

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

SPECIAL CONSULTATION VIA TELEPHONE BETWEEN
MR. N. SCHULTZ AND MR. R. GIBSON

LOCATION/ENDROIT: OTTAWA, ONTARIO

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1993

EDITED BY: ROSS GIBSON, JULY 7, 1993

"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

1376 Kilborn Ave.

..... Ottawa 521-0703

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1 Ottawa, Ontario

2 --- Telephone conversation between Mr. Schultz
3 and Mr. Gibson on Thursday, June 17, 1993

4 MR. SCHULTZ: Good morning, Mr. Gibson.

5 It is Nick Schultz calling from the Royal Commission on
6 Aboriginal Peoples.

7 As we had arranged, we are taking your
8 evidence over the telephone today, June 17, 1993, and you
9 are in Victoria at the moment. You are going to be speaking
10 about your involvement in the relocation as a result of
11 your being posted in the High Arctic as a member of the
12 RCMP, and you are speaking to us today as a retired member
13 of the RCMP in your private capacity.

14 Perhaps you could begin by introducing
15 yourself and stating your full name and so on just so the
16 record is clear and then proceed with whatever statement
17 you would wish to make. Then I may ask you some questions
18 when you have completed it, if that is all right with you.

19 Mr. Gibson, would you like to carry on
20 now.

21 MR. GIBSON: Thank you.

22 I feel privileged to speak out on the
23 movement of the Eskimo in 1953 to the High Arctic. I

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1 believe something should be known, the background of
2 myself.

3 I was born in Gibsons, British Columbia,
4 raised in southwestern Ontario until the age of 14. I
5 was raised on a farm and experienced the Great Depression.

6 At the age of 14, I returned to British Columbia with
7 family.

8 I joined the Royal Canadian Navy and am
9 a veteran of the North Atlantic. I travelled extensively
10 and I have visited people in Peru, the Falkland Islands,
11 British West Indies and I joined the Hudson Bay Company
12 for a short time, but due to allergies, I had to leave
13 the company. At that time, I was stationed at Telegraph
14 Creek among the Tahltan Indians, Fort St. James among the
15 Carrier Indians.

16 I wrote and passed my exams for the
17 provincial police and was stationed in Prince Rupert aboard
18 the PML-15 which took me to all the Indian villages and
19 the Queen Charlotte Islands where I was in charge of the
20 detachment of Queen Charlotte City and Masset.

21 I have always been most interested in
22 Native conditions and have gone out of my way to increase
23 my knowledge and understand why such things should exist.

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1 In 1950, the B.C. provincial police were
2 taken over by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In 1952,
3 I was posted to Port Harrison at my request to serve in
4 the Arctic. At the age of 30 and with the experience and
5 interest, I was most happy to receive this opportunity
6 to see how the people in the High Arctic lived.

7 Port Harrison is some 100 to 120 miles
8 north of the tree line, very barren country and rocky.
9 I was very interested in the ways of the Eskimos and made
10 keen observations.

11 My first observations were appalling --
12 the housing, the cleanliness, the lice-infested people
13 and poor source of equipment, r.e. guns and other necessary
14 things to survive. I couldn't understand how people were
15 making out in such circumstances.

16 Canvas tents were in poor shape. I
17 wondered in August how they lived but waited until Winter.

18 A big surprise. Igloos made of snow. No variation of
19 same. No square igloos. They were all round in
20 architecture.

21 Who is listening have been in the Arctic
22 to witness the change of seasons from fall to winter or
23 from spring to summer?

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1 Moving from a tent to an igloo takes at
2 least one week. A large igloo is constructed first. The
3 bed the Eskimo moves in with her stone lamp, stone pot,
4 primus stove and whatever equipment she might have and
5 she takes over the large igloo and a bed platform is made.

6 Next, there is another smaller igloo
7 attached which houses food and clothing. Then a third
8 igloo is attached which contains dog harnesses and hunting
9 equipment, et cetera, seal meat and so on.

10 Igloo No. 4 houses a mother dog perhaps,
11 with pups. Her reason for being there, I believe, is to
12 guard the entrance to the igloo or igloos and, of course,
13 being a mother dog, her milk could freeze and she would
14 die. The loss of dogs is a great loss to the Eskimo people.

15 So all in all, we have a long tunnel with a series of
16 igloos.

17 They make a length of about 40 feet.
18 I had to crawl on hands and knees. I am six-feet tall.

19 The Eskimos are much shorter. As a result of my crawling
20 in and out of the igloos and other activity in the Arctic,
21 I now have two artificial knees attributed to this action.

22 The Eskimo women regulate the
23 temperature in the igloo by moving the wick of the stone

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1 lamp up and down and, therefore, causing the temperature
2 to rise and fall to prevent dripping and melting of the
3 snow.

4 Sanitary conditions left much to be
5 desired. I never slept in an igloo occupied by the Eskimo.

6 I always built my own trail igloo as I could not bring
7 myself to live under or sleep under such circumstances
8 as these people were enduring. However, that was their
9 culture.

10 Male Eskimos are the outfitters and they
11 are the ones who make a camp good or bad. They have the
12 great influence. They travel by dog sled or komatik where
13 mud was put on the runners to prevent sticking and causing
14 hard-going for the dogs.

15 To my surprise, the komatik that I
16 witnessed one day coming to the detachment was none other
17 than a large piece of walrus skin pulled by two dogs and
18 a smiling Eskimo coming along over the snow. Now, this
19 would indicate that this man did not have access to wood
20 for a komatik and he was using the land availability and
21 the availability of the walrus skin for his means of
22 transportation.

23 This gave me food for thought and, of

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1 course, increased my interest in how these people existed
2 even prior to the coming of the white man.

3 Kayaks were used greatly for
4 transportation. These are little skin boats and, of
5 course, the Eskimo travel in the summer time from their
6 outlying camps. Families were left behind on the land,
7 but if perhaps the Eskimo woman wanted to come along and
8 do her shopping, then she lay facing the Eskimo as he
9 paddled his kayak. These were the things that created
10 more interest.

11 Hunting for food and so on is their way
12 of life and their only occupation up until this time.
13 There is plenty of food in caribou, but not readily
14 available in the Port Harrison area and walrus had to be
15 hunted from the Sleeper Islands, some 50 or 60 miles off
16 into the Hudson Bay.

17 Travel to hunting areas were outfitted
18 by the RCMP and Hudson Bay Company. Movement to the
19 Belcher Islands in the early 1930s and to Cow Charlie (PH.)
20 to the Sleepers in the late 1940s was an indication of
21 the shortage of food on the mainland of the province of
22 Quebec.

23 An RCMP boat, Sioolee's boat, Inookpuk's

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1 boat and a boat from Povungnituk were the only ones
2 seaworthy to proceed to the Sleeper and the Belcher
3 Islands. There was plenty of fish and small seal, but
4 a shortage of Arctic fox. Low prices, et cetera.

5 Eskimos depended on the family allowance
6 and welfare. They even gave their children away to other
7 unfortunate people who didn't have any so they could be
8 registered and be able to draw family allowance as a family
9 income and support.

10 Child allowances were issued by ledger
11 and voucher, a message through RCMP and Hudson Bay Company
12 with details going to the Department of Northern Affairs
13 for final bookkeeping. Eskimos appeared to accept the
14 welfare as a way of life and slowed up on their own Native
15 ways and became dependent on white man. This was quite
16 obvious to me.

17 No money was involved at the Hudson Bay
18 Company. Tokens were used as trade and disks for
19 individual identification of the Eskimo. A disk method
20 of registration proved most satisfactory.

21 Patrols were made for people to settle
22 in the High Arctic after receiving a message from
23 Superintendent Larson. Tommy Paliser, a Hudson Bay

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1 Company interpreter, born in Nain, Labrador, was employed
2 by the Hudson Bay Company and understood white man's ways
3 and Eskimo ways perfectly. I used him to make sure that
4 the Natives understood all aspects of the move, including
5 the dark period, et cetera.

6 I made no promise of the return to Port
7 Harrison. Margery Hinds, Rheub Ploughman of the Hudson
8 Bay Company were helpful in selecting the people for the
9 move. Margery Hinds supervised the necessities for women
10 and families. New rifles were supplied, et cetera.
11 Plenty of volunteers were available when the time came
12 to leave Port Harrison.

