



INQUIRY RESPECTING THE TREATMENT, EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF INNU IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

English Transcript

Volume 3

*Commissioners: Retired Judge James Igloliorte, Dr. Mike Devine and
Anastasia Qupee*

Wednesday

15 February 2023

CLERK (Battcock): All rise.

This Commission of Inquiry is now open.

Please be seated.

P. RALPH: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Good morning and welcome to the third day of the Inquiry into the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System.

We'd like to start the day again with a prayer from Tshaukuesh Penashue.

I would ask the – I would ask the translators to come up as well.

Tshaukuesh, give the translators a chance –

ELDER PENASHUE: Yes.

P. RALPH: – is it okay?

ELDER PENASHUE: Yes.

P. RALPH: Good.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA (providing English translation): We'll start again with a prayer for each one of us to have a good day today, to have the strength and to be amongst each other and give each other the strength to have this day that we look forward to.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Elizabeth was only saying the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, and asked our Creator to help us with – today, what we are going to look forward to.

Thank you.

P. RALPH: Thank you.

Thank you, Tshaukuesh.

And before we start, I'd like to recognize the contribution of our two translators, who are doing a fantastic job under pretty challenging circumstances.

So if we could give them a hand?

And Benjamin, perhaps you could outline – Mr. Brookwell – outline for us the witnesses that Innu-representative organizations are planning to call today.

B. BROOKWELL: Good morning, Commissioners.

Today, the witnesses that we intend to hear from are Mr. Penote Antuan, Joachim Nui, Tshaukuesh Penashue, Janet Bellefleur and Nykesha Gregoire.

P. RALPH: And I guess before we get started with the resumption of the examination of Mr. Antuan, on behalf of the Commissioners, Mr. Antuan, I'd like to thank you for coming back again today. I know it's not easy, but we're really thankful that you're – that you could come back again and talk to us again today.

B. BROOKWELL: Before we continue, Penote, I wanted to check if you can hear me okay or if you want the headphones again?

ELDER ANTUAN: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: (Inaudible.)

ELDER ANTUAN: Can you hear me?

B. BROOKWELL: Maybe a little closer.

P. RALPH: (Inaudible) slide your chair in closer, maybe.

ELDER ANTUAN: Okay?

P. RALPH: Yes, that's good.

ELDER ANTUAN: Good.
You let me know when to start.

B. BROOKWELL: Yup.

ELDER ANTUAN: Um –

B. BROOKWELL: All right.

So the – what we spoke a bit about yesterday was Mount Cashel, and I have a few questions about Mount Cashel.

At Mount Cashel, could you tell us what language was spoken?

ELDER ANTUAN: The language that I did – that I did use when I was – when I went away, in my community, it was English. It was the second language that I used. I wasn't very fluent as I am now. I can only pick the words – one by – words. Whatever I was taught in here – in this community here.

The priest was different – was a teacher at the beginning in – in my community. Because he was a (inaudible), he couldn't even – well, he taught in English in some ways, but also he – he used the Innu language also.

B. BROOKWELL: At Mount Cashel, what would happen if you spoke in Innu – in Innu-aimun?

ELDER ANTUAN: While we were at Mount Cashel, we could only speak in English. That's the second language we spoke. In order for us to speak our own language between of us – between – there was only two of us then – in order for us to speak in Innu, we were hiding away from the – the Brothers who were watching us. To use this – to use our own language.

And if – if we – if we ever caught using our own language we would – we would be punished. We would be punished. The punishment that we had was – we – we had our fingers laid on a – on a – on a table and

they – each finger – we had five or six straps on each hand. That's how cruel they were.

That's what I call cruel in my – my lifetime. You don't see a person doing that to you – to you. To the other people, like that. They don't do that. Because they were different Brothers. The first thing I knew they were Irish Brothers, from Ireland. They weren't – they weren't here – they were – they were not from Newfoundland or Canada.

B. BROOKWELL: Thank you for speaking about that. I know it is difficult.

I want to –

ELDER ANTUAN: I –

B. BROOKWELL: – oh – go ahead.

ELDER ANTUAN: I'd like to say a few – (inaudible) – about a few things.

I have a strength, Sir, I have a very – a good strength, to know what they were doing to us. Because you – I – we couldn't see anybody around us who can protect us, at the same time when we were punished for it. And the thing is that – because we were two of them – there was only two of us, there was nobody else – nobody else – to protect us. And the reason I say that, because I'm pretty sure if we – if – if we ever done anything wrong, they would really punish us, for good.

That's what I want to say in that session, and tell the things I – I like to share with you also.

First of all, I want to say a few words of my old – all – all my Elders who passed away in this community.

We have lost all the Elders who were – who were born, who were living here in Sheshatshiu, and also we – we just – lost – losing everything. Like I – I said to the – to the – a person yesterday – do you know

that person who was doing the drum – drum dance yesterday? I said, that's the only one – one man – one Elder – that he – who could sing with the drum.

Like me, I'm a – I'm the Elder too, as respected Elder in the community here in Sheshatshiu. I don't have that system with my – it's – it's – who has that system to – to do the drumming – drumming and also to do like, drum dance. Those things are very difficult for a – for a person to understand.

I had my grandfather who passed away long ago, when I was only about – three years old, I think, when he passed away. [REDACTED]

He spoke with his – Mishtapeu and asked him to look for food around the community here, when there was no – when there was some caribou around in the country, but they couldn't get it. Once they found out that he was – he can do a few things that no other person can do, we asked my grandfather – some people here in the community knew about it. He – what – greatest gift that he ever had given to him, you know?

We have caribou, has his own boss. The birds have their own boss. Fish have their own boss. And we have names for them, also. And when you – when you think all of this things have been done to us you'd be surprised what we have, that you don't have.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Now those things were never told by our people. Were never told to the – you people – like, you people. And those things, we don't want to lose them. We don't want to lose them, because they're sacred to us. Just the same way we do with the caribou – sacred to us.

When you say Mother Nature is giving the – we say to Mother Nature, we – give us the food in order for us to survive in this world. And I think the best way to say to the earth, is Mother Nature. She's the one who is – supply us our food in the country. Anything. We even collect our medication in the woods, trees – many kinds.

That's the first item I was trying to correct – correct it. The second one is matutishan – matutishan. [REDACTED]

Matutishan was used for – they call – we – you people call sweat tent, and that's what I heard from other people, say sweat tent.

The thing they used for sweat tent is that they – if you were ill – ill somewhere in your body. So they put the person inside the sweat tent to heal himself. And some of the – one of the Elders would have – what do you – what do you call it – hold on now. Let me explain to you so that some – way so that you can understand.

An Elder can go inside the sweat tent, and tell the – a person, where does he feel pain, okay?

_____ he asked the person where he's ill – what part of his body is sick. So what the Elders were – were doing, he blow – blow – you know, blow the heat over to her – over to him, and he got cured afterwards, see.

Now I got – I only brief you on these two things. I – I – they have spoken. By individuals who were speaking to us yesterday, and now – yesterday, for this time. It's only brief – I just brief out everything that they – telling – tell – was it done.

Now the other thing I want to say is that I got grow old, like – I'm an Elder now. I – as far as I can remember, when they build the houses in Sheshatshiu, I remember that. I'm pretty well remember – well remembered. What the people – the government were saying to us: If you don't go in the country, you stay here in the community, we build houses – we'll build the houses.

So a lot of people were anxious to see that – their house – a lot of people. Now also – I also – I'm also anxious to see the house, where my mother can stay, 'cause I'm only – young – a young man then. Back in '60s or '70s I think – I don't know for sure what day it was – what date – because I can't – I never – I never followed a calendar so much, but I knew what is coming to us.

When they build the houses, they built 20 ... 25, I'm not sure – were they 25. The first road, which we called North West Point Road – this is the first road here – the second – and down the beach, that's where they build all.

The – the Innu wanted them – have the running water. The Innu wanted them – have a bathroom. And they were told by the government officials: Now your house is finished – all done. Just a stove in a house. Windows all there. The panels all there. Everything – but no water – no water.

And the water – before that, we did get water from the river. Do you see the pond here somewhere – I think – somewhere here – and there's another pond over – (inaudible). This is where we get our water, to drink, to make a tea, to make a bread, we even use it as cooking.

This is how we were put in this community.

What I'm doing here, this morning, I'm just briefing the things that we done in our community – just briefing. There are times – when I will be – when you do come again in our community, to extend the – the – what do you call it here – it's a –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

ELDER ANTUAN: – sharing.

And I will also give you more information if you need – if you need it because what I understand of my Elders, it passes on to us, to say to you people who are listening. Try to listen to us – some of the ways that we endure in our lives.

The other – the – the – the other thing is I want to talk about – a little bit of – just to give you a brief – education in the community.

Education, when I – when I knew, we – they
built three new schools in the community.
One was the – the old school, which I call
old school. There was only one – one
teacher there. It was Father Pearson; taught
– who teach – who taught us school.

The second school that was built is down below, which was called Our Lady – Our Lady of the Snows school. The third one was built here – around here somewhere – exactly right here I think. Was built – was built by the – the government, and was called Peenamin Mackenzie School. That was the third one, which housed from kindergarten to Grade 12.

And the second school that was built down below us – it was – house for kindergarten to Grade 9. Both – like – the school that was built – the second one.

That's the part of education.

The education was told by – told us, by the Government of Newfoundland that we have to send our kids into the schools. If we don't – if we don't send our kids in a school, we wouldn't have got our family allowance, our assistance by Social Services, we won't get anything from the government, money-wise.

That's what we were told.

B. BROOKWELL: Penote, I think we're going to take a short break for translation in a few minutes. Just wanted to let you know in case you wanted to start on something new. But if now is a good time for a break –

ELDER ANTUAN: The last thing I wanna – I was gonna do with it was the – the Social Services part.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay.

ELDER ANTUAN: If you want to finish I'll leave it off from there. You still want a break?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You go right ahead.

B. BROOKWELL: Yeah, go ahead.

ELDER ANTUAN: As far as I can remember, the first Social Service came in in our – not in Labrador – not in our community, but he – he – he was working on the other side, with us. He didn't stay here – be out here.

I was the only person who could speak English. It was my – my – my uncle could speak English – Ponus Nuke – he was fluent with English too. I, myself, with my mother went to – I don't even know – recall

his name, the – the person who was working there. I couldn't recall.

My mother was asking assistance from – from that person. And I told the person, I said: She need assistance. And he asked questions like: How many in your family? There was only two of us, then. And Mother answered: There's two – there's two of us, myself and him, he said.

The first question that they ask us – they ask my mother: If you're working – are you working? And that hit me in my – somewhere in my head. Hit me. To say that to the lady – I'll call her lady who – I mean – to say to her: Are you working?

You know what I thought? When he told that – my mom: Are you working? There's no jobs before – there was no jobs. There were no jobs to look for. All he has – go to social assistance – to the Social Services. That was my first reaction to Social Services.

That's the things I – I've seen in my lifetime. Where – that's when it starts, by the way, Social Services argue to Innu people about everything that they – they want them – them – to do, I think, that's why they're arguing.

When you look at – in the – in this community now, you look at the – who – the younger people, who have their kids in their home, and who have their uncles in their home, who have their aunts in their home.

It's so important for us, and also you people, to understand how – how we are doing in our community. Especially the group of your relation-people who are there with you. You have to give them understanding.

You also have to give them help – what they need. You also want to give them – understand the way *you* people operated in this world, because you cannot put one person into your understanding. And also I cannot put one person in my understanding – in my – in my wording, when I say the

word, to understand. I will (inaudible) more people to be there.

I'm just about finished what I want to say for the Social Services; but I will add – add on, when you people come back again. I believe you'll be back here in March, to hear again – to hear you – from you people.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay. We will – we'll take a short break.

We'll take a short break for the benefit of the interpreters, Penote; but some of the lawyers, and your lawyer, may want to still ask you a few questions, so can you come back in ten minutes?

ELDER ANTUAN: Yup. (Inaudible.)

Recess

P. RALPH: Are we ready to resume?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yup.

B. BROOKWELL: So, Penote, I have two last questions for you, and they're about Mount Cashel.

And can you tell us who sent you to Mount Castle – Cashel?

ELDER ANTUAN: The first thing I can tell you is that the first word, I heard from my mother, when she – when she told me I'm going to St. John's. And the only two people that I knew who were – who were out this trip, was a priest – was our priest in the community, whose name was Father Pearson. And the other person who was the – who was the mission at the Grenfell on the other side – Grenfell Mission. And that's the only people I can think of – that were – that were the ones sending me. Maybe there was a Social Services there too. (Inaudible.)

When we were told to go St. John's, we have some clothing from the Mission at North West River. We have clothes but

that's where we got it from. And I also believe that they paid my whole way in St. John's.

That's all I can remember.

The things they do with our people, they don't consult them in some case – there's no consultation in – with us – what they were going doing to us. All they say was: Go in to school in St. John's. That was it.

So we left here September 1958 – when we got to St. John's.

B. BROOKWELL: So my last question is when you were at Mount Cashel, did you get to come home at all?

ELDER ANTUAN: As far as I can remember when I was at Mount Cashel, we were able to go home in – in the summer when there was a break, when there was no school in the summer. We're never been brought back until – until it was over.

Like they do now in the schools, you have a break for Christmas, you have a break for Easter and also we have a break for summer. We didn't have that – in – in my memory we didn't have that there. We stayed there in St. John's. We do all our duties in St. John's – what we were told to do. Look after the cow; look after the pig; look after – look after the hens.

B. BROOKWELL: Thank you very much.

Those are my questions. The other lawyers may have questions.

P. RALPH: I will ask counsel if they have questions.

Before I ask that, I've had a conversation with the Commissioners and also with Mr. Antuan, and it's our – the Commissioners' intention to bring him back, perhaps more than once or twice over the course of the Inquiry.

I think we all have, I think, a lot of questions we'd like to ask Mr. Antuan and I think he is also anxious to share his knowledge of the history of the Innu and so, again, we will – we will bring him back several times over the course of the Inquiry.

So I'll ask – I'll go through. Province of Newfoundland, do you have any questions for –?

Government of Canada?

Do any other counsel wish to seek leave to ask Mr. Antuan questions?

I'm sorry –

J. TARLTON: No, um – I – thank you and good morning, Commissioners, distinguished Elders, members of the Innu leadership.

My name is Jonathan Tarlton and I represent the Attorney General of Canada on behalf of Canada, along with other members of –

P. RALPH: Jonathan, just to interrupt you. I was – when Mr. Antuan leaves I was going to ask everyone to introduce themselves –

J. TARLTON: Yeah.

P. RALPH: – just that's –

J. TARLTON: I'll – I'll leave it then.

P. RALPH: Okay.

J. TARLTON: No, I just wanted to take the opportunity – no questions, but to thank Mr. Antuan for – I can appreciate it's very hard for him – he said – for him to speak yesterday and today, and we've had to listen to some very difficult things. But I wanted to thank him for coming and I look forward to hearing him in the future, in March and at other gatherings of the Commission, either formally or informally.

So I just wanted to say that before we – before he leaves.

Thank you very much.

P. RALPH: Thank you, Mr. Tarlton.

ELDER ANTUAN: Can I say a few words?

All you people, the rest of the lawyers who are here. I certainly want to thank my Elders who passed away. If they did – knew what was going on in this – in this community, they would have loved it, to understand. They have to – glad about it – they would be happy, if they see'd it.

And I think we should thank them, in our hearts and our – in our mind, for them. In order for them to (inaudible) they can't be here but certainly – certainly – they understand, where they are, and where we are.

And I'd like to thank the Commissioners, people who are working on it, and the lawyers who were working, and I thank you very much.

And I will soon see you again, next – next round, I guess. (Inaudible.)

Thank you very much and hope you enjoy the day. Keep up working – keep up good work. I called – I call to you, keep up the work and thank you.

P. RALPH: Commissioners, before we get to our next witness is it – I think – a good time for all the lawyers to introduce themselves.

So perhaps we can start with you, Benjamin – and also identify yourself, and who you're representing.

B. BROOKWELL: My name is Benjamin Brookwell and I'm a lawyer here representing Innu Nation.

J. ASHINI: My name is Jolene Ashini – oh, I forgot.

Jolene Ashini, member of Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation. Articling student with OKT Law and representing Innu Nation.

N. SHEAVES: Good morning, Nikita Sheaves, and I'm a lawyer representing the province.

P. RALPH: If the –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: (Inaudible) – say it louder please, Nikita.

N. SHEAVES: Good morning.

Nikita Sheaves, and I'm a lawyer representing the province.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.] Nikita?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Nikita.

K. DUGGAN: Good morning.

Kim Duggan and I'm a lawyer with the Department of Justice Canada, representing the AG of Canada.

Thank you.

INTERPRETER NUNA: What's your first name, please?

K. DUGGAN: Kim.

INTERPRETER NUNA: Kim.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

K. PECK: I'm Kelly Peck and I am a lawyer representing Canada.

INTERPRETER NUNA: Can I hear your first name?

K. PECK: Kelly Peck.

INTERPRETER NUNA: Kelly Peck.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

J. TARLTON: Good morning.

My name is Jonathan Tarlton.

I am also representing the Attorney General of Canada, on behalf of the Government of Canada, and it is a pleasure to be here.

Thank you.

V. RYAN: Hi.

I'm Victor Ryan and I'm a lawyer for Canada.

C. URQUHART: Kuei, (inaudible) Caitlin Urquhart and I'm a lawyer with the Commission.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Caitlin?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Caitlin.

L. MOORE: I'm Lynn Moore, and I'm a lawyer with the Commission.

A. DING: Good morning.

My name is Adrienne Ding.

[Redacted text block]

K. MAHER: Good morning.

My name is Kevin Maher. I represent the Nunatsiavut Government.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Your name again?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Kevin.

K. MAHER: Kevin.

W. KENNEDY: Good morning.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Thank you.

K. HEALEY: Good morning.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

What's your name again?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: William?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Kathleen.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Kathleen, sorry.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A. CONWAY: Good morning.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Allison you said?

Allison?

P. RALPH: Allison.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Allison.

R. ASH: Good morning.

My name is Robby Ash and I'm with the firm Poole Althouse. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

A. FITZGERALD: Good morning.

My name is Andrew Fitzgerald. I'm counsel to the Child and Youth Advocate.

Thank you.

P. RALPH: Yeah the – I guess – some of the names of the lawyers were challenging. Hopefully over time it'll get easier with practice.

Oh yes, and my name is Peter Ralph, I'm also Commission Counsel.

So, ready for the next witness, Benjamin?

B. BROOKWELL: The next witness that will come up is Elder Joachim Nui.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

(Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

B. BROOKWELL: Okay. (Inaudible) someone else.

(Inaudible.)

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

ELDER NUI: Ehe.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.] Book.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Book. Okay.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yup.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Swear?

B. BROOKWELL: Swear, yup.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Put your hand on it.

CLERK: Do you swear that the evidence you shall give to this Inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth –

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Yeah. He's going to swear.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you.

CLERK: – and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Please state your name for the record.

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE (providing English translation): My name is Joachim Nui Senior. I'm from Natuashish.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

B. BROOKWELL: Good morning.

I am going to ask a few questions today, a little bit about your life.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Ah. Ehe.

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, yeah.

What's going to happen here, he says, I'll tell the story about how I've been raised, the coming of myself when I was young. And it's going to be like – it's like a – like a similar story regarding Penote Antuan, what he shared. And it's – like it's the same – same story – it's like a similar story what's going – what – what I – what – to share.

Okay. He said: In – in Davis, it's a place called Utshimassit. When I was young, he says, there were a lot of Elders. What I remember, there was no school, I was – I was raised in the country and in the country, that's where we – that's where all the children were taught in their cultural values – their cultural values, I mean.

Okay. He said: The first thing is, the only teachings that we received back then was the teachings of the country; the skills, the cultural values and all that. And mothers usually teach their – the girls – their young girls, like (inaudible), and all that. That's the only teachings that they receive.

Okay, yeah. He was talking about the country. Like, they usually spend a lot of times in the country. They only spent two months in springtime in the communities. That's when the priest comes around. Like in the –

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

– in June month. But there's a Father – his name was Father O'Brien – usually comes around in June month. And most of the time there are two groups of people in the

community. Like, the most of them – most of the people are based somewhere in Nain – in some other community – so every time when – when the Father O'Brien comes around, he only spent two weeks in the community, to do the baptismal and weddings and other social functions – I mean the functions for ceremonies.

Okay, he said, in August month, that's when usually there's a outpost going – like, people going to the country. Like, they usually spent – like, they usually spent a year in the country. And every time when they goes to the community, they don't have enough money to – to – like, support themselves. Like, the only support that they have is the country food, every time they go to – in the country.

Okay. He said: I got a lot of stuff I don't remember because the problems right now – I'm just getting to do the points – I'm getting old.

Okay. He's – I wanna talk about the – my life when it comes to the country. Like – like, I spend a lot of time in the country. Looking at children today – like – I mean – today – looking at children – children who (inaudible) in the country. And today, yeah, he said, every now and then when people goes back to the community, they usually, like, buy small stuff to the store, in the community.

Okay. When I was in – back in the past, I mean, Father O'Brien, when – he was getting old, and there was another priest that took over – like, they changed. And the priest that took over – like, he was, I guess, learning how to speak Innu and all that.

And when I was 15 years old, that's when I began to understand, like, to be in school. Like, I only spent seven years in school, while I was – while I was in the – in the – in the old days, I mean.

Okay. When the – the other Father came into the community, he said, that – that's the

Father that taught a lot of stuff when it comes to the spirituality, when it comes to the Catholicism. And – and that's when – when the kids, or the youngest, learned how to adapt what – like, the society that's – the society – what the Father brought to the community. And his name was Joseph Cyr.

Okay. He says one year when the – when – like, after one year, like, the Father talked to the people in the community about how government will – will oversee how – how they would be given things that they were promised or whatever. And back then, when the Father was there, we don't have anything when it comes to the houses, like – like, to say houses – like, the houses that we have now. Like we only – we only had those tents and all that.

Okay. When the Father explains about – to the people back home: If you guys go to country, you guys won't be able to receive anything.

Okay. In 1915, [read: 1950] the priest told the community – community members, about their kids to be in school and all that, and they were – and they said – the priest promised the community members that the new houses will be given to you, plus better education.

Okay. He said he spent 18 years – actually, priest spent 18 years in the community. And since that time when priests were – been in the community, they learned a lot of Innu – like Innu language and all that. And what he said that we've been promised, there'll be school for our children and there's – those promises were broken. We haven't seen anything for 18 years while the priests were there.

Okay. After 18 years – after 18 years, there was a – the promise we're been – like, those promises we're been given were actually start – start to start. Like, the school was built, the store and the houses were – that were promised, and we were told that everything will be running – like, running

water and all that. Like, the only thing that's standing during – the houses were built, was a stove.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Oh, sorry.

When we went inside the houses that were promised to us, he said, there were no beds, no – just stove inside the house. The remaining stuff were being paid by us, he said. We paid our own stuff like furniture and all that.

Okay. All the things that we bought when we entered those homes. Like, all those things that we bought, like furniture, we were – been – like the – were – they sent us a – second-hand stuff.

Since the first contact, he said, like we're beginning to – been – there's – we begin to affect our way of living. Like – like in the – in the country, we didn't – we didn't feel anything – there's nothing to fix us. We were healthy, he said.

Okay, and the other thing he says is, Innu Elders felt that the teachings were – started to die off when it comes to drums. Like, all those cultural, country values that they had, beginning to fade when the priest came, to the – the first contact with the priest.

B. BROOKWELL: I think we're gonna need to take a – just a short break for lunch, but we'd like to continue more after lunch.

P. RALPH: Commissioners –

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Mmm.

P. RALPH: Commissioners, what time would you like to resume this afternoon?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Let's say an hour – hour and (inaudible).

P. RALPH: 1:15?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Okay.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yup.

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Recess

CLERK: All rise.

This Commission of Inquiry is now in session.

C. URQUHART: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us.

We've had some questions online, so just to explain that there are two Innu dialects and we have our two wonderful interpreters, Anne and Gerry, interpreting to ensure that everyone in Sheshatshiu and everyone in Natuashish can understand what is happening here.

Thank you.

And if anyone from the public is interested in sharing their experiences with the Inquiry – with the Commissioners, we would ask you to go speak to Mary and Audrey in the front room, to sign up for the sessions in March.

This afternoon we will continue to hear from Elder Joachim Nui. And following that we will hear from Elder Tshaukuesh Penashue.

B. BROOKWELL: So please go ahead and continue telling us what you wish to speak about, and I'll have some questions at the end. But I'm here to listen at this point.

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, what Joachim Nui stated, that: Right now what I'm gonna talk about – we're gonna talk about the problems that they had in the past, and in the past the Elders have a lot of strength, when it comes to – when – when there was no contact from the other society.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Lake trout.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Lake trout.

So that's when they – when the lake trout is caught, the whole community was asked to come to eat fish, like, or – like the first – I don't know what it's called – it's – lake trout? Lake trout, yeah.

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, and the other thing he says, there's a term, Nitshik^u, means Otter. It's a part of a spirit animal left by Missinak^u. And he said: Every time when the otter is eaten, it's always should be eaten inside the tent, or inside a house or whatever. And – like, it's really different than the other animals that are – that – that are – being hunted.

Okay, and the other thing he says when it comes to caribou bones, like legs, and like I said there is a – a person, let's say, who has a – (inaudible) –

INTERPRETER NUNA: (Inaudible.)

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: – I don't know what's this thing called, but I know it's – it's called teshipitakan. That's where they store their meat when it comes to caribou bones, and these – after these caribou bones are placed in teshipitakan they have to be clean

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Teshipitakan, in English I would say that's like a platform where meat – caribou meat and bones were stored and it was on top – not on top, but like, say, in the middle of trees. They stored it there for use of Makushan.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

He was talking about Makushan. When it comes to Makushan, he says, when it's

been prepared – after it's been done – it has – it usually stored for two weeks or a month out – inside the tent. What usually happens is when the – when there's feasts going on, the first people that would be served, he said, was the men. So after that, the women, and after that is the kids.

And we were taught how to prepare Makushan. And we were being taught how to serve – serve the Makushan, the feast.

Okay, and the other thing what he stated is: We always listen to the Elders, he says, when it comes to giving advice, when it comes to hunting, and preparing feasts and all that. [Redacted]

B. BROOKWELL: Might I just suggest a – perhaps a short break for the translators as we've – we've gone through a little bit.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay.

We'll take 10 minutes.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

Recess

C. URQUHART: Welcome back, everyone.

Joachim Nui will now finish his testimonies.

B. BROOKWELL: So I have a few questions that I'd like to ask, about what you told us so far.

The first is, can you tell me what Utshimassit means?

Yeah.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

What he says, when it comes to the name Utshimassit, that name came from the Hudson Bay Trading Company that was – that was referred to from – what do you call it – Hudson Bay people.

B. BROOKWELL: This may be a strictly translation question so I might ask the translators, but does Utshimassit have a English translation? Does it mean something precise in English?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Utshimau means the – like, the store manager, the manager of the trading post. That's where the name came from. It was the trading post that was within their area, in their territory; that's where the trading post was. And utshimau, that's what means the – that's where it – it came from, Utshimassit – Davis Inlet, as well.

B. BROOKWELL: And can you tell me about how old you were when you were living at Utshimassit?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They didn't visit there, they said, they never went to there.

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

Utshimassit came from a group of – there's a store called Hudson Bay Company. And the Hudson Bay Company is referred as – in Innu – I guess that's – that's what Innu referred to: utshimau, it means the boss.

And when it comes to assi, means land. And that's what he stated.

[Dialogue between Interpreter Nuna and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

Okay. What he stated that – he couldn't remember, he says, because I spent a lot of time in the Voisey Bay.

B. BROOKWELL: And – oh sorry.

And I'm trying to make sure I followed where you moved to. Is it that you moved first to old Davis Inlet in the 1950s?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Can you repeat the question?

B. BROOKWELL: Yeah.

So I think there's old Davis Inlet, new Davis Inlet, and I wanted to know when you were at old Davis, and when you moved to new Davis.

P. RALPH: Ben – excuse me – I mean, if you wanted to lead on that, I think that's fine. I think we know the dates that they settled in new Davis, so if you want to ask him about it, I think 1967 they would have gone to new Davis.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay.

P. RALPH: And I think there was also – in 1947 they went to Nutak. So I think if you want to lead him on those – on those dates and – and he'll – I'm sure he'll figure out the rest.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay.

So in 1967, there was a move to new Davis and that was because of housing. Is that the right way to think of it, you moved because of housing?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

In 1967 he said what he was told – that's the other issue, he says, where the old Davis – before, where they were relocated to new Davis, there was no living conditions when it comes to the land. There's a place called – I don't know how to pronounce it in English – (inaudible) – it means it's on some kind of a – a brook.

And we were told by a government to choose where to live; so that's when we picked the new Davis, that is close to the shore for the boats to come in.

B. BROOKWELL: And after that, why did you move to Natuashish?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Yeah.

Okay, yeah.

What we're been told by the government, he says, like, we're been promised to move to another location. Because what we've been told in the past, he said, that we're promised to get the – all amenities when it comes to bathrooms, and all living – like, arrangements, when it comes to – like what do you call it – bathrooms and toilets and running water.

And the other thing what he stated is: When we moved to new location, it's more accessible when it comes to the things were promised to us, he says.

And the other thing what he stated is: The old Davis that we – that we – that we stayed is – there's no living conditions when it comes to like – it's – like it's a rugged area.

B. BROOKWELL: And have you had or seen the RCMP or Social Services in – involved with the Innu, when you were at Natuashish or new Davis?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

When it comes to Social Services, he stated that: I remember back then, five kids were apprehended by Social Services, then they were brought into my household and the Social Services was – never given me anything when it comes to feeding the kids.

I was the only one that provide the kids – when it comes to being in the – in my care, he says.

B. BROOKWELL: For how long did you take care of those children?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, and then he said like, one of the kids that I took in under my care, she was two years old, and that kid was my cousin's kid. And when he – when – when the time when he's coming of age when he was, I guess, teenager, he got married.

And he stated that: Over those years when I had the other – the other kids that was under my care – five years, four years and two years, that were under – under my care, he says, and – and every now and then, like, he said – like – I usually take care of kids, when it comes to services – when it comes to Social Services bringing their kids in.

Okay, what – and the other thing what he stated is: There's one of kid that I usually take care of when she was only a – two years old, he's been with me all through the years.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

B. BROOKWELL: And why did you decide to take in these children?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: The reason why I take this – take those kids that are apprehended by Social Services that – the reason why is, their caretakers were drinking – like, their moms and dads.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Oh, sorry.

As he said – he stated one of the kids were apprehended – like, most of the time, he said, one of the kids ran away from his mom – he's been with us for three years and he's still – no actually – he's still – so he's one of the kids that's was apprehended – like, he's been there for three years, he said.

B. BROOKWELL: After the kids stayed with you, where did they go?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, what he stated is: Those kids that were – the kids that were under my care, he says, like, those kids were departed to their separate ways and that's – he said, when it comes to the kids that I had in care, they – they never lost their identity, their language and their – and their way of being as Innu.

And the other thing that he stated is: I see difference when it comes to when the kids apprehended, been shipped out somewhere. They lost a lot of – they're lost. They lost their cultural identity.

Okay, and what the other – the – he said, too, that those five kids that were apprehended by – under his care, they are really – like they – they – he said, they understand how I live and they were well

taken care of, and they knows all my kids, like – as their own siblings, he says.

And the other thing what he stated is: Like, I was the only one working that time, he says. But I managed to support those five kids and my – my biological kids, he says.

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

[Dialogue between Interpreter Nuna and Interpreter Gregoire in Innu-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Oh, sorry.

He said: At first when they had a first contact with the priest, we had everything going when it comes to practising our Innu culture, our beliefs and our values. And when the – the first contact by a priest, we're being taught to follow what the priest has taught to the Innu people like – like – like I said. And the other thing at first is, in the past we – we didn't have any, like, baptismal practices. So ever since the first contact we had was – the people are

baptised – the kids were baptised and all that.

In 1927, when the priest came, that's when everything changed, he says.

B. BROOKWELL: Thank you for answering those many questions. I very much appreciate it.

And those are the questions that I had about what you've spoken about, and I know you have more you wish to share, so please go ahead.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

P. RALPH: I have a few questions for Mr. Nui; and, perhaps, Anne and Gerry, would you like a five- or ten- minute-break before I continue?

Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good.

P. RALPH: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE:
(Inaudible) five minutes – ten minutes, please.

Recess

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Hello. Okay.

Ready?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Ready.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Okay.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: Lost the translation. Do you want to translate yourself or (inaudible)?

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: No, I'll translate myself.

I know!

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

I'm just explaining what a public inquiry is.

And the explanation is that when the government recognizes that there is a problem, then the public along with the Innu Leadership and the governments see that there is a problem. And so we as Commissioners are set out to do the work of finding why that problem happened, or what is the problem.

And this is part of the work for this week, of what we're doing, is gathering information of how Utshimassit, Natuashish came to be, how Sheshatshiu came to be – gathering that information.

And what Elder Joachim said, that people were happy and people – people looked after their children, people provided for their children. And that's really important information.

And this is, for this week is – is the information we're looking for. And we're going to get more information tomorrow from Mary Jane Edmonds, and do a timeline like this.

And I know that people would be nervous, because it is like a court setting, starting off. And I know people in both communities would be nervous, especially families, to think that all these lawyers are going to ask us questions. And that's not the way it's gonna be in March.

We want people to come forward to tell their stories, and we wanna hear those stories. And so when we come back to do another – another round of this session, we will have families come forward and speak.

The lawyers will be on the sides, and we will have the community speak. And same thing in Natuashish, too. The lawyers will be on

the side, and the communities and the families will speak.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

So I just wanna clarify that. And I know people – people's levels of stress can go up, I know that.

So, thank you.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: Good afternoon, Mr. Nui.

My name is Peter Ralph and I'm one of the lawyers for the Commissioners.

Sure.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Yeah, understood.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

P. RALPH: Mr. Nui, I understand that you're 89 years old, and I think – so, does that mean you're born in 1933?

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay he said: I was born in 1934, December –

P. RALPH: – '34?

ELDER NUI: 1933 – '30. Thirty.

P. RALPH: 1930.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

P. RALPH: And I understand that you're born in the country?

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: And he said he was born in Kamestastin.

P. RALPH: And – and just here – what was your life like with your family, when you were a – a young boy?

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

He said like – like I – in the past – when I'm – in the coming of age – I endured a lot of hardships in the past, when I was up in – when I was a child. And he said: I couldn't remember my mom.

P. RALPH: Now I understand, Mr. Nui, that your family – or some families – moved to Nutak in 1947; can you recall that?

ELDER NUI: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay. He said: In the year of 1948, a place called Nutak, people were asked to move to Nutak, to leave old Davis Inlet.

P. RALPH: And, Mr. Nui, can you remember what – what your life was like in Nutak?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

He said: When – when she was a – young, he says I got no mother – I got no mother to provide me. My dad moved to – in Sheshatshiu, but the only – I got my brother on the name of Ponus – she was with – with my father.

And today he said: This – in the past, like I have endured a lot of hardships when it comes to just being – providing for myself, he said.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. I can hardly (inaudible).

P. RALPH: I don't think they're – I think you need to speak closer to the mic, Gerry.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

He said: In the coming of age – coming – when I – when I was young, he says, I have endured a lot of hardships in the past, when I was a child. My dad moved to Sheshatshiu, along with my brother Ponus Pone – Ponus Pone – Ponus Nuke, sorry.

And for me, he says, it's really hard to just be myself as a child when I was young. It's all – it's all by myself, he says, I was alone.

P. RALPH: Mr. Nui, eventually you – you moved to new Davis Inlet. And I think that was in 1967, do you remember that?

Oh, you can't – speak in the microphone – give him –

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

In 1967, he says, like, we were told by government that we would be moved to another setting – or a location. And what I – what we're being told by officials, that – the – where you're living right now, it's all rugged – rugged, there's no living conditions when it comes to the area where they're living.

P. RALPH: So, Mr. