

COMMISSION ROYALE
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

ENDROIT/LOCATION: LE NOUVEL HÔTEL
1740 RENÉ-LÉVESQUE BLVD. W.
MONTREAL, QUEBEC

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1993

VOLUME: 5

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Montreal, Quebec

---The hearing continues at 9:05 a.m., Friday,

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I would like to welcome you on behalf of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

To begin, I would like to request that you identify yourself and identify your context of interest in aboriginal matters, and you can proceed with the presentation as you wish, once you are ready.

Dr. HUGUES CORMIER, Centre de recherche Fernand-Seguin, Hôpital Louis-H. Lafontaine, University of Montreal: Good morning, Mr. Dussault and Ms. Robinson.

I am Hugues Cormier. I am a researcher at the Centre de recherche Fernand-Seguin of the University of Montreal. I am accompanied by Dr. Emmanuel Stip, also of the Centre de recherche.

We have, I believe, about one hour, until 10 o'clock?

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Yes.

Dr. HUGUES CORMIER: We prepared a more

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formal part but we hope to use the opportunity to discuss with you.

We have, as the title of our presentation indicates, worked on a presentation to you of some thoughts and proposals within a perspective in which the aboriginal issue is discussed in a context of the importance of autonomy for the mental health, certainly, of aboriginal individuals and their communities, but also of all the citizens of Quebec and of Canada.

In a few minutes I will give a short, more general introduction to our presentation. Then Dr. Stip will speak about the mental health aspect in relation to aboriginal people in its biological, psycho-developmental and contextual aspects.

He will then expand somewhat on his personal and professional experiences with the aboriginal peoples and what may have assisted him in formulating the observations we are making here today.

I will then continue in the same vein.

Then Dr. Stip will come back to speak about the importance of the aspect that has already been considerably discussed, of the healing process, and make

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some proposals in the sense of development of autonomy and a positive evolution of the life and health of the aboriginal and Canadian peoples.

After the proposals that Dr. Stip presents, I will again return to speak perhaps more particularly of political autonomy in relation to the aboriginal question.

I would like to begin by noting that among the indicators that point to the urgency of acting and the scope of the suffering and problems experienced by the aboriginal peoples there are, as you know very well, the health and mental health, or social health indicators, which show some often quite substantial discrepancies, whether we speak of suicide rates, discrepancies in terms of frequency of problems such as alcoholism, violence, incarceration, and in some more social indicators, income, average income, and other indicators of that type.

So we, as citizens, physicians, psychiatrists and researchers in the field of mental health, we feel we are involved in these problems, and we would like to contribute to the thinking about them.

We find your terms of reference very

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interesting and it is in our view extremely urgent to move in the direction of a new contract and, in the definition of the parameters with which you are working, we want to emphasize the importance of the health and mental health perspective.

It seems to us that we are living in a society in which the type of government, the constitution, is a confederal or federal one. The sufferings and problems we observe are in our view closely associated, unfortunately, it must be said, to a type of federalism that is too often dominating in the concrete form it takes in relation to certain groups and communities, certainly in so far as the aboriginal peoples are concerned, but also in terms of the Quebecers and other Canadian groups.

We are going to discuss this issue here today, conscious that the indicated solutions that might be developed may also be very relevant, in our opinion, to other communities.

I yield the floor to Dr. Stip.

Dr. EMMANUEL STIP, Centre de recherche Fernand-Seguin, Hôpital Louis-H. Lafontaine, University of Montreal: We thought it was important to resituate mental health at the heart of the aboriginal

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problematic as one of the conditions for success in improving relations between the peoples as well as a necessary condition for any process of self-determination, that you can't have one without the other.

The thing that leads us to introduce this issue is that for decades now there have been important changes in the definition of mental health. The World Health Organization has set the example by defining mental health as an internal experience and an interpersonal group experience. These are assumptions that have also been shared by the Canadian definition, which defines mental health as the capacity of the individual, the group and the community to interact in a way that contributes to the subjective well-being and development of individuals.

There is a Quebec definition, too, which since 1985, with the biology and culture report, has been used to define mental health along three axes. It is a multi-axial definition, and there is a definition, a biological axis, a psycho-developmental axis and a contextual axis.

The biological axis has to do with the genetic, psychological components of an individual with his hereditary makeup, and it means that any

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disturbance of those components can result in an indisposition along that axis. So there is an influence on his mental health.

It is in this sense that an individual can be disturbed, for example, if the level of mercury in the lakes increases unduly. So the issue of the dams is in itself a relevant issue, with biological repercussions that can influence the whole of one's organism.

It is conceivable, as well, that the resulting fragility will have an impact, through one's genetic makeup, for example, on one's vulnerability to the consumption of alcohol or dependency, which may also be a factor to consider in an individual's total health picture.

The psycho-developmental axis is the second axis. It has to do with the emotional, cognitive and relational aspects and, of course, any traumatizing event in an individual's childhood, adolescence or even adulthood may result in a deviation of this psycho-developmental axis, no matter what the event, whether it be the intensity of an incestuous relationship

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or an act of violence or a context of family alcoholism or just a failure in school, it can have this influence on the development of individuals.

Finally, the contextual axis, and this may also be something that we want to bring out in this Commission. This is the axis that refers to the individual in an environment and his relations with the community.

We find along this axis the entire economic, social and political dimension of a community. We could even add the ecological context. Many researchers and studies have shown that there is always the possibility of a relationship between cultural disintegration and psychiatric symptomatology since 1963, when Leyton (PH) conducted a study on the specific population in New England. Many researchers have reproduced this type of approach, which clearly shows the relevance of establishing relationships between the psychiatric problematic and cultural disintegration.

So whether in its Canadian definition or its Quebec definition, the vision of mental health leads us to think that the social, political and cultural aspects

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of mental health problems will be an integral part of the social agenda that a community decides to adopt. Many factors will determine whether this health flourishes or deteriorates.

Nor will we overlook the legislative context and its constitutional dimension, with the statements on human rights and the limitation of collective rights, social responsibility, the wealth of the community fabric, community organizing, the quality and fragility of the environment and, finally, the place of a society's spiritual and scientific values.

This is the context in which we should be speaking, I think.

So a complete definition of mental health should express a much more interactive vision among the different systems of health in the wider sense, and the interactions with other human subjects are influenced by a society's whole value system. One of our objectives in coming here is to draw attention to the need to build some bridges between the immigrant and aboriginal communities to allow the processes following

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self-determination to unfold. If no bridges are built, there will be some difficulties, which we can spell out later.

Dr. HUGUES CORMIER: In the next section we will be presenting to some degree the professional and other experiences we have had with the aboriginal communities, or the aboriginal issue.

Dr. EMMANUEL STIP: We have had occasion several times to be confronted with this issue in our activities. I practiced for seven years in Abitibi-Témiscamingue in various mental health structures and in hospitals that were very close to the Algonquin community and the Cree and in some cases Inuit communities.

This opportunity helped to highlight some particular features. We tried to find differences that would sometimes show failures in our health care system and sometimes as well cultural particularities that, if ignored, would lead to therapeutic setbacks or difficulties.

So we found a number of elements. First, that there are differences in terms of what is referred to as phenomenology, that is, the way in which

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an individual enters into relationship with... his relationship with space, time, and other people. We can't get into all the details here, but there are many points that should be pointed out and conveyed to all those professional communities in the health care field.

We found that the spatial relationship among the aboriginal people who were our patients was quite different from that of the non-aboriginals. The relationship to time, as well, that is, that we had to look at the duration of hospitalization, the duration of treatment, in a different way from what is taught in the faculties of medicine or in the faculties where nursing or social work are taught, in which we find that unfortunately there is still some deficiency in terms of medical education in Canada.

In Quebec alone there is not one course being offered to doctors or psychiatrists on the aboriginal specificity in terms of health care. All these aspects of time and space are factors in the healing process and in the way in which health care is delivered.

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We also found some defence mechanisms that are special, and that should be conveyed and taught in a more significant way. So there is a deficiency in terms of medical education.

We also found that it was necessary to rethink the way in which we organize health care. It often happened that someone was hospitalized in Abitibi for depression or psychosis, and our role, little by little, was not so much to spend some time organizing health care to heal the patient, but rather to prepare for a transfer to a structure in which the aboriginal culture was more established and in which the institution was managed by aboriginal people themselves.

We might have thought of Oka when dealing with a problem of drug abuse, but we worked above all with Poundmaker Lodge in Alberta, which has a philosophy of health care that integrates the traditional aboriginal medicine in the cultural and care aspects. It is integrated with contemporary medicine.

So our role was just a preparatory job, like a delivery, and this delivery was done in another

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structure, in closer relationship with the culture.

If I mention this, it is because it could result in some problems of organization. Sending someone from Abitibi to Alberta poses the problem of sectorization of administrative obstacles, of costs, and we tended to have some confrontations with the health care system when we should, in our opinion, have been giving priority to the anthropological aspect of health care rather than the administrative or bureaucratic aspect.

Perhaps more than the other societies in Canada, the aboriginal peoples should be given special treatment in this regard, to respect this rhythm, culture, in some cases the language, the rituals, and not to impose, because the bureaucracy is established like that, care that is not always best adapted to their needs.

Poundmaker Lodge, then, was a good resource in this regard and we are now erecting in Quebec, as well, some structures that are interesting.

Concerning alcoholism, it is true that it appears to be a major problem from everything we

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could see, but we also found some experiments that were very promising. We had the opportunity to have some contacts with the Alkali Lake experiment, also in Western Canada, which showed the new awareness and the development of collective responsibility for this scourge.

Through films we managed to show in Abitibi, we also came to have some interesting discussions with both our community and the aboriginal community, and this kind of experience should be contagious.

The final experience we have had since coming to Montreal, in the context of the psychiatric care provided to the homeless in Montreal. I volunteered for a resource called Chédoris (PH), which is a structure for homeless women, women without resources, which is in downtown Montreal.

To our great surprise, I found that in one year 17 per cent of the clientele was of Inuit origin. Very often it is in the immediate neighbourhood of the Forum. These people come to the city and very soon find themselves without resources, without housing.

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This structure dispenses activities, money, food, clothing to help them. But the distress is clear, and in this case the lack of resources provided by the government agencies or in close coordination with the hospitals and social assistance centres. We are obliged to resort to alternative structures to help them.

We have also found a failure in the appropriate participation of the medical emergency services in Montreal in offering appropriate respect for the particular problems of Inuit women.

So that is our experience, to some degree, which you will find is described in greater detail in our written brief.

Dr. HUGUES CORMIER: I am going to continue in the same vein.

In my case my experience is much more disembodied, if I may say so, but nevertheless...I will add a small personal note, if I may.

First of all, in the 1960s I studied history in the schools in Quebec, simply to indicate to you my contacts with the aboriginal issue.

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Then I would say that I was interested by, among other things, the positions taken by Mr. René Lévesque and his government in relation to a certain opening that I felt and that has often been referred to by aboriginal groups.

I subsequently became involved in thinking about the Canadian constitutional question, in a health care perspective, as I was saying at the beginning, such as looking, for example, at the possible links between the socio-economic and constitutional situation of a society or human group and its health at the macroscopic level, for example, observing, in relation to Quebec society, the extremely large upward fluctuations in the suicide rate from the 1960s on, that is, from the turbulence in values and social changes that were occurring.

To continue, I presented some suggestions to various commissions, such as those held in Quebec, Bélanger-Campeau, as well as Beaudoin-Edwards. In addressing those issues, in fact, the aboriginal issue and its analogies with the problem experienced by Quebec society from certain standpoints interested me.

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I was also able to participate in the constitutional conference held in Toronto, which was on the topic "Identity, values and rights", where I was able to discuss with some aboriginal representatives some common problems between the aboriginal peoples and Quebec.

This has been very pragmatic. These are not scientific things. In my participation in these groups and conferences, and I might mention the evening when the group Kashtin performed in Toronto and in which I must say that the kind of disintegration and the Canadian problem where we don't often manage to acknowledge each other, that night, with some aboriginal and English Canadian fellow citizens, I had a very very positive experience in which I would say the unifying link and the contribution to the process of reidentification in Canada through the aboriginal contribution was experienced, and I think this could be verified with other people who had that experience.

I would like to add that in that process I discovered, and again this is very, very personal, that my wife has some Abenaki ancestors, and thus my daughter. These are things that, I would say, make

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your perception of identity and of what you are and what you are experiencing evolve.

Well, I will stop there.

Dr. EMMANUEL STIP: To come to some proposals, when we think of mental health as the contextual axis in particular presented it, we think there should be some reappropriation of the tools of the aboriginal peoples, the much sharper cultural tools, and that this reappropriation should also be contemporaneous with a sharing of the aboriginal culture for the non-aboriginals.

In terms of medical practice, in terms of psychiatric practice, we find that the major obstacle is the difficulty in understanding other cultures. In the psychiatric field, the primary thing is always to be able to encounter the other through a culture. We could propose, in the same way we can propose it for a society, it could also be a proposal for each individual.

Before getting into the proposals as such, we have this impression that the decisions must be taken now, of course, and that the healing process may not occur at the level of this generation. I have often

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had occasion to talk about this with Richard Kistabish (PH), who is an Algonquin who has helped us to share a lot in terms of experiences.

He often says it poetically, that they will someday emerge from winter. One gets the impression that this winter may still exist for that generation, but that this is no reason not to begin the care now and that even if we may be thinking of a cultural revolution in terms of Canada on the aboriginal issue, the efforts must be maintained for many years, but begin them now so that the results can emerge in the next generation, and we should not slacken. On the contrary, it is necessary, in the same way that often in medicine the results are not immediately felt, it must be hoped that these results will be significant in one or two generations. This is what we call transgenerational healing, but it is not something that should prevent us from making some efforts.

What we might propose is that in fact there be the creation of aboriginal cultural spaces for the non-aboriginals. Why do I say that? If we want there to be a more productive cultural encounter, it will be

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necessary for the non-aboriginal people to have some access to this culture, in a more significant way than at present.

For example, we would propose that in each major Canadian city there should be an aboriginal cultural centre to promote the development of the Amerindian communicable culture. It would not be a museum, not at all, but rather a space in which transcultural communication is possible and facilitated.

The Goethe Institutes that the Germans have developed in different countries are examples of these structures in relation to German culture throughout the world. Everywhere in the world, in the major cities, you may have a Goethe Institute, that is, a place in which you can learn the language, meet people, contact the media and encounter artistic creations.

These places would allow some rapprochement between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples, they would facilitate cultural recovery and mutual familiarization. This approach should also involve televised audiovisual space. It is necessary to create some bridges between the two worlds, and these places would

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have this function for the entire urban population in Canada and Quebec.

Certainly, when you live in Montreal you are less in contact with the Amerindian culture, but that is precisely why some efforts should be made. There are very few places in Montreal, for example, where one has access, or one can meet in a human, not hysterical way, that is, without talking about conflicts, without talking about tobacco, talking about other things and getting into a real encounter.

That is why we propose that there actually be the creation of cultural spaces in all the major Canadian cities.

Second point, which is also along the same vein, the second proposal, is a policy of defence and promotion of the Amerindian languages.

It is catastrophic, in our view, that greater efforts are not being made to preserve the aboriginal languages. It is incredible that I, for example, who have been working and in contact with these people, when I wanted to participate in their care I had some

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problems in getting instruction in these languages. There is no school, there is no university, the opportunity seldom arises, where one can get access to education in the Algonquin or Iroquois languages.

It is extremely difficult for a non-aboriginal person to find a place in which these languages are taught. Yet an apprenticeship in these languages would enable health care professionals to more authentically encounter the others' culture and communicate more effectively with a part of the population. It would also secure greater trust, since it would be evidence of an approach to the other culture, a transcultural approach.

On a more comprehensive plane, a language that is no longer spoken is a dying language, and we should be devoting as much effort to the survival of these treasures as we do to the preservation of animals that also sometimes in the process of disappearing. The whole of humanity would thereby benefit.

This promotion should also involve the aboriginal peoples themselves. There must, of course, be a language policy so the aboriginal peoples can have the means to continue to speak and think in their language, but it is impossible to learn an Algonquin or Iroquoian

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language in Montreal, although you can learn dozens of foreign languages. If I want to learn Ukrainian tomorrow morning, I register somewhere. If I want to learn Vietnamese, I register somewhere.

Here in Canada, where there are still people who are founders of the country, we aren't even able in a month of Sundays to find out where we can learn those languages.

These are some concrete proposals, that we have tried to make extremely concrete, to show that the aboriginal peoples, in their reappropriation of their culture, their economic and political tools, are going to head toward self-determination, autonomy.

It is indispensable that in a parallel way there be some bridges built, so the non-aboriginal population clearly understands what is happening, that they have access to this culture, that there be some exchanges, and that in this framework we can speak of a cultural revolution, and that it will be much less conflictual and will be a success and also an advantage for the non-aboriginal peoples to discover this resource, which is a founding element in Canada and is present in

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manifestations that all too often are manifestations of conflicts although they could be approached otherwise.

It is to some degree our role as psychiatrists to think that we can also have a concern for health within an approach such as this.

Dr. HUGUES CORMIER: I am going to continue with some proposals that are perhaps more for discussion and less concrete than those that have just been made.

In terms of language, among other things, we have had Law 101 and I think that in what you were saying this is a sort of Law 2002 which might be proposed.

A proposal that I would like to discuss is the issue of raising awareness...I find that the aspect of aboriginal cultural space for the non-aboriginal people is certainly a part of the answer to the problem of the gulf of ignorance or misunderstanding that exists among non-aboriginals in relation to the aboriginal peoples.

The idea here is less to recommend or propose concrete things than to say, in addition to what Dr. Stip has just raised, to emphasize our desire

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to encourage you to advance mechanisms that we have some difficulty in seeing concretely, to raise the awareness of people, and inform them more effectively.

Among other things, on a particular point, which is the following, that is, from our standpoint we have been talking here primarily of course about the problem experienced by the aboriginal peoples. I referred earlier to the suicide rate in Quebec which, as you know, is another extremely important social problem. This is true in Quebec but it is also very true in the Northwest Territories, in Alberta, in Saskatchewan and in other western societies.

Globally, the western world is experiencing a crisis in mental health and in its life. Somewhat paradoxically, at first sight, I think the aboriginal phenomenon, in which the aboriginal people can make an indispensable contribution to something that is very important in the area of mental health, that is, a healthy mental life is precisely one in which the rational, cognitive aspects are in proper relationship to the emotional aspects.

As we also say, we do not forget that we live in human societies. We don't just live in economies. I believe that the aboriginal peoples, while experiencing

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some very serious problems, have something to teach us, an indispensable contribution to share with us, and that it is necessary, I think, to send that message to the non-aboriginal peoples, how this watertight barrier exists in our contemporary societies between the emotional and the cognitive.

I was struck, when I came two weeks ago, by the testimony of young Attikameks-Montagnais who were speaking, without the C I would say C the discomfort I felt, about their culture, the importance of the songs, of their language and all that, and who did so with a spontaneity that some non-aboriginal people, we feel virtually unauthorized to refer to these emotional aspects.

I think it is very important to communicate the contribution that the aboriginal peoples are going to make to our society in general.

From the more specific standpoint of the development of self-government and self-determination, we think the proposals that were made by the Forum paritaire québécois are very, very positive, as is the importance of finding equal space, in fact,

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mechanisms to work together to negotiate and find concrete solutions to the development of this self-government.

In particular, the development of self-government over mainly aboriginal territories in which the participation would be that of all citizens who inhabit the territory, thus governments that are not purely ethnic but rather territorial is, in our view, very positive. I would like to discuss it with you but I think it is a fact that the Quebec government, for example, is a government that must work for the needs of all of its people.

That should be the case as well with those governments that develop in territories with a largely aboriginal population.

I think we will stop at this point for the more formal section and continue with the discussion.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I would first like to thank you for this presentation on a subject that is extremely important, the subject, among others, of mental health.

As you said, the issue of mental health, which comprises several facets, some more

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immediate and others somewhat more remote, you spoke of three axes, is an extremely important one. It is one of the major problems we find in the aboriginal communities.

Of course there are some extreme cases or situations in which, in fact, we have pulled through. You referred to Alkali Lake in British Columbia. We held hearings in that region and met with people who told us in detail about the experience they had in getting control of their community.

We were also, a year ago, in Val d'Or, and we went to Grand Lac Victoria.

There is of course a multidisciplinary team that has been working for a dozen or more years. The entire healing process is something that is absolutely essential. Often the people are not too sure how to tackle it because the problems are interrelated C alcohol, unemployment, substance abuse of all kinds C which lead to suicide, and violence.

Often, therefore, they prefer to cover things up and deny rather than start to look at the problem within. Furthermore, when outside teams go into

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the communities it is usually on a very selective basis, and doesn't result in long-term solutions because those, obviously, have to come from within the community itself.

But when the problem lasts for several generations it raises the whole question of how to get out of it. I confess that this is one of the areas in which the Commission feels the most pressure because the methods and solutions that have been presented to us are not obvious. We talk about a lot of things but you get the impression that despite what you say, for example, in terms of generations, that it may not be for this one but for another, that the problems are so immediate and urgent with the aboriginal youth, who are numerous as you know.

I put the question again in somewhat more global terms, and these are known phenomena, but little known basically by the general public as opposed to problems that are in the headlines virtually every day. We see it when there are some extreme cases like Davis Inlet or certain reserves in Ontario with waves of suicides, etc.

We have held special consultations on the suicide phenomenon among aboriginal people in

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general, among the young people in particular. We hope to be able to produce fairly rapidly an interim report on this issue. It is not an easy issue, it is an issue that is not peculiar to the aboriginal peoples, but one with a particular context.

Viola Robinson and I were in Big Cove (PH) just before the onset of the last wave of suicides, in May 1992. No one, during the public hearings, really reported any major concern to us in relation to suicide. It happened on the 7th, 8th and 9th.

I am throwing the ball back to you, somewhat. There is, of course, no single solution. We can come back to the proposals on the aboriginal/non-aboriginal interface culturally. It is clear that language and culture are fundamental. We have been told that everywhere, there is no solution without working on the strengthening of identity.

In terms, strictly speaking, of the way in which a community that has relatively endemic problems, which is often isolated off by itself, how do we ensure that the thing that sparks the process of taking

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charge can occur?

In Montreal we had the Manwan women's task force among the Attikamek. We held some hearings a year earlier and they had really made a very, very important attempt to get on top of the violence issue. So it is possible, and there are some beginnings, and it is fragile.

Do we take it case by case? One often gets the impression in extreme cases that you almost have to open up the community for a short while. We know that on the Canadian level we can't do that. The communities themselves have to react.

I am expressing to some degree what we feel and the scope of the situations we have seen and that you are no doubt aware of, in Northwestern Quebec in particular.

You have seen, for example, the situation in Alkali Lake. How do we affect...obviously, if there had been economic development...

We know that the problems are the essential, education, managing to convince the young people to persevere, etc. You often hear the expression that we're stirring the soup. I guess I am sending the

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ball back to your court. Generally speaking, you have certainly felt this and perhaps thought about it as well.

You have told us a fair number of things that make sense and that we have heard C perhaps not all C presented like that. Do you have some additional thoughts to give us, on the issue of suicide in particular, how the communities might intervene.

Dr. EMMANUEL STIP: On the question of suicide, it is true that at the moment there are not a lot of research teams that have very concrete answers to propose.

Except that in Abitibi in the non-aboriginal population it is one of the highest rates. I was working in Malartic (PH) for seven years. The rate there is twice that of the province, which is already high. And that is a population that is white, that is, I should say, multi-ethnic as well, the population in Abitibi.

Of course there are no doubt some factors that are contributory, in the way in which Abitibi was colonized, things like that, but there is not at the moment any concrete answer, unfortunately. I could not tell you that.

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At the Centre de recherche Fernand-Seguin we have a team that is working very seriously on suicide, and we are more in the period when we are trying to understand than to propose solutions. Although there are some telephone hot lines, S.O.S. Suicide, there is no impact yet, you get the impression, on the rate of suicides.

My reply may be discouraging, but it is within today's reality.

The second aspect, I was led to think of in transgenerational terms because it is true that it is discouraging for a professional who wants to have immediate results on a problem of alcoholism, on a problem of injury in a family, you want things to happen quickly.

And it's true, they must happen quickly. What is necessary and is happening quickly is attending to the urgent, the serious things.

I have had a fair number of periods of depression when I saw the scope of the scourge and that it would be bad if professionals like me or others were to fold our arms and do something else in face of this powerlessness. What restores my hope is that it is true

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that it is in terms of education that the decisions can be made, and in this I am speaking of the contextual level, that is, the entire context of this cultural reappropriation or cultural transformation.

The results will not come to that generation now. Maybe it's sad to say so, but it is also joyful to say it, to the degree that if we do it for a generation that will come after, we will get some results there, and that, I think, can be the case.

It releases me somewhat from depression to say that. There are many fields in the history of health care. When we look at what has been written about the history of health care or medicine throughout the world, where there have been results that were never appreciable within one generation or even two or three generations.

Generally speaking, everything that involves the major public health problems can be expressed like that. I think this is so with alcoholism, violence, even in relation to incest. Maybe things are too late for the coming generation. It can be done in another generation.

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The entire educational process must be integrated with the health problem.

The third aspect is that the combined structures, that is, of western medicine, Canadian medicine, is one of the best in the world and there is no reason why it should not provide better results than that.

What counts in the healing processes is the entire cultural context in which healing is done. And if there are no structures that are more combined, if there is no aboriginal coloration within the health care structures to dispense care to these people, we will be missing out as well on a healing process.

Even if we have the technical tools, the scanners, the great blood analyses, it will not be in terms of all those analyses that we will arrive at a healing process. There is something else. It must be integrated forthwith into our medical culture, and this must be done through education in the faculty of medicine, etc. Here too, it may not be in this generation but in the generation of the future professionals that we will get some results.

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Dr. HUGUES CORMIER: Suicide among young people, there is the question of the individuals. Everyone has his or her personal history to which it is necessary to pay full attention.

If we speak in a more comprehensive spirit, it is as straightforward as saying it is necessary to provide some hope. It is necessary to open some hope. The individual, confronting his own life, must say to himself: My life has some meaning, or does not. It is as simple as that.

It seems to me that this is where we can make the link between the individual who comes to say "my life no longer has any meaning, I am going to end it", or "I'm going on" if there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

I think that in that sense the Commission and what comes after it are crucial, in the sense that there must be some light at the end of the tunnel, some real capacity to be able to get control over oneself, that it will not be simply some exhortations saying get hold of yourself, but that there are some concrete accomplishments and concrete mechanisms through which an individual can give some sense to his life because he sees

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that this can lead to something.

I think that, overall, this can be done, but we can also, since there are some experiences that have been referred to, like that in Alberta, etc.

Often, in psychotherapy, we talk about the corrective emotional experience, that is, that after a traumatic experience and some problems, the positive thing is to have a corrective experience. We need some community corrective emotional experiences.

I make an association, no doubt there are many such things in Canada, but among other things the history of our neighbours in the United States...there is one instance that comes to mind. It is an aboriginal community on the Pacific Coast, close to the Pacific Ocean, where they had some terrifying health indicators at the time when the so-called Termination Bill was proclaimed with respect to the aboriginal people.

