two principals that I  
19 worked for. I challenged the Director of Instruction by  
20 telling him that he was infringing on my freedom of speech.

21 I was right. He kept telling me that the Board said this,  
22 the Board said that. Well, I made an appointment with  
23 Fred Beale, the former Chairperson. I wanted to clear

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 the air. I told him what had happened and he, too, was  
2 a bit taken back by what had taken place and apologized  
3 on the spot on behalf of the Board for the Director of  
4 Instructions actions.

5 I also felt a definite squeeze from the  
6 principals until I cleared the air by giving them my side  
7 of the story and what had taken place.

8 Another example is that we do have an  
9 Indian Education Advisory Council and Committee to the  
10 School District. The Council is still controlled by the  
11 Board. We were told that if it was not controlled by the  
12 Director of Instruction, it would not be recognized by  
13 the Board.

14 Another example, the Board applied for  
15 funds -- this was a few years ago -- for First Nations  
16 students from the province indicating that it was for  
17 special needs students. The province felt that there  
18 needed to be an inquiry on the program offered. Well,  
19 the District didn't expect this response and they scurried  
20 around to implement or report what little had been done  
21 in each of the schools within our district. I asked for  
22 the information and it was given to me reluctantly about  
23 what was happening in each of the schools and I was told

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 not to release this information to anyone.

2 Another example, I did a survey of the  
3 needs and desires of the Laxkw'alaams Band. This is in  
4 Port Simpson. My findings were disheartening and  
5 unexpected. There were serious concerns with the quality  
6 of the administration at the school. A delegation  
7 approached the Superintendent of Schools and we were to  
8 give him the information of our findings and the wishes  
9 of the community.

10 Instead of being responsive, the  
11 Superintendent was angry and he asked us, "What is the  
12 purpose of my job, if you are going to do my work for me?"  
13 I told him, "We are not here to do your job. We're here  
14 to report on the wishes of the band, and for him to take  
15 some action on the concerns of the community." There was  
16 no action taken. I was told that the survey was biased  
17 and that it was not a true picture.

18 Some of the teachers comments on survey  
19 were that there was a lot of staff division;  
20 disorganization; lack of consistent procedure; lack of  
21 freedom of speech for staff; more school and community  
22 events needed; like to see parents in school more often;  
23 need to explore community coordination of attendance

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 programs; good school with lots of potential; poor  
2 leadership and division of staff; no follow up or direction  
3 or policy structure. Those are just some examples of what  
4 the teachers were saying.

5                   Some of the parents comments were that  
6 classes need to be harder, like in Rupert and other places  
7 so they could better prepare for the real world; some good  
8 and a lot of improvement is needed; stop favouritism in  
9 the hiring practices; hire according to skills and  
10 qualifications; we don't want dropouts to do substitute  
11 teaching or child care workers who have no previous  
12 training to deal with special need students; my grade 1  
13 was suspended for not attending PE; we need more  
14 experienced teachers as well as teachers who are  
15 sympathetic to our culture; far too many dropouts; too  
16 many students sitting outside the principal's office;  
17 teachers can't deal with them; teachers must get involved  
18 with village activities; why is there no homework for  
19 students; and the list goes on and on and on.

20                   Some of the students comments were that  
21 the unit program that is offered is a hinderance to their  
22 education. It's more like a correspondence course. The  
23 Native students require direct instruction.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   In the Royal Commission they encouraged  
2 that the federal and provincial governments accord to  
3 Native Bands and Councils the appropriate authority and  
4 attend resources to enable them to engage effectively in  
5 the self-determination of or shared responsibility for  
6 the education of their children.

7                   Well, the local education came into  
8 focus and I was actively involved for the Laxkw'alaams  
9 Band to negotiate their local education agreement. We  
10 received a little bit of leeway, we were wanting to take  
11 an active part in the hiring process of teachers. We  
12 weren't allowed to do that.

13                   Just before this takeover at the local  
14 education agreement the School District has charged an  
15 interest fee to the bands and I can't remember the exact  
16 amount, but it's around \$48,000 interest. It's possibly  
17 higher than that. More often than not our First Nations  
18 teachers are not hired or simply overlooked.

19                   As a member of the Advisory Council I  
20 was told that I was the most critical of the School  
21 District. I didn't know how to take this comment, but  
22 I chose to flip it into a positive one and to know that  
23 I must have done my job well in being an advocate for our

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 First Nation students.

2 I had an apology from the Director of  
3 Instruction who made the comment and told me, "Yes, I will  
4 flip that remark, too, Louisa, because you were a powerful  
5 advocate for the First Nations people."

6 We have a lot of dropouts who congregate  
7 in the downtown area and like everywhere else, these kids  
8 find themselves in an awful lot of trouble. Kids have  
9 been knocking on doors at the alternate schools to try  
10 and get back into the school system, but the doors are  
11 slammed in their faces because their skills are not high  
12 enough to be admitted.

13 Friendship House recently picked up on  
14 these students to some extent and some of these students  
15 -- some students were 16 years old and their reading level  
16 is grade 3 or 4.