13 They were told that if they were
14 interested to contact the Hudson Bay Company or the RCMP.
15 Tommy Paliser was used as the interpreter so there was
16 a clear understanding of what lay before them and of the
17 possibilities of a better way of life in the High Arctic.

18 I could see where there was not going
19 to be much change from my observations and knowledge of
20 the High Arctic. While the Eskimos in Port Harrison lived
21 in igloos in the wintertime and tents in the summertime,
22 I could see whereby it was going to be no great hardship
23 as far as that was concerned.

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1 They were told of the dark period and
2 of its probable implications, but they seemed to accept
3 this at the time of the interviews and shrugged their
4 shoulders and said, "It can't be helped." Their Eskimo
5 word is "iamnamut" (PH).

6 I did not know when I was picking these
7 Natives that I was going to be the member who was going
8 to be picked to accompany them into the High Arctic,
9 Resolute Bay. However, I believe the new detachment was
10 going to open at Cape Herschel. I refer to it as Twin
11 Glaciers.

12 The C.D. Howe left Port Harrison and
13 proceeded to Churchill on its eastern Arctic patrol, and
14 I refer now to Northwest Territories postal cancellations
15 1907/1986 by Ken O'Reilly. This is put out by the Postal
16 Department and this is what I have. In 1952, it had been
17 decided to establish for sovereignty purposes an RCMP
18 detachment in Eskimo settlement on East Ellesmere Island
19 with two relocated families from Pond Inlet and Port
20 Harrison, Quebec. The new settlement was proposed for
21 Cape Herschel.

22 The CGS D'Iberville arrived off Cape
23 Hershell on August 15, 1953 but was unable to reach it

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1 or the abandoned RCMP post of Bache Peninsula. A new site
2 on the south side of Buchanan Bay below Twin Glaciers was
3 selected and the supplies landed on August the 18th. That
4 is just for passing information as to how this location
5 on Alexander Fjord came about and also later reference
6 I will make to the sovereignty.

7 The D'Iberville had to change plans, et
8 cetera, and it was decided who and where the people were
9 to go. We tried to keep the families close together.

10 Craig Harbour had had a successful
11 walrus hunt when the ship arrived. Larson and I had a
12 disagreement on the dog food. If I was to go to Resolute
13 Bay, I knew there was nothing there for me, only the
14 Cornwallis Island. Larson assured me that there would
15 be plenty of country food available, but due to the late
16 arrival at Resolute Bay, the walrus had all gone south
17 and there were seals available and some birds, ducks, which
18 winter there all year round.

19 Resolute Bay had established an
20 ionosphere station, an RCAF station, a U.S. weather bureau
21 station and then another weather DOT station.

22 The Eskimo camp was established some
23 three miles away. Henry Larson and I picked the site.

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1 I understand that scientific people who had been in the
2 Arctic prior, such as Dr. Roots, Dr. Thorsteinsen, Stewart
3 McDonald, recent Massey Medal receiver, had made close
4 scrutiny of the availability of country food in the area.

5 This I was satisfied with and their observations were
6 keen and well tabulated.

7 The site was picked by Larson and myself.

8 A fresh water lake was at the rear of the camp. Excavation
9 by scientists revealed that nearby a Native camp some 200
10 years ago had been there. No known reason for its demise
11 was available, but there were signs of plenty of food which
12 had been available during that time. It is now believed
13 that perhaps it was the dark period that took the people
14 from the area.

15 Upon arrival with the Native people on
16 the shores of Cornwallis Island, tents were erected, dogs
17 were tethered and hunters had to get out and hunt for
18 seafood for dogs and people concerned. My greatest
19 concern was the present shortage of country food and the
20 supply for the coming winter.

21 Several weeks before darkness, Eskimos
22 went every day to hunt and they were constantly reminded
23 of the forthcoming darkness. Igloos were built the same

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1 as in Port Harrison under my supervision. Cleanliness
2 was to be of great importance. Pride took over as visiting
3 parties were frequent to the Eskimo site under my
4 supervision. Visitors probably never had witnessed
5 people living under these conditions. Great interest was
6 shown by the majority of people who visited the camp and
7 very little comment was made to me at that time.

8 With the arrival of the large diesel
9 engines to give power to the entire settlement, the weather
10 station, the ionosphere station and so on, large store
11 boxes, containers were sent in, containers of valuable
12 wooden boards, et cetera. A check of the wood waste --
13 at the RCAF station, I requested all boards, plywood, et
14 cetera, be separated from the disposables. All
15 establishments complied -- the RCAF, the ionosphere, et
16 cetera. I would say that this was probably the start of
17 recycling which we are all faced with at this time.

18 Insulation of fine quality was obtained
19 left over from the RCAF construction. Windows, et cetera,
20 were obtained from discards from the other projects.
21 Paint was also available. The cable was obtained from
22 ionosphere. The late Jack Wyatt was instrumental in
23 assisting here.

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1 The power was installed by RCAF
2 electricians. A one 60-watt light bulb to each dwelling
3 was supplied. No outlets were allowed due to safety
4 reasons and my concern for the ways of the Eskimo. I did
5 not want to bring them into the white man's way too soon.

6 A phone line was extended to one
7 dwelling, that of Sadluvenich, with a direct line to the
8 RCAF where I had my detachment. This was installed for
9 emergency purposes only -- one long ring.

10 My refusal to allow Eskimos on the RCAF
11 and other white establishments has been greatly criticized
12 and I had my reasons. There were some 50 men stationed
13 there, white men. I refer to them as white men. In the
14 Eskimo side were these young girls and so on. Canteen
15 was available. White man's way of life was quite prominent
16 and they had all the amenities that one would want from
17 the south.

18 All this was new to the Eskimo and I did
19 not want -- and I was instructed from the Commissioner
20 of the Mounted Police that my purpose was to keep the people
21 on the land, not to allow them on the base because they
22 were afraid of perhaps being exposed to the white man's
23 way of life, prostitution, alcoholism and so on, because

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1 all of this could be quite readily established if they
2 were allowed to go on th*e base.

3 This was a great concern of mine and I
4 had the utmost co-operation from the RCAF. Their men never
5 went to the Eskimo camp and the Eskimo camp people never
6 visited, as such, to the RCAF or did they ever enter the
7 building.

8 There was, however, a large dump some
9 distance from the Air Force base which I told the Eskimos
10 they were not to bother with, that I had things under
11 control. I used to foot patrol periodically to see if
12 I could catch them. I suspected that they were visiting
13 this dump.

14 Now, this large establishment of the
15 RCAF, of course, created a lot of disposable things.
16 However, I am satisfied and am very pleased to know and
17 for people to know that I feel that I was on the right
18 track by not allowing these people on the base. I think
19 further investigation years later will reveal that we did
20 have prostitution, we did have alcoholism. One well-known
21 Idlout was intoxicated when he went down over the bank
22 to the Eskimo camp, out onto the sea ice in his ski-doo
23 and was killed.

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1 I feel that I prevented this type of
2 thing. Perhaps there was some hardship to the Natives.
3 I don't know, but I have a clear conscious with regard
4 to the way I handled this. They wonder what type of a
5 person I was to deprive these Canadian citizens of this
6 privilege of going to the RCAF camp. I felt it was for
7 the good of the Native people.

8 Accusations of starvation, theft of
9 mail, sexual acts, lack of interest and being deprived
10 of their religion, medical help and so on -- I felt a great
11 responsibility to these people.

12 I understand that this matter has
13 probably been overlooked. I have never been properly
14 clarified. They had their own catechists and when
15 visiting clergymen came to the RCAF, he was introduced
16 to them and he performed some ceremonies for them. Being
17 Anglican, they were able to follow him quite well with
18 their prayer books that were written in syllabic.

19 The late Reverend Lord was greatly
20 impressed by what he did see and how the Eskimos conducted
21 themselves during these services and was most pleased that
22 they were carrying on and were not being deprived of their
23 religion.

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1 Medical help was also available. I had
2 access to Churchill and Tuli in case of emergency, aircraft
3 help. The RCAF had a sick bay medical man available with
4 some drugs if necessary and I myself had had some training
5 and used some common sense and close observation on
6 anything I might see out of line with regard to the peoples'
7 health.

8 I feel that they were not neglected in
9 this matter. I think my observations were to myself, not
10 to them. They didn't know what I was really up to and
11 I wanted to keep it that way.

12 I think if the Cape Herschel settlement
13 had gone ahead as planned, the two Eskimo families and
14 or four Eskimo families and myself could have starved and
15 faced great hardship because we would have been stranded
16 on Ellesmere Island. There was little time for
17 administration or anything, but I probably would have died
18 with them if this was it because it was my responsibility.

19 With regard to sovereignty rights, the
20 flight over the Pole of the late Brooke Claxton, Vincent
21 Massey, Mr. Stewart Hodgson -- I don't know why these
22 flights were made. I accompanied the late Honourable
23 Brooke Claxton. He was the first Cabinet Minister to fly

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1 over the Pole. Vincent Massey was the first Vice Regal
2 party to fly over the Pole. Stu Hodgson, Commissioner
3 of the Northwest Territories, landed at the Pole, I
4 understand, and had some difficulty getting off. If this
5 had anything to do with sovereignty rights, I don't know.
6 Sovereignty was never, never discussed with me.

7 The report of Professor Gunther, the
8 Hinkley Report, press reports across Canada, Marcus of
9 Cambridge University -- they were very critical with their
10 reports but no Gibsons' report until now. I completely
11 co-operated with these people and gave them any information
12 I might have, but I was greatly disappointed in the manner
13 in which I was presented and what really took place where
14 I was the person involved.

15 A generation has gone beyond. These
16 people are doing an investigation. I think it might be
17 most interesting to do such research. I was never really
18 brought into the picture for the other side of the story.

19 Their criticism seemed to be one-sided as though they
20 picked my brains and they pulled no punches in expressing
21 their own ideas.

22 I appear to have supplied food for
23 thought for them -- their inexperience and lack of

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1 knowledge of the firsthand facts. RCMP have failed to
2 take much interest in the program. The Commissioner's
3 internal investigation into the allegations made toward
4 the Mounted Police during this period were quite
5 inconclusive to my way of thinking. I have never been
6 cleared of any theft of mail. I have never been cleared
7 of any sexual acts that I might have had with the Eskimos.

8 I have never been cleared of any other thing that I might
9 have done. No apology, no nothing has ever come from the
10 Mounted Police and I feel this is quite inconclusive.

11 However, if this is the way it is, I have
12 to live with my conscious regardless of what other people
13 might think. I have never been cleared of any wrongdoing
14 or did I do anything wrong, but I do think that an apology
15 should be forthcoming from some angle because these
16 accusations made by the Eskimo people are quite damaging
17 to myself, and the press reports that come out are also
18 frightening.

19 My friends from across the country phone
20 me long distance to find out what kind of things really
21 did happen up in the Arctic.

22 Two cultures. Food for thought. The
23 white man's culture and the Eskimo culture. I believe

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1 the first arrival of the whalers and the Hudson's Bay
2 Company and the trading and contact with the Eskimos
3 altered forever the way of the Eskimo way of life as such,
4 and I think it is going to continue to alter and I feel
5 that the Eskimo perhaps are the benefactors in the long
6 run.

7 I have here a document I received taken
8 from the paper which I am going to quote which I think
9 is rather startling. The Times Colonist Tuesday, June
10 the 1st, 1993.

11 "Cost of compensation stalling agreements with wronged
12 groups. 'This offer is far too
13 little far too late,' Gary Yee,
14 head of the Chinese National
15 Redress Committee, told Weiner
16 during meeting on Monday. The
17 Chinese Canadian National Council
18 says Ottawa collected \$23 million
19 from 81,000 Chinese immigrants in
20 the discriminatory head tax
21 between 1885 and 1923. The money
22 would now be worth about \$1
23 billion, the Council says, but it

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1 wants only a symbolic sum to
2 immigrants and relatives.

3 The Ukrainian Redress Committee says between 3,300
4 and 5,000 Ukrainians were wrongly
5 interned during the First World War
6 and their losses were about \$10
7 million in current dollars. Other
8 groups have similar claims for
9 wrongful internment in the Second
10 World War. The refusal in 1914 to
11 allow a ship of 300 Sikhs to land
12 in Vancouver and the Second World
13 War rejection of a boat load of Jews
14 who returned to die in the
15 Holocaust. The government
16 apologized in 1988 for the
17 internment of about 22,000
18 Japanese Canadians during the
19 Second World War and paid about
20 \$300 million in compensation."

21 Now, I say, as I read some of these
22 reports, if these people were moved under such
23 circumstances as the aforementioned, do we classify this

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1 Eskimo project in the same category? Are they out for
2 compensation some 50 years later? Are they going to be
3 compensated? These are things that I wonder about and
4 the things that I am concerned about because I was the
5 one person who was with these people and understood the
6 situation. I cannot agree that they should be
7 compensated. They were never abandoned.

8 Did the Eskimo way of life change? Of
9 course it changed. It was bound to. Participants such
10 as Jim Cantley, Margery Hinds, Henry Larson, Commissioner
11 Nicholson and all department heads were dedicated people
12 and were wanting for the betterment of the better way of
13 life for the Eskimo people, especially in the Port Harrison
14 area.

15 The Province of Quebec did not and would
16 not administer any assistance to that portion of the
17 province north of the tree line. Again, I stress that
18 these Natives were never abandoned, never abandoned, nor
19 were they ever exiled. I think this has been greatly
20 overrated, greatly over-emphasized. I checked my
21 dictionary and I am convinced that they were never
22 abandoned because I was always present. There was always
23 an RCMP member present at Craig Harbour for their

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1 supervision.

2 I must say here that what I am telling
3 you is my experience at Resolute Bay. The late Glen
4 Sergent was the capable man in charge of Craig Harbour
5 and Grise Fjord. We had constant radio contact and were
6 always able to have a good understanding. I never felt
7 that even the people at Craig Harbour or Grise Fjord were
8 abandoned because we had the radio contact and in case
9 of emergency, again, the RCAF was available and it would
10 only have been a matter of a few hours and these people
11 could have been airlifted or an air drop could have been
12 made for whatever their wants might be.

13 The Eskimo have come a long way under
14 supervision of government agencies, but I had the
15 opportunity to sail on the C.D. Howe with one Mr.
16 Christianson who later became the Governor of Greenland.

17 I believe they were on the right track because everything
18 came under the Danish government with regard to the
19 operations of the development of Greenland, even to the
20 church.

21 This impressed me very much and I think
22 perhaps here is where we made a great mistake in Canada.

23 We have all of these various people, the Anglican Church,

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1 the Roman Catholic Church, the Hudson's Bay Company, the
2 Mounted Police, the Department of Northern Affairs, the
3 Commissioner of the Territories and all. If we were under
4 one head, I think we would have a better understanding
5 and perhaps a closer-knit feeling to bring a successful
6 conclusion to anything that might be undertaken.
7 Certainly, this has been proven in Tuli in Greenland.

8 I always suspected perhaps, while
9 Northern Service officers become a necessity and again
10 another department from the Mounted Police
11 -- the Mounted Police were given the responsibility, but
12 these Northern Service officers did a lot of good work.
13 They were fine men, dedicated men, but I always felt that
14 some of them had had contact with Eskimo people. They
15 understood the language. They were able to correspond
16 in writing.

17 I always suspected a pipeline to the
18 Department of Northern Affairs of which I knew nothing.
19 They were on their own and they never told me what was
20 what or what was going on. I was a low man on the totem
21 pole and I feel a lack of communication between the various
22 departments was something that might have hindered the
23 better progress of this particular movement of the Eskimo

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1 people. I think we have all suffered from this. However,
2 maybe something has been learned.

3 The Canadian approach to this is quite
4 startling and yet the end result, I think, has been a great
5 success. I was most interested and, as I said, followed
6 up very closely with Mr. Christianson the development of
7 Greenland. I discussed this with Superintendent Larson
8 and he agreed, but it was never carried out or was ever
9 acted upon.

10 Also, with the movement of more Eskimos
11 into the High Arctic, I suggested that perhaps they be
12 rotated from time to time and give them all a chance for
13 the Arctic fox and the better way of life, to get them
14 established. If they wanted to go back, that would be
15 entirely up to them, but I thought a rotation process would
16 be good, not only settle them at Resolute Bay, Assistance
17 Bay, Dungeness and even Beechy Island (PH.) where game
18 was most plentiful. I thought that would be quite in
19 order. They would still have easy access to any
20 supervision that would be required by the Mounted Police.

21 I feel that this whole project has been
22 a complete success. Food for thought. I expect no
23 compensation for anything that I might have contributed

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1 to the better way of the Eskimo and I feel that the Eskimo
2 should not be compensated for what happened.

3 I liken them to the early settlers of
4 Canada, how they were deprived. They didn't know what
5 they were coming to and so on and look how the white man
6 has adjusted. There were some adjustments that had to
7 be made. The dark period was, I think, a big thing and
8 the Eskimos' close-knit community was another, their
9 visiting, their cups of tea and so on.

10 I feel that perhaps there was some
11 anxiety, some change, but to my way of thinking, the Eskimo
12 were never abandoned. I think that the project was a
13 complete success and I think they should not be
14 compensated. Certainly, I feel no need for compensation.

15 All I want is an explanation with regard to the accusations
16 that have recently been made by the Native people.

17 I refer to a book which I think will sum
18 up the whole thing and perhaps throw a different light
19 on whatever the thoughts of the investigators might be.

20 The book is "Northerners: Profiles of People in the
21 Northwest Territories" by Douglas Holmes. It was put out
22 by the James Lorimar (PH.) and Company Publishers, Toronto,
23 1989, and I am sure it is available to people through the

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1 library.

2 Now, on the very first chapter is one
3 of the crippled lady who appeared in April before the Royal
4 Commission and how she moved to Craig Harbour and how she
5 was treated. The headline is "Anna Nungaq relocated to
6 total darkness".

7 Now, if you people would kindly take the
8 time and make available this article, I think perhaps we
9 will see here, which will substantiate what I have told
10 you, that I am still most interested and I still feel my
11 contribution to this project was great and perhaps quite
12 misunderstood because I had other duties to perform.

13 There was a weather station at Isaacson
14 and Mould Bay, Eureka and Alert that had to be patrolled.

15 I was a Customs and Excise officer. I assisted with the
16 Postal Department. I kept game controls. I kept my eyes
17 on the Eskimo. This was no easy job for me and I want
18 no compensation. I want no pat on the back. It was my
19 duty as a Canadian and an RCMP officer to do these duties
20 and it was expected of me.

21 The late Commissioner Nicholson said,
22 "You must make this a success. You must keep these people
23 out onto the land. This is what they are. This is what

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1 we want. We don't want to bring them into the white man's
2 way of life too quickly. They belong to a different
3 culture and you must understand them."

4 My last conversation with Henry Larson
5 when he was making his trip to Europe -- I was in Halifax.
6 He and I discussed this quite freely. After his
7 retirement, we became very close. We were discussing this
8 and the only comment that I have ever received from the
9 Mounted Police was -- he patted me on the back and he said,
10 "Commissioner Nicholson and I think we picked the right
11 man to take these people into the High Arctic."

12 I will never forget this and my great
13 appreciation. A great privilege it was and I await any
14 outcome of what this final investigation or comment will
15 be.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. SCHULTZ: Thank you, Mr. Gibson.

18 I have a couple of questions. If you
19 were at the hearing, the Commissioners would ask questions.

20 MR. GIBSON: Oh, I am sure they would.

21 MR. SCHULTZ: Perhaps we will be able
22 to arrange that opportunity. When we spoke yesterday,
23 you had mentioned that it might be possible to get in touch

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1 with you during the course of the hearings if the
2 Commissioners do have questions.

3 MR. GIBSON: I will make it possible.

4 MR. SCHULTZ: And I will bring it to
5 their attention.

6 MR. GIBSON: Right.

7 MR. SCHULTZ: In the meantime, though,
8 just to complete and clarify the transcript that will be
9 made of this, I have a few questions that I would like
10 to ask and if you find that you don't have something that
11 you have to say on any of these questions, feel free to
12 let me know. You are under no obligation --

13 MR. GIBSON: No. I understand.

14 MR. SCHULTZ: You had talked about the
15 conditions of Port Harrison and talked about them as being
16 appalling and had also talked about some relocations to
17 the islands in Hudson's Bay because of the food shortages
18 there.

19 I am wondering if perhaps you might
20 elaborate on your observations that you made in the 1952/53
21 period about the availability of country food and whether
22 people were doing well or whether they were facing
23 difficulty in getting adequate food.

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1 MR. GIBSON: Yes. This was what took
2 the settlements out onto the Sleeper Islands.

3 Caribou are not readily available in the
4 Port Harrison area. They had to travel down to the tree
5 line. They have no large migration of caribou. They are
6 just small scattered herds. Some large migrations that
7 take place over on the Fort Chimo area do not exist in
8 the Port Harrison area.

9 In the summertime, boats had to be taken
10 down about, as I say, 70 or 80 miles to hunt caribou and
11 you didn't always find the caribou. Maybe a few more
12 ptarmigan down at the tree line, but certainly not the
13 caribou.

14 The walrus were not available at Port
15 Harrison. They never came into the Port Harrison area.
16 They were only available out on the Sleeper Islands.
17 Of course, that was, again, some 70 miles, 80 miles out
18 across the open ocean and there are just a bunch of rocks
19 out in the Hudson's Bay.

20 Nesting birds, the ducks, the geese and
21 so on all went out to these islands to nest. This is what
22 took the people there. Of course, the Arctic fox in the
23 wintertime travelled out in search of food.

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1 So trapping and so on -- and it is
2 interesting again that the conditions under which they
3 lived out on the Sleeper Islands -- Cow Charlie (PH.) was
4 the name of the Eskimo man and I was utterly floored from
5 what I was able to see. They got out there in the old
6 Peter headboat and it broke down and they were really
7 abandoned out there over the winter. The geese came into
8 nest and when geese lose their feathers, they can't fly.
9

10 So the Eskimo would herd the geese
11 together and take their harpoon and harpoon a goose. They
12 were eating the sculpin. They were able to trap a seal
13 in a bay and the conditions under which they were living
14 were -- I just couldn't understand how they were living
15 and yet they seemed to be happy. They shook your hand
16 and of course the first thing they wanted was a cup of
17 tea. The old women even ate the tea leaves. This seemed
18 to be something that was at every camp, but they were most
19 anxious to get the tea leaves, to eat the tea leaves and,
20 of course, to smoke their cigarettes. They had been out
21 of tobacco.

22 But the overall conditions and how these
23 people adjusted to survive, to supply food, which, of

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1 course, was all they had to do -- it was supply food for
2 themselves. But if there was any illness or anything,
3 of course, the whole camp would have died. The
4 aggressiveness, the keen, willing to make do with nothing
5 appalled me and I can see where anyone coming into the
6 country just at a glance would wonder what and how these
7 people existed over the years without some assistance from
8 somebody.

9 Have I made myself clear?

10 MR. SCHULTZ: Indeed. You had talked
11 about your impressions. Was it your sense that people
12 were short of food at that time or that there was any
13 starvation?

14 MR. GIBSON: I never felt that they were
15 starving or that there was ever any danger of them starving.

16 In this project, when they were moved to the Arctic, there
17 was never any danger of them ever starving. There could
18 never have been because of the availability to the RCAF
19 and the promise of Air Vice-Marshal Ripley to me that
20 in dire necessity, he would come to our assistance and
21 make air drops to the outlying places.

22 Now, Ripley took a dim view of this move
23 in the first place, but I think in the end I received his

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1 utmost co-operation and could see after his own observation
2 of what was happening that perhaps it was not a bad idea.

3 I got nothing but co-operation from his successors, Air
4 Vice-Marshall Carscalon (PH.) and Air Vice-Marshall
5 Carpenter and all the RCAF officers in charge of the Air
6 Force base, the head of the U.S. weather bureau from
7 Washington, J. Glen Dior, and other members of our own
8 government, heads of the Department of Transport, Jack
9 Wyatt who was in charge of the Arctic. I got nothing but
10 full co-operation and I never had any fear of starvation.

11 If anything went wrong, I had all this backing and the
12 Eskimos had this backing. Whether they were aware of this
13 or not, I don't know, but it was with this confidence that
14 I felt that I could improve on the way of the Eskimo way
15 of life.

16 MR. SCHULTZ: Before you got to Resolute
17 and you were in Port Harrison in 1952/53, did you have
18 any sense of whether people were short of food or there
19 was any starvation?

20 MR. GIBSON: I felt that there was a
21 shortage of food and I think I expressed their dependency
22 on the family allowance and any welfare that might be
23 happened.

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1 In closing, this sovereignty -- I must
2 go back here. Sovereignty, you know, to me was a thing
3 that perhaps reared its head and it did rear its head with
4 regard to the Northwest Passage and so on.

5 Now, the only sovereignty connection
6 that I can even recollect was that the Canadian Rangers,
7 an organization which is across Canada, was organized and
8 rifles were supplied, old rifles from the army and certain
9 rounds of ammunition all across Canada, the settlements.
10 There was a captain of the organization as a member of
11 the C.D. Howe crew -- not crew, passengers -- and he visited
12 all of these places and he gave the eligible Eskimo --
13 not only in Resolute Bay and Grise Fjord, but other
14 settlements -- rifles and certain rounds of ammunition.
15 They wore a badge on their arm that they were a ranger.

16 Now, is this part of sovereignty? Was
17 this part of it? I think not because my observation was
18 that the Eskimo were not happy with the rifles that the
19 rangers brought them. As a matter of fact, I have several
20 hundred pictures depicting the way and life of the Eskimo.

21

22 On one, it startled me to see that one
23 of these rifles was used as a tent pole. Therefore, I

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1 don't think that they were overly impressed with the
2 rangers and I don't think sovereignty ever entered the
3 Eskimo's mind. I think survival is foremost in the
4 Eskimo's mind. I really and truly believe in my heart
5 that survival, of course, is the main thing, not only for
6 the Eskimo but for all humanity.

7 MR. SCHULTZ: You had mentioned that you
8 received instructions from the then Inspector Larson in
9 connection with recruiting people for the relocation and
10 had gone out to see them with an interpreter and that you
11 had made no promise to them.

12 Were you aware at that time in any way
13 of any promise being made to return people if they were
14 unhappy, or did you have any understanding of what would
15 happen if people got to the High Arctic and weren't happy
16 with what they found?

17 MR. GIBSON: I felt that this was
18 certainly out of my hands. I was aware that there was
19 that possibility, but I felt that in due course the matter
20 would be looked into and investigated and acted upon not
21 only by the RCMP, but also by the Department of Northern
22 Affairs.

23 Certainly, you must remember that I am

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1 very small on the totem pole which sort of grew up with
2 the whole thing. I never thought of the return. I think
3 it was the fact that this was a project. It was a challenge
4 and I felt that those plans that were laid and so on were
5 quite satisfactory and if they were going to return, then
6 the matter would be looked at when it reared its head.

7 Now, never in my time was I ever
8 approached by any Eskimo that was relocated in the High
9 Arctic saying that they were unhappy, saying that they
10 ever wanted to return. They were anxious to bring more
11 people in and this was when Henry Larson and I discussed
12 the possibility of having small settlements across the
13 islands under supervision of Northern Affairs or Mounted
14 Police and settle these people in.

15 Now, game is in pockets in the Arctic
16 and, therefore, people cannot all live with 500 or 600
17 people in one bunch if they are going to live off the land
18 because of the migratory bird, the runs of the fish in
19 the spring and in the fall, the activity of the seal and
20 the walrus and so on. It is just a great, great, great
21 thing that I think should be taken into consideration.
22 All of this thing enters into the thought that went into
23 resettling these people.

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1 As we went along, certainly I submitted
2 the late Henry Larson some proposals. He didn't always
3 listen, but then again he was the officer commanding.
4 I wasn't. I think, though, in due course that he would
5 have listened a little more. He was a very understanding
6 man of whom I had great respect.

7 My co-operation or their co-operation
8 with me, the departments and all concerned I will never
9 forget and the thing could never have been a success if
10 they hadn't worked, but I felt that there was a lack of
11 communication to a greater degree to the man who was in
12 the field which I think is always the case.

13 It is the man in the field who -- and
14 I was given a free reign. I just verbally reported to
15 the Commissioner which was a privilege. Henry Larson and
16 I were able to talk freely. I visited at his home and
17 so on in Ottawa and we discussed this freely. It wasn't
18 all written out on paper and so on.

19 I wonder if the communication between
20 Jim Cantley and other heads of the department -- Mr. Sivertz
21 and so on -- if they really discussed everything with Henry
22 Larson or did they go off on their own ideas and perhaps
23 these things never appeared on paper, were never tabulated?

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1 But certainly intelligent people can reason, I think,
2 and understand -- and perhaps misunderstood to a degree
3 -- that as long as things are going well, then we are doing
4 all right.

5 Do I make myself clear?

6 MR. SCHULTZ: You do, sir. Thank you.

7 Is there anyone who was there with you
8 in Port Harrison in 1953 who might have been in a position
9 to make a promise to the people about coming back?

10 MR. GIBSON: Yes, there was. The late
11 Corporal Webster. I think you will find that he was there
12 and Corporal Webster and I didn't always see eye to eye.

13

14 When this project came up, he handed me
15 the message and said, "This is going to be your problem.
16 You can screw it up or make a success of it." Now, that
17 is exactly what he told me.

18 Therefore -- but he also took patrols
19 and was interested in co-operating with me. I had his
20 utmost co-operation. There was no animosity between the
21 two of us, but we just, as I say, had differences in
22 religion, differences in upbringing and our ethnic
23 background and all of it just all entered into it which

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1 -- I don't think we were very evenly matched if I might
2 be a little easy on my explanation here.

3 Fred would go out on a patrol and I would
4 take over the detachment. Then he would come back and
5 I would go out on patrol, but we always worked together.
6 We had a good working relationship, but the rest of it
7 went by the board. So as to what Fred told them, I have
8 no idea, but I would like to think that his ideas were
9 mine, that he was in no position to make them any promises
10 or did we know at that time that any promises would be
11 made, as far as I was concerned.

12 MR. SCHULTZ: Were there other people
13 from the department around at that point in time who were
14 helping you or helping with the relocation?

15 MR. GIBSON: Yes, the late Margery Hinds
16 who was a school teacher.

17 MR. SCHULTZ: Was Mr. Stevenson also in
18 the community?

19 MR. GIBSON: No, he was not in the
20 community. He only arrived at boat time.

21 MR. SCHULTZ: I see.

22 MR. GIBSON: Of course, Rheub Ploughman
23 who was a Hudson's Bay Company was most co-operative with

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1 his interpreter and so on. The interpreter was always
2 paid through the Mounted Police voucher, mind you, for
3 any services rendered.

4 We also had a very capable nurse Mrs.
5 Reynolds who played a very important part in her criticism
6 and understanding of what was going on and of the people
7 who should be picked. She was an elderly lady with a
8 complete understanding of the ways of the Native people
9 and her contribution was invaluable.

10 MR. SCHULTZ: Could you perhaps tell us
11 a bit about how you did go about picking people to approach
12 for this project?

13 MR. GIBSON: Well, yes. I took the dog
14 team and it was late winter. I took the dog team and
15 proceeded north to all of the camps.

16 Now, you must remember that there are
17 several camps and these camps -- their location is
18 determined by the summer hunting and perhaps move inland
19 10 or 12 miles to the lakes for the summer fishing and
20 so on, which sort of sets them apart. Transportation into
21 the main settlement is quite difficult. In fact, we
22 sometimes don't see any of the Eskimo women from one season
23 to the next.

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1 However, I took Tommy Paliser and my
2 special constable and we proceeded north to visit the
3 Eskimo camps, some of it being that of Johnny Echalook,
4 Sadluvenich, Johnny Inookpuk and Sioolee's. Just off the
5 top of my head, these are -- Nellie the Witch was another
6 one. They had a campsite and upon arrival of these camps,
7 I immediately constructed my own igloo because, of course,
8 the conditions under which I was witnessing I felt I
9 couldn't expose myself to. It is not that I felt that
10 I was any better, but I certainly didn't want to become
11 lice-infested. Furthermore, I was allergic to raw fur,
12 the smell of the raw seal and I never could eat raw fish
13 or seal liver. You see, I had to look after myself as
14 well as being interested in the Eskimo.

15 The first thing was that as soon as my
16 igloo was erected, there would be a line-up of these people.
17 They never offered me a cup of tea, but they expected
18 me to make them tea. So my special constable would put
19 on the primus stove and we made a great big pot of tea.
20 They would line up with their tea cups and come into my
21 igloo and I told them the purpose for this patrol. There
22 were other patrols, but this was a patrol that had never
23 been made before. This proposition had never been put

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1 to these people. They never ever thought of moving --
2 only from ten-mile distances, I would say, in the spring
3 or in the fall to build their igloos or put up their tent
4 to do their fishing and to do their hunting.

5 These campsites were regulated, I think,
6 perhaps by word of mouth areas. We will say Johnny
7 Inookpuk probably had a given area which no other Eskimo
8 would trap or hunt or so on. This was just his area.
9 It was not registered in any way, shape or form, but it
10 was just their way of life. Each one in order to survive
11 had to have a certain area to do this.

12 So, anyway, we went on to all of these
13 camps and all the explanations, and I used Tommy Paliser.

14 I was most cautious because I was afraid, knowing how
15 that these could be misconstrued even at that early date.

16 Little did I know that they were going to be so
17 misconstrued at a later date.

18 I was most cautious and even after my
19 arrival after the initial contact with these people, with
20 the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company and where
21 the interpreter was always available, I left word and
22 instructed the Native people that if they were interested,
23 that they felt free to come and discuss with the Hudson's

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1 Bay Company and myself and the interpreter so there would
2 be no misunderstanding of what was about to take place,
3 and if they were interested, their names would be taken
4 and certain ones would be selected.

5 Now, I feel that this was a success
6 because when it came time for the Native people to sail
7 away on the C.D. Howe with me and their dogs and their
8 worldly possessions, I was surprised to see or surprised
9 to know that other Eskimo families -- we could have taken
10 the whole darn settlement aboard the C.D. Howe and settled
11 them into the Arctic because they wanted to get away.

12 Whether it was curiosity, whether I had
13 sold them a bill of goods or whether they could see perhaps
14 that it was going to be better, I don't think the return
15 ever entered their minds so long as they were getting away
16 from what they were and it was going to be better. Anything
17 was better than what they had.

18 Now, they are intelligent people. They
19 are not foolish and their way of life was not going to
20 be altered that much from my explanation of living in igloos
21 and so on.

22 Then there was no great problem or was
23 it ever greatly questioned by them.

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1 MR. SCHULTZ: I have a picture of you
2 sitting near an igloo in the spring of 1953 at an Eskimo
3 camp and I am wondering if you can describe for us how
4 the conversation might have gone.

5 MR. GIBSON: If the Eskimo were around,
6 I would probably tell them that it was obvious that the
7 prices of the Arctic fox, the scarcity of the Arctic fox,
8 the scarcity of country food, the unavailability of the
9 walrus and the caribou and so on, that Port Harrison and
10 northern Quebec had always been a very poor area. But
11 with the increase in population and so on and the cycle
12 of the animals available, certainly it was rock bottom.
13 It was absolutely rock bottom. The price had gone out
14 on fur. The availability of trading goods was not
15 available and this was stressed on this people.

16 I made them aware of the probability of
17 the survey and I was completely assured that the surveys
18 had been done on the availability of walrus and seal and
19 so on, and I stressed again the dark period which did not
20 seem to -- so they thought, "Well, so it is going to happen,
21 but it is not going to stay dark forever," type of thing.

22

23 They were most interested in this

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1 because -- and I didn't go unprepared for any questions
2 I might have been asked. After all, I have a bit of
3 education and understanding and again my interest in the
4 Arctic and so on, what would be about to take place.

5 Again, I must stress that had I known
6 that I was going to be the one who was going to accompany
7 these people, I don't think I would have approached it
8 any different because I realized what lay ahead and yet
9 I could see where they were going to be better off.

10 Of course, as I say, the Eskimo have only
11 one thing to do -- to hunt and trap -- and the better the
12 hunter and the trapper, the better the camp and the happier
13 they are.

14 As I say, from my world travels to far
15 distant places and so on, I found the Native people always
16 gave me the impression of being happy regardless of the
17 circumstances under which they were living, and I don't
18 think it is a false impression either. The Eskimo always
19 greeted you with a warm handshake and a smile. I never
20 have ever had so many handshakes. That's like royalty.

21 This gives me the confidence of the
22 people or whether it is confidence that they want in me,
23 I don't know, but it is the way of the Eskimo. It is the

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1 way of most Native tribes to present themselves in a
2 favourable manner under extreme circumstances.

3 MR. SCHULTZ: When you were out there
4 talking to them and then explaining what was involved,
5 how did it come about then that they communicated to you
6 that they would be interested in participating in the
7 project?

8 MR. GIBSON: By them coming back to the
9 Hudson's Bay Company during their trade or maybe a patrol
10 back; contacting the interpreter; contacting Rheub
11 Ploughman; contacting Ms Hinds, the school teacher;
12 contacting the nurse and, of course, I would always be
13 -- a runner would be sent for me to participate in whatever
14 this was.

15 Therefore, while I had the co-operation
16 of all these people, the utmost co-operation, it fell on
17 my shoulders to make the complete understanding to the
18 Eskimo of what lay ahead.

19 MR. SCHULTZ: So what I understood, just
20 so that I am clear of what you said, you went out and talked
21 to them and left the idea with them and then they were
22 to come back and get back to you and they did that.

23 MR. GIBSON: That's exactly right.

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1 MR. SCHULTZ: When you were talking to
2 them, did you know where they would be going to? How might
3 you have described that to them?

4 MR. GIBSON: As I say, my interpretation
5 was to go to Bache Peninsula, to Twin Glaciers. This was
6 it and this was going to be the new detachment. This was
7 going to be up off Greenland and it was going to be where
8 Eskimo -- I explained the whole thing.

9 There hadn't been any Eskimo there for
10 200 years, that there was good hunting, trapping, fishing
11 and so on. I just sold them a bill of goods. I was a
12 salesman or a real estate man, whatever you want to call
13 it, and it was my responsibility to get across to these
14 people the advantages which, of course, they would either
15 take or leave.

16 MR. SCHULTZ: The Commission heard
17 evidence in April that the Inuit impression of what they
18 would be getting when they got to the north was different
19 from what they found and that their expectations in terms
20 of game and so on weren't met and there wasn't as plentiful
21 game as they had been led to believe and that, for example,
22 muskok was restricted from hunting.

23 Is there any comment you might want to

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1 make on that?

2 MR. GIBSON: Yes. I believe in our
3 earlier conversation I stressed that I don't know what
4 they expected. They were still going to have to hunt.
5 The game wasn't going to come to them. They had to go
6 and hunt the caribou. They had to go and shoot the walrus.
7 They had to go and get the seal and so on, but, again,
8 I must stress that I don't think the Port Harrison Natives,
9 to be perfectly frank with you, were the best of people
10 to move into the north because they had become too dependent
11 on the white man's way of life with their welfare and their
12 child support and so on.

13 I think that the people from Pond Inlet,
14 Cape Dorset area and Pangnirtung -- now, these were the
15 people and earlier settlers --when Bache Peninsula, Craig
16 Harbour and Dundas Harbour originally settled, these were
17 the people who were taken. It wasn't the people from
18 northern Quebec. A different way of life, a different
19 culture. They could hardly even understand one another.

20

21 In my reading and knowledge here, even
22 the people who went into Grise Fjord -- the families didn't
23 get along. The Port Harrison Natives and the Pond Inlet

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1 Natives, while they tolerated one another, they certainly
2 never had too much regard for one another because I think
3 the Pond Inlet man was much more aggressive. He knew how
4 to set seal nets under ice. He knew how to hunt a polar
5 bear. He knew how to dress a polar bear. He seemed to
6 know the country better and they were much more aggressive.

7

8 The Natives of Port Harrison seemed to
9 have lapsed into a bit of a decline, if I might use that
10 word, and I am not being disrespectful when I say this.

11 Again, I blame the influence of the white man and the
12 scarcity of country food and so on, the conditions under
13 which they existed.

14 I think a lot of research has to be done
15 if we are going to unearth this thing and bring it to the
16 open. I think we have to go much, much deeper than we
17 have ever gone and what it brings up I am willing to accept.

18 MR. SCHULTZ: When you talk of going
19 deeper, is there something specific you have in mind that
20 you would --

21 MR. GIBSON: Not really, I suppose. I
22 think the facts are before us and we have to accept them.
23 How we interpret them is another thing.

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1 My interpretation of the conditions are
2 such, but somebody else might come along -- and I understand
3 that there are going to be people at this hearing, some
4 Air Force people and so on that -- well, they were utterly
5 appalled at what was done at Resolute Bay and it was none
6 of their business what was being done at Resolute Bay.
7 I didn't know how to run the Air Force and I didn't expect
8 that they were going to tell me how to run the Eskimo camp.

9 The people involved -- it was probably
10 their first ever visit to the Eskimo people and they knew
11 nothing about them, and now they are coming out as experts
12 and criticizing what was being done and they don't know
13 one end of it from the other.

14 This bothers me and this is why,
15 unfortunately, due to health reasons, I am not able to
16 be in Ottawa, but I have lived for the last 35-40 years
17 just waiting for this opportunity to express my own
18 personal opinion and my own personal experience from having
19 been there.

20 So much of this -- as I say, the Natives
21 who are now complaining are not the original Natives that
22 are complaining. These are generations that have gone
23 on. These were babies. Some were born afterwards and

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1 so on. This is what startles me.

2 Also, I might add to what I have already
3 said that there was a report that came out -- the Eskimos,
4 what they left at Resolute Bay when they returned to Port
5 Harrison some 30 years later or whatever. The worldly
6 possessions are startling. They had electric radios.
7 They had carpets. They had bedroom suites. They had two
8 ski-doo's. They had two or three rifles. They had all
9 of these worldly possessions.

10 Now, this is all tabulated in this
11 particular report which I will just check here. You should
12 see my mess. "Aboriginal Affairs" and this is issue No.
13 22, Monday, March the 20th, 1990. The Chairman was Ken
14 Hughes.

15 In this report, it gave all of these
16 things that were taken or left or whatever they had obtained
17 over the years, but in this report or any other report,
18 I never see any tabulation of what they went in there with,
19 with poor rifles, poor tents, poor equipment and so on,
20 what they had prior to their going in there. There was
21 nothing ever done about this and I think that all of this
22 investigation -- and with all due respect to everyone
23 involved -- perhaps the other side of the story is that

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1 this is the first time this has really been revealed, that
2 nobody -- I have tried to get my point across.

3 I have co-operated with these professors
4 and people who have contacted me from long distances and
5 short distances and so on. I have submitted some of my
6 slides. I have an invaluable collection of slides which
7 I only wish we had the time and so on to explain. I think
8 it would make for a better understanding.

9 Unfortunately, I cannot be there in
10 person to meet these people eye to eye because I wonder
11 what these people look like and I am sure they must wonder
12 what kind of a person I am.

13 If their recollection is that I am
14 overbearing, belonging to the old school, perhaps to a
15 degree, but I also had a duty to perform and it was my
16 responsibility and I took that responsibility not lightly.
17 I took it heavily on my shoulders.

18 As a result of my patrols and so on in
19 the Arctic, I have severe skin cancer. I have a heart
20 condition. I have a lung condition, two false knees and
21 I am getting no compensation and nobody gives a damn.
22 I am on my own. I have earned my pension. I have made
23 my contribution to Canada and what lies ahead or what the

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1 outcome will be, I don't know. A hundred years from now
2 -- I don't know. Perhaps it will be all opened up again,
3 but I won't be here. Henry Larson isn't here, Nicholson
4 isn't here, Mr. Cantley isn't here. None of these people
5 are here to answer these questions.

6 Therefore, this investigation must go
7 on and I am sure that people will use their intelligence
8 and perhaps feel that everything didn't fall between the
9 cracks.

10 MR. SCHULTZ: You had talked about the
11 facts being what they were, but it was a question of
12 interpretation and I just have a small question.

13 You had referred to your role as a
14 salesman in selling the project to the Inuit and referred
15 to selling "a bill of goods" which is a phrase that
16 sometimes is used in a derogatory way to refer to buying
17 a lemon or something like that.

18 I would just like to clarify with you
19 how you would wish us to take the --

20 MR. GIBSON: I would think selling them
21 a bill of goods would be something to their advantage.

22 MR. SCHULTZ: Thank you.

23 You had also talked about how your

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1 understanding was that everyone would be going to Twin
2 Glaciers, but it turned out that the people went to
3 different locations and that the division, if I understand
4 it correctly, was made on the ship near Pond Inlet.

5 I am wondering if you have any
6 observations about that?

7 MR. GIBSON: Well, I don't know --
8 Constable Moody was the man in charge of Pond Inlet. I
9 don't know what his instructions were, although I know
10 Doug personally. He took over the detachment at Resolute
11 Bay for me.

12 I am afraid that I don't quite know what
13 was presented to those people, but I do believe that the
14 Pond Inlet people were given the idea that they were going
15 to be the ones that were going to show the poor people
16 from Quebec what to do. That, I think, is where the
17 animosity arrived at and even exists to this day, I
18 understand.

19 MR. SCHULTZ: Do you have any
20 impressions of what took place on the ship when the families
21 were --

22 MR. GIBSON: I was there.

23 MR. SCHULTZ: Was it your impression

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1 that this was a shock and an upset to people?

2 MR. GIBSON: I don't know because,
3 again, Eskimos don't reflect too much shock or upset
4 whether it is to their advantage or the white man's
5 advantage or disadvantage. I have never figured that one
6 out. I am sure they were concerned, but there was also
7 every thought given to the people on where they were
8 located.

9 The families, as near as we could
10 regulate them, the people who went to Port Harrison were
11 all interrelated. Old Nellie, the oldest one of the whole
12 lot -- and I have been severely criticized for sending
13 her, but she later became the great contributor to the
14 life of the camp and lived for about four years to enjoy
15 every bit of it.

16 So, therefore, I suppose there was an
17 upset. Distances -- these people are quite
18 community-minded. They visit for a cup of tea and so on.
19 Well, they get to Resolute Bay and they find that the
20 person from Pond Inlet can hardly understand them. So
21 they only can visit between the two of them and the gossip
22 and whatever conversation they might have or whatever they
23 might want to talk about is quite limited.

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1 Under their Native way of living in
2 northern Quebec, these people would travel from camp to
3 camp just for a cup of tea, hook up the dog team and just
4 go for a cup of tea and twist their fingers and a little
5 visit, as they called it, and return to their camp. So,
6 therefore, they are a close-knit, a very close-knit people.

7 I think that this -- and with the dark
8 period, I think that this did have an impact. I have no
9 doubt for what this was, but I think it is a very minor
10 thing because, as I say, what startled me and what has
11 upset me most was the fact that these people said that
12 they faced starvation which they never did, that they were
13 sexually abused which they were never, and that Gibson
14 was being able to read syllabic. I don't know one note
15 of syllabic from another and any mail that went out
16 certainly went out under mail restrictions.

17 I did my best to distribute this mail
18 and you must remember that the mail at the other end --
19 while it went from Resolute Bay and from Craig Harbour
20 once a year or twice a year perhaps by dog team, the mail
21 into Port Harrison or wherever it might have gone, it might
22 have been only every three months or six months.

23 So there were time lapses there which

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1 I think perhaps have been greatly exaggerated to a greater
2 or lesser degree. If a person doesn't write, it is going
3 to be a year or two before they -- if they got around to
4 writing, it might be six months or a year before they got
5 that additional letter. So I don't think this is any great
6 issue.

7 MR. SCHULTZ: Do you have any thoughts
8 about how you feel the people faired, particularly, for
9 example, in the first winter? You talked about having
10 to hunt every day and to build up supplies of country food
11 to get through the dark period and so on. Can you comment
12 on how the first winter went?

13 MR. GIBSON: Yes, I can. If it hadn't
14 have been for Amagoolik, again a Pond Inlet man who was
15 the only one from Pond Inlet who settled at Resolute Bay
16 initially -- he made seal nets. He showed these people
17 from Port Harrison, but the Port Harrison people were quite
18 willing to accept what Amagoolik had to offer.

19 How to hunt a polar bear -- they didn't
20 know how to hunt a polar bear. They didn't know how to
21 dress a polar bear. They didn't know anything about this
22 way of living.

23 The Pond Inlet man was able to adjust

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1 to this and I felt that the people from Port Harrison
2 resented that. Again, I must relate misunderstandings
3 and that story of a lock and my special constable, I think,
4 sums the whole thing up. I wish it to be tabulated.

5 The Anglican church had to be closed and
6 it was my responsibility to see that there was a lock and
7 hasp put on the door at Bishop Marshers's request.

8 So I was busy and I gave my Special
9 Constable Josie Nowra a lock and hasp to be put on the
10 mission house door or the mission door. So he took it
11 and I explained how I wanted it put on and so on. A couple
12 of hours later, I went across and had a look and he had
13 done a fine job, a very fine job of putting that hasp on.
14 I couldn't have done anything better myself, but, low
15 and behold, the lock was unlocked. It was hanging open
16 in the hasp and so I wondered why he didn't lock the lock.

17

18 Anyway, I proceeded on to the Hudson's
19 Bay Company where Josie was and, again, the interpreter.

20 Josie met me with a smile and a handshake and I said,
21 "Josie, why didn't you lock the lock?" He looked at me
22 for a minute and he said, "You just told me to put that
23 lock and hasp on the door. You didn't tell me to lock

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1 it."

2 Now, this was a lesson to me. Did I make
3 myself clear? How much did they understand me?

4 To this very day, when I misinterpret
5 or try to get a different angle with my wife who occupied
6 the Arctic with me for one year in Port Harrison, she said,
7 "Oh, you're trying to think like an Eskimo." Now, you
8 see the impact that this has had on us.

9 Did I get my point across?

10 MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, sir.

11 Do you have any general observations you
12 would like to make about your relationship with the people
13 in Resolute and how you feel things went in the community
14 in the time you were there? When was it that you were
15 posted out of Resolute?

16 MR. GIBSON: I was posted out in 1957.

17 MR. SCHULTZ: Is there any sort of
18 general observations you might want to make about --

19 MR. GIBSON: I could certainly see the
20 improvement with the -- they no longer lived in their
21 igloos. They had their little houses and they say they
22 scrounged material from the dump.

23 I think this presentation is far, far,

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1 far out. I don't know whether it is to impress the readers
2 or the people who are interested. It has made good
3 reading, but the press, our Canadian press, I find -- and
4 I don't know whether there is any legal approach one could
5 make or not, but I get very uptight. My blood pressure
6 goes up and so on when I read some of these articles that
7 appear in this paper and how they express themselves and
8 so on. It is nothing -- one side of the thing is always
9 -- and this is what has bothered me and will continue to
10 bother me until I get this transcript and I find out what
11 the final outcome of this Royal Commission is going to
12 be.

13 MR. SCHULTZ: You talked about how you
14 carried out the orders that you were given and so on.
15 Did you sense at any time that people might have resented
16 the orders that you were carrying out or that kind of thing?

17 MR. GIBSON: I never felt any resentment
18 toward me at all. As I think I told you earlier, my
19 association with the Natives and my working with them was
20 indeed a pleasure, as far as I was concerned, and I thought
21 I was helping them.

22 As a matter of fact, Allie and Edith
23 named a baby after me, Rossiapic, and this is just a great

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1 privilege. I thought it was a great privilege. I helped
2 to deliver one of their breach births and I thought that
3 I saved a life. I attended their every want and need.

4 I never felt -- while I never ever --
5 my culture, my upbringing could never bring myself to their
6 level -- and I don't like to use that word "level", but
7 is the only way I can explain it in English or any other
8 language. I don't think I am superior. I don't think
9 they are inferior. There is room for us all and we are
10 all God's creatures, if I might use that expression.

11 So, therefore, I never felt that they
12 resented my being there. I felt that they had become quite
13 dependent on the white man and perhaps had lost some of
14 their natural instincts of surviving or dying which they
15 seem to accept as easily as life.

16 MR. SCHULTZ: There was a comment made
17 in April about people going to the dump to look for food
18 because they were hungry. Do you have any observations
19 on that kind of thing in Resolute Bay?

20 MR. GIBSON: I am not saying that they
21 didn't. Now, I would not say they didn't, but many a night
22 I took patrols -- I suspected this. I must say that I
23 suspected it and in all probability they did, but there

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1 was no reason for them to do this. Whether this was just
2 something for them to do or what, they were certainly in
3 no position of starving.

4 Now, I will tell you that the Air Force
5 base at Resolute Bay -- they used to get in their supplies.

6 Well, it was mostly dehydrated fruit and it was pears
7 and peaches and apricots and things like this, excellent
8 trail food, but the men from the south -- they didn't want
9 all this stewed up stuff and so on. So there were cases
10 and cases and cases of this stuff that would normally have
11 been destroyed and then they would have gone to the dump.

12 My instructions to the officer
13 commanding the Air Force base was -- and I got his
14 co-operation -- that things be completely destroyed as
15 near as possible by the use of a bulldozer to cover this
16 up to make it not available to the people. Again, even
17 during the dark period, they went out with bulldozers to
18 cover up anything that might be there.

19 But back to these cases of food which
20 were not too popular with the occupants of the Air Force
21 base, I was asked if, rather than dispose of this, which
22 was perfectly good food -- it was still in its original
23 cases -- if would be of any assistance to the Native people.

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1 Of course, I said "yes".

2 So these people had access to this and
3 I made it available to them. Sea biscuits and things like
4 this that would never, never be consumed by the RCAF, but
5 yet was part of their "victaling" situation.

6 I did take advantage of this, but I felt
7 that it was not a hand-out. It, again, was a case of
8 utilizing what might have otherwise gone by the board.

9 Now, wasn't it better that I do the
10 supervision of this type of thing than have them go to
11 the dump and pull it out all half burned and run over?
12 Do you not think that my intervention there and the
13 understanding and the acceptance of the good will of the
14 Air Force was foremost?

15 MR. SCHULTZ: I appreciate what you are
16 saying.

17 I have exhausted, I think, the questions
18 that I have identified as arising from what you have told
19 us. I don't know if you have any final comments that you
20 would want to make. If not, then we would end the interview
21 at this point and a transcript will be made and I understand
22 that you would wish to have a copy of that. I will pass
23 that request along.

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1 MR. GIBSON: Very good.

2 MR. SCHULTZ: You have mentioned a
3 number of Inuit names. It may be that we will need to
4 get back to you in transcribing this to just ensure that
5 we have the names right.

6 MR. GIBSON: Very good.

7 MR. SCHULTZ: I don't know if there is
8 anything by way of final observation you would like to
9 make.

10 MR. GIBSON: No. I think we have
11 covered it pretty well and, as I say, I await our next
12 conversation from members of the Commission or whoever
13 might question my transcript here. I am willing to answer
14 any questions and we will set a date to make myself
15 available by phone.

16 MR. SCHULTZ: Thank you very much. I
17 will get back with you another time to talk about that
18 and I would like to thank you on behalf of the Commission
19 for your co-operation and assistance in making yourself
20 available.

21 MR. GIBSON: Thank you very much. As
22 I say, I await your call and if you don't get me the first
23 time, don't give up.

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1 MR. SCHULTZ: Thank you.

2 MR. GIBSON: Thank you very much.

3 --- Whereupon the interview concluded