Faced with the catastrophic aspect of the developing disintegration of the aboriginal communities, there was for that community, and I would attach to our report a specific reference to that experience, the institution of some way to restore autonomy to this community, which is now flourishing very well,

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not only in health but economically.

I don't know if that helps to answer the question. There is also the relationship between an individual's suicide, the psychiatric aspect as well I would say, but it is its relationship with the political aspect too.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We are aware that the political environment, the economic environment, and hence the medium and long term solutions, are fundamental. Of course there is always the hope as well of beginning immediately.

I would like to give the floor to my colleague, Viola Robinson.

[English follows]

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In concluding, I would simply like to indicate...you mentioned that in teaching mental health in Quebec there is no aboriginal facet that is peculiar to the aboriginal reality. You are certainly well placed to push for this to be done in terms of the curricula. We can only encourage you to do so. There is indeed a lack that is significant, which should be overcome.

In closing, I would like to thank you once again for having made this presentation. If you have anything to say following this request, in some way, because it seems so obvious to me, I will give you the floor, and then we will conclude.

Dr. HUGUES CORMIER: In fact, Dr. Stip published a few weeks ago a manual that is addressed to the college students. I will let Dr. Stip talk about it.

If you don't mind, I am going to reformulate something that I said earlier and Emmanuel

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will...we don't have the time....

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: It will have to be done briefly, because we are already running behind schedule.

Dr. EMMANUEL STIP: In fact, that is what must be done, I think, in pressuring the educational bodies in medicine, nursing, etc. which have to be sensitized to that issue.

I wrote a school manual with a psychologist for all the CEGEPs in Quebec, with the psychology and mental health curriculum. Deliberately, in the history of madness, since the first chapter is "History of madness", there is a place, precisely, the way in which the Amerindians, before the arrival of the Europeans, represented disturbances of the mind to themselves, with their approach as well.

So that is in a school manual and I think it is important that, as early as the CEGEP, people can get access to such information.

In the working papers I asked Richard Kistabish to write about how mental health is represented, and he did a chapter in the book.

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This, I think, is how we can develop a preventive approach. With this generation already, they will be getting access to the aboriginal culture through a book on mental health. I think these are small concrete steps that we should all generalize.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Very well.

We had a presentation by Dr. Augustin Roy and the Corporation professionnelle des médecins, and once again, in terms of university instruction as such, you are encouraged, and I think you need not be encouraged, you yourself have expressed the deficiency that there was on that side.

Once again, we thank you for having come and met with us and discussed with us concerning these difficult questions. I think you mentioned that you would be sending us a written brief. We are extremely interested if you would do so within the next few weeks. It could influence the deliberations of the Commission. Thank you.

We are going to adjourn for about ten minutes, before resuming the session with a presentation

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by Mr. Louis-Marie Ouellette, a professor at the University of Sherbrooke.

-- Adjournment of the hearing at 10:11 a.m.

-- Resumption of the hearing at 10:39 a.m.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The Commission will resume its public hearing with a presentation by Mr. Louis-Marie Ouellette, a professor at the Faculty of Education of the University of Sherbrooke.

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE, Professor, University of Sherbrooke: Lady and Gentleman, I wish to begin by thanking the Royal Commission for its invitation to the University of Sherbrooke, as an educational institution in the Quebec community, to participate in the public discussion for the purpose of suggesting some possible solutions to facilitate the establishment of harmonious relations between our respective societies.

It was because of my personal experience in the late 1970s as principal of an elementary school in a Cree community north of Abitibi that an assistant to the rector of the University requested that I participate, in a personal capacity, in your proceedings.

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Although this professional experience was extremely satisfying, this experience of one year, by itself, is insufficient for me to present myself as an expert in the field of educational institutions involving communities of differing cultures. However, for several years I have been in charge of developing educational curricula the general thrust of which is based on the responsibility of educators according to a partnership-based model of organization.

Now, since the Commission's mandate is to identify the major parameters of a new social contract between the aboriginal peoples and Canadian society that can lead to reconciliation, and more specifically to a partnership, it is on the basis of my relevant experience as an open curriculum education planner, in addition to my short but enriching experience in the Cree community, that I come today to submit my point of view on the concept of a partnership in education.

In our modern societies, education is provided by institutions the overriding function of which is to organize systematically the intellectual, spiritual and social development of individuals. One of

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the objectives of public education is to prepare each individual, while he is being integrated into the community, to participate actively in the consolidation and improvement of the community structures.

Now, when it is young people who are just beginning their schooling, the educational system must take into consideration that they will be "operational", so to speak, within 10 to 15 years, at least.

If we consider that we tend to refer to the model of the education that we have already received, which expresses a regressive attitude, it becomes important to be able to identify how our current educational systems take into consideration the future realities that our young people will be experiencing. Within this perspective, such educational systems must become prospective.

Individuals can be participants in the community's structures insofar as they are able to assume specific responsibilities within the agencies to which they are connected. The public education system, as a social institution, can be defined as an organism that links individuals to each other or, to use the

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expression of Gregory Bateson, a "pattern which connects".

If a public education system is composed of individuals of different cultures, it is important to develop a model (or "pattern") that links the cultures to each other. Accordingly, all of the people involved in the implementation of an intercultural system of education C pupils, parents, administrators and planners C have a responsibility to identify an educational pattern that is consistent with their aspirations.

This responsibility or personal involvement concerning the identification of the characteristics or parameters of a model is essential since, if individuals are prevented from acting or unable to act positively and concretely on their action model, they will have to refer to models that already exist, and if these existing models are conflictual models, the relationships will be affected.

Within a prospective approach, when the task is to analyze the educational system as a model

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of relationships between individuals or between social groups, we find that there are no fixed, infallible rules that could be used to manage the difficulties inherent in changes in the educational structures that are required by the present or future transformations of social relationships.

Accordingly, the order of priorities necessitated by the adoption of a new educational model is the result of a public debate in which the partners are led to highlight the cultural characteristics relative to their identity. If such an objective is to be realizable, it is important that a general perspective be adopted that is based on flexibility and cultural diversity, since, as we can see in the current conflicts, hostilities break out when individuals are so totally confused with their culture that they become blinded to any other.

Thus, in the adoption of parameters for educational actions, individuals are urged to highlight the general principles, to the degree that they acknowledge that other principles are embodied in cultures other than their own. If there is a willingness to establish

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an order of priorities or parameters that reflect the association of cultures, then the dialogue, through the exchange of ideas that it arouses, contributes to the discussion prior to the establishment of an agreement among the partners concerning the characteristics of this new order, an agreement based on the relationship between the cultures and not on the predominance of one over the other, an agreement based on the measured balance between the general principles of the educational model and the cultural characteristics of the communities.

In the partnership context, the issue of individual and collective responsibility is the characteristic factor in establishing the order of priorities. Accordingly, responsibility is a principle in organizing relationships within a prospective system of public education.

Now, the choices that the partners have to make when determining the parameters of the educational system can be a source of controversy, of dilemmas or of disagreements. These are unavoidable questions of ethics. That is why it is important, in my view, to orient and base the choice of the parameters in terms of an explicit ethical position.

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We find that the concept of ethics is being applied with increasing frequency to such professions as medicine, law or even engineering. It can be noted that the concept is often used in a professional ethics sense, where the issue involves the applicable rules of conduct; that is a prescriptive aspect.

It is, however, possible to understand the ethics concept as a formal principle indicating the particular criteria to which educational actions must be subordinated. The practices still have to be conceived in terms of the responsibility of individuals according to the different contexts in which the educational model is being applied.

The concept of ethics in education, in the sense of all the criteria or recommendations informing educational practices, reflects this aspect of responsibility in human relationships. So it is desirable, in my view, to develop an ethical perspective as a frame of reference and analysis in the elaboration and evaluation of public intercultural education systems in terms of the challenges posed by the affirmation of autonomy of partners of differing cultures.

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This ethical perspective involves the ability to direct educational practices toward the successful accomplishment of the actions that are to be undertaken. The ability to determine the criteria of success corresponds to the ability to recognize the limits of our possibilities, first, from the standpoint of personal identity, in terms of self-esteem; secondly, from the interpersonal standpoint, in terms of openness to others; thirdly, from the standpoint of the institutions, in terms of integration to the social structures and relationships between the communities. The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has analyzed these three standpoints in another context.

In the first place, in a public and intercultural educational system, if we want the ethical criterions of self-esteem to represent one of the parameters of educational actions, it is important that each individual, at any level whatsoever in the institution, be able to present his point of view concerning the conditions for successfully accomplishing the desired training or conduct.

To this effect, each individual must be in a situation in which he can intervene in the choice

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of orientations underlying the practices of the educational system. Self-esteem is linked to the capacity to behave intentionally.

This means, then, that one of the stages in curriculum planning is to ensure that all participants indeed have the responsibility to express the points that are significant in the particular educational process. These significant points affect the daily realities that must be taken into account, which implies, to take a simple example among many others, that when selecting educational materials, it is necessary to ensure that each person can recognize himself, with his cultural, linguistic, spiritual or economic differences.

Thus, in each particular educational context, the issues affecting the objectives and content of the activities, the educational materials, the teaching methods, the methods of training, of evaluation, must be determined by the individuals who are participating in the educational situation.

An individual can recognize himself in the situation that is proposed and find some connection with his deepest concerns to the degree that he discovers

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some way of his own to envisage his orientation. The consequence of this ability to conduct himself in accordance with his intentions gives the individual the possibility of altering the way in which situations unfold, the capacity, where necessary, to change the course of events, and thus the power of initiative. From this standpoint, self-esteem is a consequence of an individual's responsibility.

Secondly, the criteria for success in educational systems involve the adoption of and adherence to a mode of functioning in the relationships between individuals. Within this perspective, concern for others as an ethical characteristic in interpersonal relationships constitutes one of the parameters.

The relationship between individuals must be based on a basic relational symmetry, specifying thereby that the relationship is not based on the power of one over the other, which would mean that one can become a victim of the other.

Symmetry in relationships means openness toward others, an interest in others, empathy for what others may be feeling. In this sense, the mode

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of functioning must promote personal commitment and mutual trust, to establish common objectives that both respect differences and go beyond them.

Concretely, some activities must be devoted to this sharing between the partners of a specific agency, a place in which it is possible to communicate one's difficulties in the pursuit of the established objectives, in order to receive from one's peers the support one needs to continue the action, a place in which it is also possible to share discoveries and achievements, not in a spirit of competition but as a means of demonstrating that the things learned are positive indications of change and evolution. The major general objectives of the educational systems must promote sufficiently refined analytical practices to be able to assess the climate in interpersonal relations and, where necessary, suggest concrete steps to improve the situation.

Thirdly, the criteria for success concern the integration of individuals in terms of the educational system, where the issue is how to achieve a fair distribution of benefits and duties, as well as an initiation in social responsibilities as a means of

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ensuring that institutions adapt in accordance with the evolution of the changes to come.

It is important that each individual can feel he has an active role to play in the way in which the institution is organized. The manifestation of individual responsibilities in the management of the institutions, which is where the partnership is fully concretized, requires that the role assigned to the individual be defined within the perspective of a functional organization of the institution and not in the spirit of a hierarchy of values, with a distinction between the so-called superior and inferior functions.

The advantages that an individual can derive from institutions are based on the investments he makes in terms of his possibilities and not on the basis of the prerogatives of his position. If an individual can derive excessive benefits from a relatively small input, there will be a feeling of injustice.

Exercising responsibilities leads to defining the functioning of our institutions on the basis of a search for proportional equity, in which everyone is allocated his due through his action and not through

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his title. However, the administrative procedures must be flexible enough to reflect the possible qualitative differences in the actions undertaken in relation to cultural differences.

One last point, to highlight the importance of using the framework of educational institutions as a springboard for initiation in the functions that individuals will have to fulfil in society.

The individuals involved in educational agencies, no matter what their age or function, experience the social issues that concern them directly C whether it is dropping out, violence in the schools, inter-ethnic confrontations or the rapid transformations in the social fabric in general.

Because the educational institution can represent a place of initiation to individual responsibility, can represent the place in which the issues to which the individuals can identify are debated, can represent the opportunity to discover one's interests and stimulate one's initiatives; because the educational institution, simultaneous with the pursuit of learning or behavioural objectives, can lead to developing

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friendships and promoting the sense of commitment; because the educational institution can teach us that, within a perspective of distributive equity, the benefits are proportional to the efforts made, for all these reasons the educational institution represents the best place in which all those involved can act, in accordance with their function, to bring about concrete solutions to the problems that are of concern to them at their level.

Accordingly, young people will have the experience that their actions, minimal as they may be, can have, this capacity to alter the course of events, this aptitude to become a partner in the essential exercise of validating one's community, in the establishment of an order of priorities in relations with others, relations based on the recognition of and respect for differences.

I hope that these few thoughts that I address to you will have served to show that the concept of ethics, while extremely difficult to identify, may be of some utility as a point of reference in the search for frameworks or models that connect our different societies, insofar as the educational institution can be one.

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I am aware of the abstract character of my presentation, but I nevertheless hope that my remarks have helped to shed a different light on the discussion, and C who knows C to raise some new issues.

Thank you.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I would like to thank you, Mr. Ouellette, for this presentation, which, while abstract, as you say, is certainly stimulating.

Education, as you know, is a central point in the Commission's terms of reference. Education among the aboriginal people, by the aboriginal people, but also education in the public school systems in which some aboriginal people come to get instruction. So it is necessary to operate on two planes, the plane of the aboriginal schools, which are essential, certainly kindergarten, more so the elementary, to clearly establish the identity, the languages, but also the plane of the interface with the public education systems, often at the secondary level, certainly at the college and university level.

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The aboriginal peoples are aware that they must participate in both types of systems. There is a debate over the balance between the two.

This will be, I guess, my first question. Is your brief situated both in a context of aboriginal schools in the aboriginal community, largely under aboriginal control, as for example in terms of the Cree school board in Northern Quebec, or is it also situated in the context of the CEGEP de Sept-Îles, which accepts a fair number of Montagnais, and I could list some, and similarly some secondary schools.

This is perhaps my first question, to clarify somewhat the scope of your remarks.

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: Since the point of view that I adopted in my presentation is a very general one, based on the concept of ethics, it seems to me that this concept is applicable in the two situations that you mention.

To this effect, I think that I am more familiar, however, in situations in which both cultures can intervene, but I think the concept of ethics, which brings us back to the identity of the individual, to

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interpersonal relations, and to the structures of our institutions is equally applicable in both societies.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In the principal spirit with which you are familiar, that is, in which the two communities can intervene, if you refer to the public education system in general, which accepts aboriginal people, young people in particular, it is obvious that our public system is in the majority non-aboriginal.

Are you essentially saying, on this three-pronged ethics concept, to basically throw some light on the management of the schools, to throw some light on the content of the education, as happens in a context in which in theory the institutions are mainly non-aboriginal, the teachers are mainly non-aboriginal, so it is a concept that is essentially addressed to the institutions, to the teaching staff, to tell them you have to take into account this or that element.

There is an ethics that one must have in order to be effective, not only for the general clientele but for the particular clientele, which is the aboriginal

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clientele. Although your principles are valid also for the general clientele, no doubt.

Can you elaborate somewhat on this?

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: I think there is a conception of the educational structures. There is a rigid conception of our educational institutions in which we rely on experts to determine our orientations. For example, take the case of the development of the content, the development of curriculum, among others.

In my opinion, I think that it is important that the institutions, instead of relying exclusively on experts, leave room, leave some time, and in my opinion it is important to do this, to structure it formally, to leave room for some of those involved, who may be in a minority, to explain their points of view. The important thing is to ensure that the points of view that are expressed can be taken into account in the development, for example, of curriculum or a specific school program.

It might be an activity, for example, at the beginning of the year or, as I might experience it at the university, when we encounter groups that want

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to take advantage of a program, It is to meet with them, to have a specific period in which the people determine their needs, indicate their orientations, and expect that we can take these into account in establishing the program later.

It is a very simple point, I think, but I don't think it is a point that is implemented very often, to say the least.

It is as if you had some idea of the authority that must decide for everyone. I think it is important that each of us have his own share in the decisions, as I was saying earlier, minimal as they may be.

For example, when you speak of the educational institutions that generally address a certain type of community, for example, in terms of the adoption of academic materials, I think it is important to be able to ensure that each individual, even if part of a minority, has room to identify himself. Otherwise it is difficult to identify oneself in our culture, when you don't see it anywhere.

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Obviously, in terms of principles, to ensure that the content of the curriculum promotes self-esteem, to ensure that one has some input, that it is symmetrical and not asymmetrical, in the sense that the groups actually have some input, etc., that we develop a sense of responsibility through concrete participation and corresponding benefits, and that this reflect on the community.

It's all right to explain it like that, but I will tell you, for example, Ms. Robinson and I were at Concordia University two weeks ago, where they had initiated a symposium with some aboriginal and non-aboriginal youth. There were some professors from a number of CEGEPs in Montreal, including the CEGEP John Abbott.

Speaking with members of the teaching staff, we were told, listen, we are being besieged with intercultural issues through a situation in which, this year, in the first year of CEGEP, we have 50 young Crees and just about 50 young Inuit. Five years ago we had four or five. We were not prepared to receive them, etc.

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Of course, you get down somewhat on the floor of the action as it is happening, but still it is striking because you see what is coming, and we have seen it coming for some years now, and it is just beginning in terms of the aboriginal youth.

I know that your thinking is intended to stimulate the design of the curriculum. You spent a year living among the Cree, how can we, in a context such as Montreal or Sherbrooke, or any city with an aboriginal clientele, how can the school boards get across the message, both to get prepared and, in active terms, that some action is being taken.

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: I have a very specific case or a concrete action that was undertaken in Montreal, in connection with the multi-ethnic problem.

At the University of Sherbrooke, we offer a professional development program for CEGEP teachers, and to that effect we have met with the people from Vanier College, although it is an anglophone college, who asked the University of Sherbrooke to come and provide its teachers' development program. It is a master's program.

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As I was saying, one of the activities that is important, in my view, is that before setting up a program or specific activity, all the profs who are involved in the program should define the problems they are experiencing and the activities they would like to have to improve their practices.

One of the points that was raised by the professors themselves is the difficulty they have in managing multi-ethnic problems in their classrooms. So the solution was to consider their objectives and their needs and to find some resource that would give them some activity for 45 hours to enable them, first, to think about these problems and to find some solutions within their community, the CEGEPs community.

I think this is an example in which, because we thought about the need to involve people in determining their training need, I think it is an example that enables us to see that it is possible. But is it necessary in the first place to have the conviction that these things are possible?

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We had occasion earlier this week to have a presentation by people from your university, Fernand Ouellette and José Lopez Arellano, who are assistant professors, who described to us again the master's program in intercultural teacher training, with an aboriginal component. Is that what you are referring to?

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: No. It is actually a program for the professional development of CEGEP professors. Since this is a problem that CEGEP professors are facing, I think it was important to be tuned into these issues and to try, within our means, to offer a solution.

It is, I think, improving their professional skills.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Is there an aboriginal component in this professional development project, or is it simply intercultural?

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: No.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: There is no strictly aboriginal component?

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: No.

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: It is obvious that the cultural communities, there are quite a large number of children in the Quebec schools, and that this constitutes an additional challenge, but when I referred to the situation at John Abbott, the CEGEP, and that there are 50 young Cree in first year CEGEP, and as many Inuit, and the professors are very interested but challenged, and basically, without preparation beforehand, there is a need, and a very special one, because there is an important distinction, as you know, between the aboriginal peoples, the first inhabitants, and the cultural minorities.

Is there any discussion in the context of the University of Sherbrooke on adding a more particular component peculiar to the aboriginal people, to help prepare the CEGEP professors to apply in some way a number of the ethical principles you have just referred to?

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: The City of Sherbrooke is located in the periphery. We are not confronted very specifically with those problems. That is why the debate is not a structured one.

The concerns that are being expressed

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are actually personal concerns, and I would say in terms of quite particular cases.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So it is less institutional, it depends on the interest of professors who at some point decide to...

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: Exactly.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We heard the same story, to some degree, on another level from McGill University, yesterday, which, because of the Commission's invitation to come and present a brief as an institution, did something for the first time that it had never done before, looking at what everyone was doing in isolation, and to put it all together.

I am going to ask my colleague, Viola Robinson, to continue at this point.

[English follows]

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: To conclude, are you aware of the material that is published on the theme of ethics in the intercultural educational project, which is particularly adapted...of course the aboriginal component is less spontaneous no doubt than the intercultural reality as a whole.

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: I was recently

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informed of that material, but I am not acquainted with it. I will make sure that I take good note of it.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In fact, the concern is somewhat egotistical on our part. If you had appended to your presentation this morning...if at some point you constitute a bibliography, even if it is short, on things that could be more central to the theme, we would be interested if you would send it to us to round out the information.

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: All right.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Once again, as my colleague was saying, there are some interesting leads to shed light on the approach on the curriculum side.

Thank you, Mr. Ouellette.

LOUIS-MARIE OUELLETTE: Thank you very much.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We are going to adjourn the hearing for a few minutes before resuming with the next group.

--- Adjournment of hearing at 11:22 a.m.

--- Resumption of hearing at 11:31 a.m.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Please, we are going to resume the public hearing. [English follows]

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[ENGLISH]

--- (A short break)

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We are going
to complete the day's agenda forthwith.

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Since the final presentation, by Mr. François Larose, a professor at the University of Sherbrooke, had to be cancelled because of illness, the Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zecs, through Suzanne Saint-Amour, who is the Secretary of the Board, has kindly agreed to proceed with the presentation forthwith. So, Ms. Saint-Amour, if you will come and join us.

--- (A short break)

Ms. Saint-Amour, we welcome you. We are very pleased that the Fédération des zones d'exploitation contrôlée du Québec has agreed to come and make this presentation to the Commission.

You have the floor.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR, Secretary of the Board of the Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zecs: It is a pleasure, on behalf of the Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zecs, to outline for you to some extent the experience on the ground that hunters and fishers are having, if you will, with the aboriginal community.

This brief will deal solely with the problems that have been pointed out to us by our members.

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It also relates the steps taken to try to counteract the rise in violence that is being expressed through various individual acts.

Some concrete, rather simple, methods are suggested to improve the current tense atmosphere.

Concerning our organization, to give you some idea of it, because we know we are not very well known, the Inspecteur général des institutions financières, under Part III of the Companies Act, granted letters patent to the Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zones d'exploitation contrôlée on May 4, 1983.

The federation is managed by 11 volunteer board members. Eight are elected in the regions, while three others are elected at the general meeting during the annual convention. The head office of the provincial federation is located in Quebec City. Our federation employs three people.

This corporation was established by the administrators of ZECs in order to obtain representation with government and other agencies; to promote management practices adapted to the geographic and demographic contours of the land; to promote increased accessibility by Quebecers to their wildlife resources;

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to promote wildlife management and rational development policies; to promote hunting, fishing and outdoor activities; to defend the rights of hunters, fishers and outdoor enthusiasts; to examine the laws, regulations and the memorandum of agreement signed with the Ministère du loisir, de la chasse et de la pêche (MLCP); to provide advice to its members; and to ensure media coverage.

The FQZ recruits its members among the 80 ZECs in Quebec. I sent you a map which is several years old but which can...the provincial map of the ZECs, not this one. This one is rather the example of a beaver sanctuary. It is not up to date because several ZECs have been added over the last year. I think there were about 70. Now there are 80.

As of March 3, 1993, we had 53 members out of 80. The 80 ZECs are divided into three categories: the game ZECs, which cover close to 48,000 km²; the wildfowl ZECs, 12 km²; and the salmon ZECs, 1,287 km².

The breakdown by region is as follows
C well, you have the list of the breakdown in the number of ZECs in each of the regions.

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Quebec is divided into regions and the groups of regional associations correspond, I would say, to the territorial divisions of the Ministère des Loisirs, Chasse et Pêche. They include the ZECs in the regions and their mandate is about the same as that of the Fédération, but deals rather with local or regional problems.

The "controlled zones", or ZECs, are hunting and fishing territories created by order in council of the Government of Quebec in 1978 C to replace the former private clubs C and entrusted to non-profit associations by the Minister of Recreation, Fish and Game to administer on his behalf.

Cabinet regulations set out the guidelines between the users and the management association. A memorandum of agreement defines the rules between the MLCP and the association. The minister's delegation of powers is set out in the Act respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife.

So the ZEC concept is based on the following four major principles: conservation, accessibility to the resource, participation of users and

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self-financing of operations.

You have, appended, all the documents, I would say, of the statutory framework, for informational purposes.

About 1,000 administrators manage these bodies on a volunteer basis, for the benefit of the people of Quebec and the government of Quebec.

Any citizen may become a member of a ZEC, whether or not he visits the territory. It is also possible to visit the territory without being a member. The system has about 55,000 members and 250,000 users.

The maximum price to become a member is \$20, which was established by order in council of the Quebec government.

We will now turn our attention to the problems.

During its annual convention, among other things, the Fédération is informed about the major problems of its members, including that of relations with the aboriginal peoples.

As a result of the problems that had been drawn to our attention, we went to meet with the minister, Mr. Sirros, to inform him of the urgency of trying

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to resolve some conflicts. I went at that time as the Secretary of the Normandie ZEC and I was accompanied by Mr. Pierre Duchaine of the Fédération.

During 1992 the Minister of Recreation, Fish and Game established a sectoral advisory panel on which I participated as the representative of our Fédération.

Chaired by the deputy minister for wildlife, Mr. Georges Arsenault, we explored the irritants on both sides. For the first time, the wildlife agencies, under the trusteeship of the MLCP, were to meet with the aboriginal people. While it was an enriching experience and opened the door to a better knowledge of each other, for me it is quite clear that many problems were not clearly identified by the participants, possibly out of mutual respect.

We adopted two recommendations from the sectoral advisory panel: to create regional panels under the responsibility of the regional branches of the MLCP, to resolve particular local or regional problems; and to maintain a provincial panel to discuss more general problems or topics.

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To date, in terms of experience, the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche has held, in a region that we prefer not to identify, a preliminary meeting with each of the parties in order to prepare a joint meeting.

The ZEC management participants have identified the following problems:

Non-compliance with the regulations. That's us alone. The aboriginal people have done the same thing, too, to identify the problems they claim to encounter with us.

Refusal to register; refusal to record catches; refusal to pay to move about; refusal to pay for conducting activities; fishing with a net; hunting without a number; hunting moose out of season; hunting red-breasted mergansers in August; fishing on closed lakes although the quota is filled; hunting from a vehicle; appropriation of territory.

Then we have another category of problems. Flouting property rights: use of rowboats without authorization; theft of fish; theft of gasoline; vandalism in cottages, even to the point of smearing everything with human excrement C true to the Oka style,

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I would say. It is since that time that we have been seeing these problems. Vandalism in camp-ground vehicles; theft of traps; fish entrails thrown into camp toilets. I would add something I forgot to include, extortion of money for watching vehicles. When I say extortion I mean you propose to pay so much for them to guard a vehicle which is on site.

Failure to respect the environment: garbage thrown intentionally from the back of a truck; scrap left in frequented locations.

Then, a whole series of acts of provocation: threats with weapons; use of machine guns to practice shooting or hunting; driving without a licence plate; theft of gasoline; vandalism and theft on camp grounds; shots fired a few inches from one's head; fighting between wardens and aboriginal people; theft of fish; driving about with weapons C I think this is the second time we've said this, so you can strike it out; use of a sledgehammer by a forest attendant. It developed into a brawl, and a sledgehammer was used.

Impunity: The ZEC users find that the rules dealing with game and the environment are not

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observed. But worse still, prosecutions for vandalism and its provocation are shelved forever, or at least that is the perception we have.

An atmosphere of violence is being surreptitiously installed. In at least a few cases the opposing parties have taken action. We can anticipate a progression of such violence, since both sides are out for vengeance. The members of the different boards of directors have managed until quite recently to limit the damage, but we have reached our own limit of influence and tolerance.

We especially wish to say that the examples cited are attributed to individuals, and not to the aboriginal communities. We appeal to the aboriginal communities to help us dispel this atmosphere of violence.

I would add here C it's not in the notes C that in terms of managers the users who visit these territories, to replenish themselves, regain inner peace, are confronted with assaults that force them either to flee or to react quite differently, that is, that the

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threshold of tolerance will be exceeded and will engender, if you will, some violence. And of course this will occasion a financial loss which, instead of helping us invest greater resources, will deprive us.

The suggested solutions: Continue the efforts undertaken by the MLCP; meet with the band councils; establish a joint action forum involving all of those involved, including the wildlife conservation services and the police forces; maintain and increase the wildlife conservation services of the Sûreté du Québec in the crucial sectors. You know that we are very often located three or four hours by road from the centres, so it is virtually meaningless to say come do this or do that. It's impossible, they won't come. So it might be appropriate in some cases to assign personnel to places where there aren't any.

Disseminate clear guidelines to those involved on the rules to be observed on all sides; require the licencing of vehicles. This is a real problem, since you can't identify them. You don't know who is travelling through the territory. That's the method that is commonly

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used by some groups, not by everybody. I may say that often it comes from outside groups, and it was perfect, it was irreproachable conduct.

Increase the powers of the auxiliaries; respect the current territories until some other change is made; establish exchange programs among users, managers, students; establish joint resources management development programs where appropriate.

In conclusion: In our opinion, as quickly as possible it is important to redress the situation as a priority over all issues other than wildlife catches, to curb the acts of violence that are springing up just about everywhere.

Secondly, the approach taken by the MLCP is a good means, in our view, of bringing communities together locally, community by community. Let us hope, in the best interests of everyone, that this approach continues and is supported by the respective chiefs of each of the bands.

The chiefs across Canada must learn that a different reality is being experienced here between

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aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. The Oka crisis and the "laissez faire" approach to smuggling enhance and encourage the rising violence in our respective communities.

It would appear from a recent U.S. study that the aboriginal people are treated better in Quebec than anywhere else in Canada. It is important that the Canadian chiefs be made aware of this reality and be capable of making distinctions in matters involving Quebec.

In closing, I would like to confess to you my disappointment at the position of the Assembly of First Nations in characterizing the approach taken by the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche as one tainted with bad faith.

We are thankful to the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche for having brought us together around the same table. We would have appreciated the contribution of the First Nations, to improve policies aimed at game conservation, development and utilization. If this policy is so harmful to the aboriginal peoples, how is that many groups have already

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signed management contracts with the department?

The wildlife management of a plot of land, a reserve, a region, a province, a country, or the planet must be built by all those who inhabit this plot, this reserve, this region, this country and this planet.

Thank you.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you, Ms. Saint-Amour, for presenting this brief to us on behalf of the Fédération des zones d'exploitation contrôlées du Québec.

Once again, as I said at the beginning, we have strongly urged a number of groups to come and make a presentation to the Commission. I think that in the case of the Fédération this was particularly important.

Obviously, you are referring to a situation that in many regards is a difficult one. I would perhaps like to just set aside one dimension, you have C it is at page 2 or 3 of your brief, point 2.2, when you present a breakdown of the various controlled zones in Quebec, there are the salmon zones.

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We had a presentation this week by the Fédération du saumon de l'Atlantique, which reported some quite remarkable progress over the last ten years in agreements with the Montagnais to co-manage salmon resources. I understand that the example that you have given us comes from a region and...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: These are examples derived from three regions.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Right.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: But they are individual examples, as I indeed said.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Quite so. So you don't of course have the other version on the aboriginal side, but the approach of the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche has enabled you to hold some encounters on both sides at this point. Have they taken place with the aboriginal parties?

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: They have not taken place. That is, the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche is to prepare the meeting. They have had a meeting with us, with some groups, if you will, to identify the problems. They have held a similar meeting with the aboriginal groups and a joint meeting is

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scheduled.

I actually think that it is from that point on, when people begin talking to each other, that it is going to be settled.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: If I understand clearly, you are saying that despite the non-participation of the Assembly of First Nations in the process, or the reluctance of the aboriginal organizations to participate at the local level...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: It is at the provincial level. There was a chapter that was to be written on the aboriginal nation. I understand that they want to do it themselves but I think it is important that they be there because it is interesting to work with them in that area.

Although it is something that concerns us, it is very important to have their opinion on this, because, basically, we are all to some degree living, they more than we, in the area of hunting and fishing, and we are extremely interested in getting their opinion. It is a major contribution to our life.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So at this point, if I understand clearly, there is no participation

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at the provincial level.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: There was some participation of the groups at the provincial panel, except that...

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: But no meeting as such.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: There is a refusal regarding the last chapter, and what is being said is in bad faith because the regulations and laws are being misinterpreted. The letter at the end, in the appendix, you can see that they hold that the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche is misinterpreting the laws and regulations. But this, let's say it is a problem that...

It is apart from all that legislation, I think, that there are some urgent problems that are turning up.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: When you say regarding the last chapter, just a clarification.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: The chapter on the aboriginal peoples. They wanted to do a chapter that concerned the aboriginal peoples on...

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In the framework...

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SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: In the framework of the wildlife policy. And at that point there was a request to delay the development of the policy. I think it is necessary that it be reviewed as soon as possible.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The situation that you observe, the new policy was adopted, as you say, in 1978.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: That was done in 1978.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Of course there has been some experience since then, but have you observed a deterioration over the last three or four years?

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Very much so. Since the Oka crisis.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You have seen a direct link.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: The influences of violence are never denounced, so people...it serves as a model, in the last analysis.

I think it is important on both sides when there are acts like that it must be denounced, or else it becomes like a model and it will progress to

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violence. Up to now people have been very tolerant.

What hurts the people in our community the most, or our members, is especially, I would say, when people come into their cottages and make a mess, even more than everything else. It is this especially that is the most hurtful. The lack of respect for property, if you will.

The discussions with the local aboriginal communities...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: They have not begun.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Not really, even at the local level?

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: No. It hasn't started. Of course, we have never spoken to each other, we don't know each other.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: That's something I wanted to get to. Before the 1992 approach of the department to get together for the first time...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: But it's not easy on our side as well to convince an entire board of directors that it is important to meet with a band council,

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and they, I don't know to what extent they are interested either. I think it is an approach that must be made on both sides, but to get to it...

We made some attempts to ask for it, to get to it, and I think, from what I know of the aboriginal communities, that they are very interested that it be done as well.

I don't think the responsible people would approve of C I would say C isolated acts like that. I think it is extremely important that the two communities not let things go because we're going to tumble into violence, it won't make any sense.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So you are right to say that there is a reciprocal familiarization process...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Yes, that's correct.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: ...and thinking to be developed. I think we have seen that. The last two weeks in Montreal have been quite obvious in this regard, with the groups beginning to think about relationships with the aboriginal peoples and often the invitation that we made to them was the opportunity basically to...

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SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Because it should not be forgotten that we are very ignorant of...often the aboriginal peoples allude to laws or all sorts of problems that we are completely unaware of.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: There is no information.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: This is what is somewhat isolating. How is it that the governments have let things go to such a point that we are so ignorant?

There are a lot of people who are going to be upset at some point, so it is urgent that the information get around, and all the information.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In your brief, when you report on the problems under three headings, one of the problems that you mentioned is the circulation of vehicles without licence plates.

Are the problems that are described in your brief problems that have been identified as peculiar to contacts with the aboriginal people, or are these problems that other members of the ZECs might be causing?

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Solely the

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aboriginal people.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Solely in relation to the aboriginal people.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: I think they remove them specifically when entering the territory.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So your brief should be read within that perspective.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Yes, absolutely.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Similarly, when you talk about damage to property, etc., is this a perception or is it documented that these are...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: It is documented. Basically, I know at least one agency that obtained some convictions but because that time the plate was not removed or because the people could be identified with some photos, but it is a means of not being identified.

Once it was identified and from then on...I think the registration is absolutely essential once you know who is wandering about on the land, it's easy.

I don't mean it is only them. We must

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be careful. We can't say that everything that happens on the land, all the thefts...

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Exactly.

That's my question.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: No of course not. We are very aware of that, but I can tell you that there is enough evidence to think that it to a large degree that. But once we settle the problem of identification, things will go better. There may always be some doubt in some cases.