17 Another major example -- and I would like  
18 to emphasize that this did happen about three years ago.

19 There was a number of students in the grade 8 and 9 class  
20 who failed one or two academic subjects and the school,  
21 with good intentions, lumped all these kids in one class  
22 -- there were 30 of them. The intent was to have each  
23 student pick up where they left off in their failed courses

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 and complete it as soon as possible so they could go into  
2 the next grade.

3                   This didn't happen. The teacher who was  
4 assigned this particular class resigned in December of  
5 that year and a child care worker substituted for three  
6 weeks until another teacher was hired. I was told when  
7 I pressed for the reasons behind this, I was told that  
8 they were looking for a specialized teacher to work with  
9 these kids. They found a teacher who had an arms length  
10 of degrees.

11                   To make a story short, out of the 30  
12 students who started in September, only three completed  
13 the school year. This class was called the dirty thirties  
14 by fellow teachers. All but two of them were First Nations  
15 students.

16                   A team teacher in the learning  
17 assistance class didn't know I was walking behind him as  
18 he passed a counsellor in the hall way. His comment to  
19 the counsellor passing by was, "Are you going slumming?"  
20 He was meaning was the counsellor going to the LA class  
21 and the majority of the kids in there were First Nations.

22                   I want to read a little article here on  
23 assertiveness and I have a purpose behind this.



May 26, 1993

207

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 "Without assertiveness we would be  
2 passive, we would let other boss  
3 us around. Without assertiveness  
4 we would just react to the things  
5 that other people expect of us.  
6 Others would tell us what to do and  
7 what to think. We wouldn't stop  
8 to figure out what we want, need  
9 or think.

10 If you were too passive you would allow  
11 others to hurt you and get you into  
12 trouble. You would not be able to  
13 set limits that keep you safe. The  
14 trouble with being too passive is  
15 that your special way of being and  
16 thinking will remain unexpressed  
17 and the world would be a poorer  
18 place. Without assertiveness you  
19 might be too aggressive, you would  
20 try to control others, push them  
21 around or hurt them. You would  
22 feel bad about yourself.

23 When you are assertive, others respect

May 26, 1993

208

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   you. You are offering your good  
2                   ideas and feelings as well as  
3                   protecting yourself from things  
4                   that can cause you harm. When you  
5                   are assertive you choose what you  
6                   will for reasons of your own. The  
7                   Great Spirit made you the way you  
8                   are to play your special part in  
9                   the world. Just as each  
10                  instrument in an orchestra is  
11                  needed to make beautiful music,  
12                  your part is needed in the song of  
13                  life."

14                                We knew that the counselling position  
15                   in one of the high schools will be vacated as of September  
16                   and one of the First Nations teachers approached the  
17                   principal and asked him what he thought of her should she  
18                   apply. "Do you think I will do a good job?" She said --  
19                   because she certainly did a good job in the present capacity  
20                   of her work.

21                                The principal answered and said, "No,  
22                   you are too assertive." She questioned him, she said,  
23                   "What do you mean? "It's the way you ask questions that

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 turns the teachers off." She said, "Tell me, I want to  
2 learn. What do I do that turn teachers off? I try to  
3 act like a parent to each of my students." And he said,  
4 "That's another one of your problems."

5 Before I do my summary, I would like to  
6 introduce you to Bernice Goldie who is a teacher and has  
7 experienced and knows all the things that have happened  
8 within the school in relation to the First Nation students.

9 I would like to introduce you to Bernice.

10 **BERNICE GOLDIE:** Thank you very much,  
11 Louisa.

12 It is a privilege to be here. I've had  
13 a very fortunate life because I came from Saskatchewan  
14 23 years ago to Prince Rupert and I have loved every minute  
15 here and I'm going to have to leave soon, at the end June,  
16 because I'm retiring after 40 -- actually 44 years or more  
17 teaching.

18 I'm angry. I am so angry. Children,  
19 not just First Nations children, but particularly Native  
20 children are affected and this is why I have written an  
21 open letter to the Board here stating my objections to  
22 the many things that I see that are going wrong in this  
23 district. I have been told that I will be faced with an

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 ethics charge -- I said, "Fine". I haven't had one yet  
2 in all these years, it will be new.

3 Children to me are worth everything.  
4 If I'm supposed to be careful and I'm evidently supposed  
5 to be -- this is what Louisa has been saying, we're not  
6 free to speak, yet I'm -- if we do have a democracy any  
7 more. I'm supposed to wait until I have permission to  
8 say I what I feel, what I have seen and if what I have  
9 seen is not nice, my children -- I call them mine, I've  
10 had hundreds of thousands of children in this time because  
11 I started out my third year of teaching the next eight  
12 years I had over 40 students and I have had children of  
13 every race and nationality and I care equally for them.

14 The Native children here are beautiful.  
15 This year 2000 was supposed to address differences in  
16 learning styles. We were supposed to be able to see the  
17 many wonderful attributes that each individual has. You  
18 tell me what has happened.

19 Education right now for all the  
20 wonderful things that have been talked about is failing  
21 to address the needs of many children. What's actually  
22 going to happen in the year 2000 and the ideas were good,  
23 somewhere along the line we were supposed to leap from

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 the realities that did work into this fiction world --  
2 I mean it's beautiful. Before you can have children  
3 cooperating and communicating, the adults must be able  
4 to and we haven't achieved this yet. I guess perhaps this  
5 is too difficult.

6 I find that quite often continuous  
7 progress is being mistaken for continuous achievement and  
8 this is not the case. They are pushing a child before  
9 its ready simply to fit into numbers.

10 I hear about number crunching. I'm not  
11 too cognisant about this and what it means, but I've heard  
12 from a lady that I worked with at Kitkatla when I was on  
13 Dolphin Island for six months -- beautiful beautiful spot.  
14 She says that somehow -- I don't know that this is true,  
15 but this had better be firmly straightened out -- that  
16 the Native students are being used to boost numbers and  
17 the money that is theirs rightfully, to have been placed  
18 for their education, is being used in perhaps -- and I'm  
19 saying perhaps because I don't know, but this is what I've  
20 heard. This to me is evil.

21 I would like to be proven wrong, but what  
22 I see is an administrative hierarchy from our University  
23 Department of Education, the government and the BCTF which

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 I'm a member. I might say that unions are great to a point,  
2 but there comes a point where they seem to swallow up their  
3 children. Right at this moment this is what I feel they're  
4 doing.

5 We need to have a fair education for  
6 every child and this isn't happening. What we have right  
7 now is a very privileged system. If a child comes from  
8 a home where the parent is able to continue the education  
9 that's been neglected at school, they are going to make  
10 their way. When I spoke to my Parent Advisory Committee,  
11 they said, "Oh well, you know, we dare not say anything  
12 because we have to live here. You're leaving."

13 In fact, I was asked that by another  
14 member. I have been threatened so much lately -- not that  
15 threats disturb me, but I don't want to held liable, but  
16 these parents are afraid to speak out. These are not all  
17 Native parents by any means. This is not confined, but  
18 it's worse. It's worse.

19 This is why I was so happy to be able  
20 to come here because after having all this time with  
21 children and caring more about them from year to year,  
22 I am utterly dismayed and I've spoken to our  
23 Superintendent. I respect him. I respect many of our

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 administrative officers. Some of them I'm wondering if  
2 they realize why they're there. I am about to find out  
3 precisely what their job descriptions are and I would like  
4 to have them accountable for what those descriptions are.

5                   It's time than more than ordinary -- so  
6 called ordinary -- classroom teachers were held  
7 responsible. I would like to know how our Board hires  
8 its teachers. I hear, "Oh well, so and so has a degree  
9 so they would be much better doing such and such." This  
10 is ridiculous.

11                   The most intelligent person I knew long  
12 ago failed in the teaching course. His IQ was so high  
13 he couldn't make contact. Why they do not listen to people  
14 who know their own people. Miss Smith here, why don't  
15 they do that. How can we have this come about because  
16 it has to come about or we're going to have a really bad  
17 problem? It's bad enough now, but it's not going to get  
18 better until we can stop this dictatorship. That's what  
19 it amounts to.

20                   Accountability -- I guess, because I  
21 tell my children I know race, know creed, I'm green as  
22 far as colour is concerned. I just love kids.

23                   Thank you very much.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   **LOUISA SMITH:** To continue on, in  
2 summary.

3                   Not much has changed since the Royal  
4 Commission on Education was implemented. There are still  
5 a great number of dropouts; poor academic performances;  
6 more students in the special needs category;, low reading  
7 levels; and prejudice.

8                   The problems that cause the  
9 above-mentioned:

10                   1. Multi-graded classrooms give  
11 little time to address the individual child's needs;

12                   2. The grading system in the  
13 elementary schools does not give a true picture of where  
14 the child is. There is the fear that the Native child  
15 is being left behind without a detailed report on the true  
16 outcome of the child's standing;

17                   3. Instead of reteaching a weak skill  
18 in the academic courses it is too easy to categorize the  
19 child as a Special Needs student;

20                   4. The Unit Program that is offered  
21 in Port Simpson School is more like a correspondence  
22 course. The students need structure, hands on methods  
23 and demonstration of lessons being taught;



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   5. Money geared towards First Nations  
2 students to address the above are not utilized for this  
3 purpose;

4                   6. Prejudice towards First Nations  
5 are still experienced within the whole school system; and

6                   7. The high turnover rate of teachers.  
7 Possible solutions:

8                   A follow-up on the Royal Commission on  
9 Education focusing on First Nations students. Possibly  
10 a Human Rights Department;

11                   A survey on the individual programs that  
12 the student is taking, such as special needs, regular  
13 program, academic, pre-employment, et cetera, and the  
14 reading scores of these children;

15                   To hire a First Nations person to work  
16 along side the Superintendent of Schools:

17                   A person to do the hiring of First Nation  
18 personnel;

19                   To have a budget of all the money poured  
20 into the district for First Nations students and work  
21 towards parity for our children;

22                   To monitor her staff that will ensure  
23 needs are being met whether its the child, teacher, parent

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 or anyone who is helping to create a positive school  
2 experience for the child; and

3 To promote a multi-cultural  
4 understanding of First Nations people to combat racism.

5 The reason why I'm suggesting this is  
6 because it seems to be working very well in the Vancouver  
7 district where a First Nations person is doing just that.

8 The other possible solution is to have  
9 an independent school for First Nations students that will  
10 address cultural values, to make them strong in  
11 understanding their roots and who they are.

12 The Family Counsellor Program that is  
13 offered by the Tribal Council is very new. I've been  
14 employed only one week and we plan to integrate our goal  
15 with all the helping agencies within Prince Rupert and  
16 the surrounding villages to integrate our culture in the  
17 counselling sector.

18 We acknowledge the social services for  
19 funding this program and we urge that this would be ongoing  
20 to bridge the gap that is so desperately needed within  
21 our community.

22 I thank you very much for allowing us  
23 to make this presentation.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **BERNICE GOLDIE:** May I have a second?

2                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.

3                   **BERNICE GOLDIE:** Thank you.

4                   There is a program by Dr. Furenstien and  
5 I'm wondering if it's being used in the Vancouver area.

6 I have asked about it. I tried to take a course and it  
7 was cancelled. Someone said it was too expensive to  
8 implement. I said, "What about the expense that we have  
9 now? What about the wasted lives? If it works it's for  
10 children of displaced cultures."

11                   There is another program going on in  
12 Winnipeg -- one that my parents told me about. I wrote  
13 away -- two children came and one was very well up in her  
14 work and the other wasn't and I wondered why. They were  
15 sisters. So, I looked up their files and I found that  
16 one had been through this preschool sort of a nursery  
17 program in Winnipeg. I wrote and they wrote me back a  
18 very fine letter and Miss Angus, the mother of the two  
19 girls that I'm acquainted with, would be very happy to  
20 help, but nothing comes from the district. We're supposed  
21 to wait, always, on them.

22                   There are some things that I feel could  
23 be done, but they don't seem willing to try them. They

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 say, "It can't be done." Somebody has to start.

2 Thank you.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Well,  
4 you've painted a rather sad and very very disturbing  
5 picture, but it's not unique. In fact, in one of the  
6 communities that I held hearings at recently -- and I  
7 thought this was a rather strange state of affairs, there  
8 was a presentation made on literacy. The major effort  
9 that was being put in on this literacy program was for  
10 high school students. Students who had just completed  
11 and graduated from high school.

12 I was told that these people couldn't  
13 read. These Native students couldn't read and therefore,  
14 there was no point in encouraging them to go on to  
15 post-secondary because they wouldn't be able to handle  
16 the materials because they couldn't read. So, of course,  
17 I asked the obvious question, "How could students graduate  
18 from high school who couldn't read?" I was given the  
19 explanation that you've just mentioned -- that they get  
20 put forward in the numbers game up through the different  
21 levels until they finally graduate without having literacy  
22 and that kind of skill.

23 So, that aspect of what you're talking

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 about is not unique to this area. It really is a problem  
2 because everyone is saying that if self-government is going  
3 to become a reality, it is absolutely vital that young  
4 people be encouraged to pursue their education and get  
5 ready to play a role. So, I was very concerned about that.

6 It's the same thing that you're addressing that it's  
7 considered more important to show that these numbers of  
8 students are moving up the grades and graduating than it  
9 is to make sure that they have basic literacy skills.  
10 That's a very very serious problem, it seems to me.

11 I'm wondering whether we could have a  
12 copy of the report of the Royal Commission on Education  
13 so that I could see what kind of recommendations were made  
14 there.

15 **LOUISA SMITH:** I have an extra one at  
16 home. I can leave this one with you.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Splendid.

18 **LOUISA SMITH:** I also will leave you  
19 with our response to Tony Brummet.

20 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** That would  
21 be very helpful.

22 I don't know what to say about thing that  
23 you mentioned about the 30 children who were referred to

May 26, 1993

220

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 as the dirty thirties. It's just ---

2 **LOUISA SMITH:** When I mentioned it the  
3 Director of Instruction is embarrassed and admits that  
4 they do make mistakes. That was a major mistake. We have  
5 teachers from the Laxkw'alaams Bands who very much like  
6 Bernice are speaking out and trying to make change have  
7 been forced out and been forced to resign because they  
8 are trying to make some change.

9 **BERNICE GOLDIE:** Some teachers have  
10 been forced into early retirement for the same reason  
11 because they could not in their conscience see this  
12 happening. It has broken their hearts.

13 **LOUISA SMITH:** Some of the teachers who  
14 have resigned have been charged with ethic charges and  
15 one teacher is going into arbitration. She chooses to  
16 fight it because she knows she's right. She is choosing  
17 to go into arbitration.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm glad  
19 that you came and made your presentation because obviously  
20 this is an extremely serious situation and it's one that  
21 we will have to address. Education everybody recognizes  
22 is absolutely vital, extremely important. I'm very glad  
23 that you came and made your presentation. I admire your

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 courage and dedication in speaking out particularly when  
2 your observations have obviously not been sympathetically  
3 received. I think that's a very sad occurrence.

4 I thank you very much and I would be happy  
5 if you would leave the papers.

6 I would like to wish you a long and happy  
7 retirement.

8 **BERNICE GOLDIE:** It will be a very busy  
9 one. Thank you.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I'm sure  
11 it will be.

12 Thank you for coming.

13 Our next presenter is the First Nations  
14 Women's Group and we have Sandra Green and Isabelle Hill.

15 Thank you.

16 Please proceed.

17 **SANDRA GREEN, FIRST NATIONS WOMEN'S**  
18 **GROUP:** Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you for the  
19 opportunity to speak and also, I would like to thank the  
20 previous speakers who addressed so many of the issues that  
21 have already been covered.

22 My name is Sandra Green. I am of the  
23 Haida Nation and of the Eagle Clan. I was born and brought

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 up in Prince Rupert. I represent the First Nations Women's  
2 Group of Prince Rupert. We have been organized for one  
3 and a half years and are a branch of the Indian Homemaker's  
4 Association which is the oldest First Nations women's  
5 political organization in B.C. It's been around about  
6 30 years.

7 Our mandate is to preserve the First  
8 Nations family in a positive and healthy way. Our  
9 priorities are elders, youth and women of the First  
10 Nations. We speak for those who can't speak up for  
11 themselves.

12 Our issues are the social issues of  
13 family violence, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual abuse,  
14 this high rate of youth that are dying, and the newest  
15 problem of AIDS that will heavily impact on our  
16 communities. We believe that unless these issues are  
17 looked at that all of the economic development in the world  
18 will not help us.

19 The problems as we see it are:

20 Lack of services for our First Nations  
21 people and especially women;

22 Social issues that have been previously  
23 mentioned;



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1                   The patriarchal attitude of government  
2 and institutions and even within our First Nations.

3 Traditionally we are matriarchal societies;

4                   The high unemployment in our nations;

5                   The lack of cultural and traditional  
6 activities for First Nations in the cities, in the urban  
7 area;

8                   Racism in the schools, welfare offices,  
9 probation offices, jails and other key government and  
10 social service offices;

11                   Lack of direction and safety nets for  
12 our youth and no treatment centres for youth in B.C. I  
13 believe there are one or two of them; and

14                   Lack of support for our elders.

15                   Some of the solutions that we see would  
16 be helpful are:

17                   Cross-cultural workshops by First  
18 Nations people for teachers, RCMP, social workers, judges  
19 and in the classrooms and also, for all service providers;

20                   Life-skills training for First Nations  
21 youth;

22                   A women's resource centre;

23                   Special consideration for our elders.

StenoTran

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 For example, medical care and services in their homes;  
2 Crisis intervention and counselling  
3 programs by and for First Nations people; and  
4 Funding for programs.

5 We are also concerned about inequities  
6 with the First Nations. We are becoming nations of the  
7 haves and have nots. This can be offset by having  
8 representation at all levels for our women, elders and  
9 youth.

10 In Prince Rupert, as has been mentioned,  
11 there is a high population of First Nations people. Out  
12 of about 17,000 we are between 5,000 and 8,000 First Nations  
13 people. As I look around the room there have been no more  
14 than 20 First Nations people present and I don't see how  
15 this can be interpreted as being a representation of our  
16 people.

17 Where are the elders? We have a First  
18 Nations elders group here in Prince Rupert. Where are  
19 the youth delegates? The First Nations Women's Group was  
20 not even given the opportunity to submit a presentation.

21 We had one day to do our presentation write-ups. I  
22 sympathize with five weeks, but we had one day.

23 If the Royal Commission really wanted

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 to know what the issues are in the Northwest, everyone  
2 would have been invited and there would be an open  
3 microphone so that all the people that are interested can  
4 stand up and speak and not have to -- just an open door  
5 policy.

6                   This last weekend our First Nations  
7 Women's Group hosted a learning potlatch in honour of our  
8 youth. We had approximately 350 people on the first day  
9 and about 300 people on the second day. The youth  
10 responded well to learning our cultural and traditional  
11 way first hand.

12                   The time has come to be taking  
13 responsibility for our youth and women as caretakers of  
14 the nation have taken that step. Our youth are our future  
15 and without them we have no future.

16                   Some of our goals are to start a First  
17 Nations newsletter for the Northwest and to initiate a  
18 resource office for all First Nations people.

19                   We believe that the time has come for  
20 action to help our people that are suffering the effects  
21 of victimization of injustices directed to First Nations  
22 people. Philosophy and reality have to move closer  
23 together so our people can evolve and become a positive

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 part of the Canadian Mosaic.

2 I do have one question and I was  
3 wondering why the hearings are on only for one day when  
4 it was advertised that they were going to be on for two  
5 days? Also, one last mention and it's sort of comment  
6 question is: I would like to know why the protocol of  
7 informing the territorial chiefs of this area that the  
8 Royal Commission hearings were being held today -- why  
9 that wasn't done? If we want to move towards  
10 self-government, we should be following tribal protocol  
11 and that's just mainly a comment, I'm not sure if it's  
12 a question, but if somebody wants to respond that would  
13 be fine.

14 With this I would like to thank you for  
15 the opportunity to have our say.

16 Isabelle Hill is also going to be talking  
17 on behalf of the Kitkatla Group.

18 **ISABELLE HILL, DAUGHTERS OF KITKATLA:**

19 Good afternoon, Commissioner.

20 I am the President of the Daughters of  
21 Kitkatla. I speak for the elders of our group. We are  
22 an off reserve non-profit organization. We originate from  
23 the village of Kitkatla. Kitkatla is one of the oldest

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 Tsimshian villages on this coast. It's 40 miles southwest  
2 of Prince Rupert and accessible only by boat or seaplane.

3 We have about 50 working members and we  
4 represent about 1,000 people that live in Prince Rupert  
5 and Port Edward which is a municipality about 25 miles  
6 from here, and Terrace, B.C. We work under the guidance  
7 of our elders. Everything we do is under their guidance.  
8 We don't do anything unless it's from them.

9 Our two main functions are:

10 Providing the immediate necessities to  
11 bereaved families. For example, we bring them meals.  
12 We do the memorial services, the coffee and sandwiches  
13 for memorial services and a monetary donation towards  
14 funeral expenses; and

15 We help individuals with emergency  
16 medical transportation expenses. For example, three  
17 weeks ago my uncle who is 81 years old broke his hip while  
18 at his home and that same day my brother was being sent  
19 up to Kitimat General Hospital to have his fractured ankle  
20 set.

21 What we did was send three individuals  
22 from Prince Rupert to Kitimat in an ambulance. The third  
23 person was a non-Native and I don't know what his injuries

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 were, but the Medical Services -- wouldn't have been better  
2 for them to medevac these three people from here to Kitimat  
3 instead of sending them on a long four or five hour  
4 ambulance ride.

5 My brother had to find his own way back  
6 from Kitimat after he had his ankle set. I hate to think  
7 of the pain that my uncle went through on that long ride.

8 His niece was there and she is a first aid attendant and  
9 she wanted to see that they were properly settled in the  
10 ambulance before they left. They weren't even going to  
11 push on my brother's foot before the ride. He had to sit  
12 up for the four or five hour ride with a fractured ankle.

13 I can't see anyone being treated this  
14 way. My uncle was not allowed an escort on this long ride  
15 and he is 81 years old. That's a very serious injury --  
16 a broken hip. I can't see why he was not allowed an escort.

17 So, we help our people that have to  
18 travel to get medical help or escorts that have to go at  
19 the last minute. We like to help them out with expenses.

20 Our organization faces many problems.

21 Our elders chose not to incorporate as a society. They  
22 did not want to go through all the red tape for this  
23 procedure. We want to be accountable to our people and

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 not a government.

2                   Our rental facilities, when we have to  
3 rent a facility for our smorgasbords which is our main  
4 fund raising event -- we have one or two a year, the expenses  
5 are high. We have to plan quite a bit ahead of time to  
6 get the facility we need for the high cost that we pay.

7 We have to set up the tables and chairs ourselves and  
8 they check to see if it's clean when we leave. All the  
9 time it's cleaner than when we first went in.

10                   Meeting places available -- it's hard  
11 to book in advance. They have two in town that are free  
12 of charge. One is the public library, but you are only  
13 allowed that once a month and it's hard to get a date that  
14 we need because a lot of organizations use it. The  
15 Friendship House is the other one and it's very good in  
16 supplying their board room for meetings. Again, that's  
17 well used by all other organizations.

18                   It's hard for us to meet regularly. We  
19 have to meet in homes and work out of our homes for  
20 smorgasbords and when we prepare the sandwiches and coffee  
21 for memorial services.

22                   We need a storage facility for our coffee  
23 pots, dinnerware, cooking utensils, seafood. It's hard

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 storing all of these in one place and we need a lot of  
2 seafood on hand at all times.

3                   The fund raising guidelines -- we used  
4 to have raffles, 50/50 money raffles or arts and crafts  
5 and now when you apply for a ticket raffle, if it's a 50/50  
6 money raffle you have to have that all done in one day  
7 -- the selling of tickets and the drawing.

8                   If you apply for a ticket raffle to  
9 raffle off an item of art or whatever, that has to be drawn  
10 at an event. A bake sale is not an event so we have to  
11 pick something that's like the All Native Tournament or  
12 Seafest Activities or something. It has to be drawn there  
13 so it's hard for us to plan a raffle and have it drawn  
14 at an event that they think is a public event.

15                   We heard about these hearings through  
16 the grapevine. We thought we missed the deadline and we  
17 really hoped to have more time to prepare. I have been  
18 very busy. I'm a full-time SFU student in the First  
19 Nations Language Education Program and directly involved  
20 with the First Nations Women's Group. We have just  
21 finished our potlatch and we are happy to say it was very  
22 successful.

23                   I didn't have time to network with the



May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 newly formed Northwest Urban Aboriginal Society. We  
2 definitely support this society. In the future, the  
3 Daughters of Kitkatla hope to supply bursaries to our  
4 graduates and to honour them with a graduation dinner.  
5 We also hope to start up language retention classes. There  
6 are very few fluent speakers amongst our people. That's  
7 something that we have wanted to do for a long time. It's  
8 the problem of getting together at some place on a regular  
9 basis.

10 We will be affiliated with the Northwest  
11 Urban Aboriginal Society of Prince Rupert and acquiring  
12 the King Edward School facility would solve most our  
13 difficulties. We would no longer have to work out of  
14 homes. We wouldn't be stuck for storage space. We  
15 wouldn't have to run around to rent a hall and we would  
16 have one central place for our graduates and be able to  
17 start all language retention classes for our people.

18 There are many organizations not  
19 directly represented here today. One important one I  
20 would like to quickly mention is the Mission of the Good  
21 Shepherd. It's a non-profit off reserve society. It is  
22 run by a group of about 20 Christian people. They rent  
23 a facility downtown on Fraser Street for \$1,200 per month.

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 I think they pay that out of their pockets. They provide  
2 meals -- I know they provide suppers for -- this facility  
3 is for people who live on the street. It is a place for  
4 them to sleep also or just to sit around and have coffee  
5 or to talk to the Christian people that run it.

6 This place is something that is much  
7 needed in Rupert especially in the winter time. We do  
8 have a number of people that live on the streets. I know  
9 the lady that heads this organization. She works at the  
10 hospital. I'm sure that if she had heard of these hearings  
11 and had time to submit, she would have submitted something.

12 There are many things that these  
13 organizations want to do for the First Nations people.  
14 We shouldn't have to constantly struggle for these services  
15 for our people.

16 Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
18 very much. Thank you to both of you.

19 There are one or two things that I would  
20 like to comment on and one is the point that you've made  
21 about the transportation of Native people who have to go  
22 to the hospital. This is something that has been raised  
23 with us in a number of communities and in some communities

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 we have been told about patients who tried to find their  
2 own way and had to go by plane to the hospital, didn't  
3 speak anything but their own Native language, didn't know  
4 what to do at the airport and had no idea even when they  
5 arrived at the hospital what was happening to them because  
6 nobody there spoke their language and they didn't speak  
7 English.

8                   We've been asked to recommend an escort  
9 service for patients who have to travel for medical  
10 treatment. Obviously, that makes a lot of sense.

11                   I'm concerned about what you've said  
12 about the hearings and it was mentioned earlier by other  
13 presenters, and of course, we will be looking into that  
14 obviously something went wrong there.

15                   You asked a number of questions like  
16 where are the elders, where is the youth, why were the  
17 chiefs not informed? I would just like to mention that,  
18 of course, the Commission has been having consultations  
19 with elders. This is a very important part of the work  
20 of a Commission is holding special consultations with  
21 different groups and one group that we have been consulting  
22 with is, of course, the elders because of the major role  
23 that they play in the lives of Native people in their

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 communities.

2                   So, although they were not present here  
3 we have in fact been holding consultations with the elders  
4 and similarly with young people. We have been going into  
5 schools and into universities to hear the concerns of young  
6 people. We realize that on issues like self-government,  
7 education and so on it's absolutely vital that we hear  
8 the views of young people.

9                   In fact, we are having a national round  
10 table on youth because under our mandate we are required  
11 to get the perspective of young people on all the issues  
12 that are included in our terms of reference.

13                   They do have a different perspective as  
14 do the women on a lot of these issues. So, we are very  
15 conscious of the need to do that and we have been hearing  
16 from young people, although not as much as we would have  
17 liked. We obviously have to do something about that.  
18 I agree with you that the chiefs should have been informed  
19 about the hearings.

20                   And, you ask why was there not an open  
21 door policy. I'm not sure I know the answer to that.  
22 Normally at our hearings we do have participation from  
23 the floor. People who have come out of interest and as

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 far as I know we have never refused to hear anybody who  
2 has come and wanted to speak to us and we've had a number  
3 of presentations from the floor or people on the floor  
4 who have disagreed with what's being said to us by  
5 presenters and have come forward to speak.

6                   So, our process in that sense is open,  
7 but I'm not sure as you say that that was made clear to  
8 everybody. I assure you we will certainly look into what  
9 happened in these areas. I don't know what publicity was  
10 given or notices -- I'm quite sure it went out through  
11 the media, the press, radio and so on about the hearings,  
12 but I will look into the question about how thorough a  
13 job was done in that respect.

14                   If you were inconvenienced by the short  
15 notice, I certainly apologize for that. I'm very  
16 appreciative of your coming and making your presentations  
17 to us.

18                   I'd like to thank you very much. Thank  
19 you.

20                   **SANDRA GREEN:** Thank you.

21                   Could I just ask which elders that you  
22 mentioned have been consulted or the elders in the  
23 Northwest Coast are they a part of that?

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** It was a  
2 group of elders. I'm not sure that I can tell you where  
3 they were all from, but what we did was we held special  
4 consultation in Ottawa with elders and we had a combination  
5 of Native elders and non-Native elders. It was very very  
6 interesting to hear what they had to say and what their  
7 priorities were.

8                   One of the things that was very  
9 interesting about that consultation was that there was  
10 total agreement amongst both groups, Native and  
11 non-Native, that the environment was a very high priority  
12 and was a concern that was shared by both Native and  
13 non-Native people, and therefore, was a good indication  
14 of other relationships that could be developed and specific  
15 areas where there was a mutual concern and sharing of ideas  
16 of how the problems could be addressed.

17                   I'm quite sure that we did not have  
18 elders from all various parts of the country and different  
19 nations present, but we did make an effort to have that  
20 consultation and, of course, we have heard from elders  
21 at our public hearings all across the country elders have  
22 come and addressed us at our public hearings. So, we  
23 wouldn't like you to go away with the impression that we

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 had not had the participation and did not welcome the  
2 participation of elders because that certainly is not the  
3 case.

4 I would like to thank you very much for  
5 coming and talking to us.

6 **SANDRA GREEN:** Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

8 I believe that that is the last of the  
9 presentations that we are to have and that we're going  
10 to have a closing prayer now and I believe that Miss Smith  
11 has agreed to do the closing prayer.

12 Is there somebody else who wants to make  
13 a presentation?

14 Yes, by all means.

15 **PETER EFIMOFF:** Did you want to do the  
16 prayer first?

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Did you  
18 want to make a presentation?

19 **PETER EFIMOFF:** Not a presentation, but  
20 I would like to comment on the educational system as it  
21 ---

22 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes,  
23 please come forward. Yes.

May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1                                   Perhaps you could please state your name  
2 for the record?

3                                   **PETER EFIMOFF:** My name is Peter  
4 Efimoff. I am Native it's just my mother married into  
5 a Russian family.

6                                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** How do you  
7 spell it?

8                                   **PETER EFIMOFF:** E-F-I-M-O-F-F.

9                                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

10                                  **PETER EFIMOFF:** The school I attend  
11 right now is called Prince Rupert Senior Secondary School  
12 and I have several friends that are First Nations students  
13 or I guess as the majority of people like to refer to them  
14 -- I guess you could judge them by the colour of their  
15 skin and call them that, but I just see them as buddies  
16 of mine, not really First Nations people or Native people.  
17 They are just people as far as I'm concerned.

18                                  One of the several things that I've been  
19 taught is that there was a language that us, as Native  
20 people, had years ago. I'm coming in sort of from left  
21 field, but I'm a 19 year old. I don't know much about  
22 my own culture.

23                                  I do know that there was a language that



May 26, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

1 was associated with Native people years and years and years  
2 ago, but that it's just not there in our educational system  
3 at a level say from grade 1 upwards. I realize that at  
4 the time that French and English were chosen as the main  
5 languages in Canada. The people that were setting those  
6 standards obviously were trying to accommodate all the  
7 different cultures in this country and try to make it as  
8 easy a thing to learn, I guess.

9 I was thinking that it might be better  
10 or it might be a little more comfortable for people starting  
11 out at say grade 1 to move up through to grade 12, I guess,  
12 if there was some sort of a Native language that they might  
13 be able to learn -- say a French language -- you should  
14 have a choice maybe. Not just when you go off to  
15 university.

16 I figure you're starting too late at that  
17 age, but maybe have it at an elementary school level as  
18 a choice. Maybe when you're younger you wouldn't make  
19 the choice, maybe your parents would make it for you, but  
20 that's the point there that there should be some language  
21 other than just French and English.

22 I'm not saying just French, English and  
23 Native, but as this country of ours grows and expands and

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 the population increases from different countries maybe  
2 you should be able to learn a little bit of English and  
3 your mother tongue, I guess you'd say.

4                   Not just the languages, but the  
5 different cultures that you're coming from, like Native  
6 culture -- say your parents have a German background or  
7 Asian background, maybe that should be an option as well,  
8 not just -- again, as you go to university a lot of people  
9 that I've talked to that have gone to university said that  
10 these are the options in university. Why aren't those  
11 the options at a high school level or at an elementary  
12 level?

13                   I'm not saying learn it all, it's just  
14 that you're totally narrow in that one subject, but learn  
15 a little bit of your own culture and the Canadian culture  
16 so that when you go into it you're not going into this  
17 society with a feeling of alienation from your own culture.

18                   You have to carry at least a little bit  
19 of it within yourself. You can't just -- I feel detached  
20 from my own culture. I don't know how to speak my own  
21 language. I have learned a few odds and ends from both  
22 my mother and father, Russian and Native, but I have no  
23 real sense of identity with my own culture or my father's

May 26, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 background or my mother's background.

2 I think that in itself contributes to  
3 I guess a lot of negative aspects of high school -- skipping  
4 school, doing drugs, drinking. Just this year alone we've  
5 had a few people out of our school like three or four people  
6 that were killed in drinking accidents. I'm not saying  
7 that's just because they were Native or not, but maybe  
8 if we had a heavier sense of identity with where we come  
9 from, no matter where you come from, Native, European,  
10 Asian, whatever, as long as you have some little piece  
11 that you can carry with you and know that that's where  
12 your from.

13 I just think that would contribute to  
14 a growing country that again as the lady back here referred  
15 to as a mosaic country.

16 Thanks.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

18 May I call on Miss Smith now?

19 A change. Yes.

20 **JOHN STEWART:** At this time I would like  
21 to thank the Commission, Commissioner Wilson, and all those  
22 that are here that spent so much time all day today on  
23 behalf of our urban area, that are living off the reserve

May 26, 1993

242

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Prince Rupert, B.C.**

1 that made presentations today.

2 We are very grateful that you are here  
3 today to listen to our concerns. Hopefully, that you will  
4 take it back to your colleagues or wherever it goes from  
5 here and hopefully we will hear from you in the near future.

6 I would like to ask you something though.  
7 Do you know why Indians were the first ones in Canada?

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I beg your  
9 pardon?

10 **JOHN STEWART:** Do you know why Indians  
11 were the first ones in Canada?

12 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** No.

13 **JOHN STEWART:** Because there were  
14 reservations.

15 At this time I would like to call Miss  
16 Smith.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

18 **(Closing Prayer)**

19 --- Whereupon the hearing adjourned at 6:00 p.m