These are minor things, basically. It's more upsetting, and it's more insulting, I would say, than the monetary value.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Except that we must be aware that the accumulation can make the cup overflow at some point and lead to some difficult situations.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: And what has been pointed out is that the conduct of those few individuals is not different, whether you are within a beaver sanctuary or outside a beaver sanctuary, you understand.

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Of course, in the beaver sanctuaries it is reserved to the aboriginal peoples for trapping.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: It is reserved for trapping, yes.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The other question I would like to ask you, I was taking a little look at the configuration of the map of the controlled zones.

Does your perception have something to do with the fact that many of those zones are in territories on which there are some aboriginal land claims...

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: I gave you the example of a region, a sanctuary. You have there the beaver sanctuary which is sketched, you have the ZECs and the outfitting areas.

Should they be doing it there or not doing it there, I think it was not up to us...we don't know. We didn't even know. We have often wondered whether the territories are, in a beaver sanctuary. Very often the directors don't even know.

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All I can tell you is that everyone on our side who was consulted wants a settlement of that problem at any cost, wants some solutions.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We also had this week a presentation from the Fédération de la faune.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Yes. I don't know what came of that.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: It was a fairly difficult presentation, basically. The president came after six years of efforts, so to speak, to indicate to us that he was throwing in the towel on the pooling of concerns of the aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in the wildlife context.

However, we have had, as reported by Mr. Beaudin and Mr. Malec, who made a presentation on the salmon issue, a very encouraging experience.

We also had a presentation from the outfitting proprietors in Quebec. So we have covered a fairly broad range of concerns that are common.

I think it is essential that the contact be made at the local level with the aboriginal authorities.

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SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: At the provincial panel the two groups were in agreement on that. I think that it is there ultimately, when people are going to speak to each other, that we are going to find some solutions to all that.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The minister, Mr. Sirros, who came and presented a brief yesterday morning, said in his brief that when the rules of the game are clear it is much easier, the relationship is easier than when they are ambiguous.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Yes. That's what the directors are asking. They are asking for clear guidelines, what are the regulations that should be implemented and what are the regulations that should not be implemented. Let's have some clear guidelines and we will follow them.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The clarification of rights.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: That's it. If it is only the right of registration and circulation, tell us. If it is other rights, tell us, but tell both groups, so it is clear for everyone.

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: A brief such as yours comes from the Fédération, the board of directors, thus the Fédération.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: That is, I had the mandate to prepare it on behalf of the Fédération.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So you are speaking on behalf of the Fédération.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: I am speaking on behalf of the Fédération.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Very well.
Thank you.

I am going to ask my colleague, Viola Robinson, to continue.

[English follows]

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COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In closing, I would like to indicate that we hope that the work of the Royal Commission and the recommendations will help to clarify a fair number of things and to show some direction that will help people on the regional and local plane to reach agreements more easily.

Once again, I thank you for having come to share the information and also the concern of your members. Nevertheless we see that there is a mechanism, although it is recent, 1992, that is proceeding. It is certainly [words missing?] than the two solitudes that existed previously.

You can convey to the Fédération our appreciation for the approach that is being made. We urge you to continue, and we wish you good luck.

SUZANNE SAINT-AMOUR: Thank you very much.

COCHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada has come to

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the end of its public hearings, which began in the first week of April 1992, hearings that have taken us to every part of the country, into the ten provinces and two territories, three or four times.

We have had four series of public hearings, we have published some documents reporting on what we have heard, attempting to group the responses of the participants who were numerous, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike around a number of key elements.

The first two series of hearings were concentrated more in the aboriginal communities.

We established a program of financial assistance to intervenors, which was used to fund 142 projects. The objective was to have briefs presented to the Commission that went beyond the level of statements of the problems or political statements or statements of principle, but which contained an analysis based on research, directed toward solutions.

This intervenors' assistance fund was managed for us, in a totally independent way, by Mr. David Crombie, the former minister of Indian and Northern

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Affairs.

We put major emphasis, during the third and fourth series of public hearings in the spring and this fall, on the presence and full participation of non-aboriginal people, from the living forces of society.

In our view, it was absolutely essential to have a balanced point of view at a time when we are going to be trying to put together the information from the public hearings, the national round tables and the research program of the Commission, which is considerable.

I think we should say that the approach to the living forces of society in Quebec, in the various provinces across Canada, has been a consciousness-raising one. We have forced a fair number of groups to stop and think about the relationships they maintained with the aboriginal people in their context. We asked them to look as well on a broader scale, but often in their context.

There is, to be sure, something to be learned from this. Most of the groups told us that had it not been for the invitation and prodding of the

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Commission, we would not have come, that basically you have done us a service because we realized that we had a lot of work to do, and this applies to the economic community, whether the caisses populaires, the universities, such as McGill University yesterday, the health care sector, the Association des hôpitaux, the professional corporations, the justice community, the Barreau told us exactly the same thing.

I think it is an extremely important revelation this morning. The presentation by Ms. Saint-Amour of the Fédération des zones d'exploitation contrôlées is in the same vein, in connection with resources, even if a priori they are more likely to be in contact, it is an important lesson.

In that sense, I think that there are some seeds, and that the ball that has been set in motion can roll into many communities in a way that can effect a rapprochement.

There have been some approaches independent of the Commission, and we are very pleased at this, such as the Forum paritaire here in Quebec, Quebecers and aboriginal peoples.

There are some approaches in a number of communities. We had a group of 22 young people who have

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worked in the framework of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse to approach and bring about better understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal young people.

I think that the Commission hearings indicate that there is a great deal of work to be done. Similarly, in terms of governments, in terms of municipalities, we have not fully achieved the success we hoped in getting presentations from the cities, to get them to stop and think about the aboriginal reality in their midst, often a reality that will increase and will come about. The future trend is rather clear, so there are some opportunities to think ahead.

I think that these hearings have challenged not only the governments but a number of components of the non-aboriginal society. This was one of the goals pursued by the Commission, because we are very aware that the Commission, once it has submitted its report, there will need to be people with an interest in the matter who can make a judgment concerning the value of the proposals that we will make and take up the initiative, to push those who are responsible for implementing the recommendations to ensure that there is a dynamic in society that is pushing for changes.

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In terms of the aboriginal peoples, I think that the hearings have likewise challenged many preconceived ideas. There is, beyond a discourse that may often seem forceful, some will say incisive, there is behind this a very strong desire to make up for what is lost, and a desire for coexistence and collaboration with the communities.

Often it is in the means that are taken that the wrong messages are sent, or that messages are not always clearly understood.

We have tried to demystify a number of things. The language, for example, in Quebec. There is an almost equal distribution of those who speak French and those who speak English as a second language among the aboriginal peoples.

People in Quebec often have the impression that there is a rejection of French by a fair number of aboriginal people, without necessarily realizing that English is the second language and that they have lost their original language and thus they were required to learn an initial second language, and now they are being asked to learn a second one.

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It is an additional effort that is a portent of the future, Mary Sillet was saying, in Northern Quebec, where the young Inuit increasingly speak Inuktitut, English and French. But this is one of the things which are often misunderstood, which are very pernicious because we are not always reading the other as it should be done.

We are very conscious that the Commission's role remains a limited one, that the success of the enterprise will be registered in the degree to which we may of course have managed to create some movement but also to which, independently, the communities take up the challenge.

As for us, in the course of the coming year we are going to put together the thinking that has been presented to us and the proposals that have been conveyed to us. We are going to try to aim as accurately as we can to develop a project that will be understood, in which the aboriginal peoples will recognize themselves, but which will also be regarded as a valid direction for the whole of the society, basically an objective of social peace, but also, of collective enrichment.

We have generally missed out on a lot

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of the benefit of the American aboriginal culture, for historical reasons. We cannot remake history, but I think that everyone is now called on to pool the reciprocal cultures.

In that sense, there might also be some benefit for the intercultural relationship in Quebec, as in Canada, with the cultural communities.

We thank those who have put an effort into the Commission. We have often said that the Commission will fundamentally yield what the people may have put into it in hope and effort, in steps toward solutions.

Since this is a commission that affects peoples, that affects the collective projects of Quebec society, Canadian society, this is even truer. We are not talking solely about technique, but about emotion. We must, then, make an amalgam that reflects these realities.

Last point, aboriginal language and culture. Identity is, of course, absolutely fundamental for openness, coexistence, and partnership.

That being said, I would also once again like to thank the staff of the Commission who have

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worked relentlessly, the translators who have accompanied us this week and pretty well everywhere across Canada in a difficult, often limited context, with unscheduled hours, and also indicate the role played by the media, even if one would wish that they probed a little more deeply into the issues.

We are aware of the demands, we are aware of the difficulty involved in following the Commission into some remote communities for all kinds of reasons, but we cannot help thinking that the media also have an important interest and a major role in educating the public on all sides, in the interests of increased understanding.

I thank you, and we are going to continue our work inspired by everything we have heard and the good will manifested before the Commission on the part of the public, the governments and the aboriginal peoples themselves. Thank you.

There is always an opening prayer when we begin a public hearing, and a closing prayer, so I would ask Allen Gabriel to please conduct the closing prayer.

(Closing prayer)

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--- The hearing is adjourned at 1:28 p.m.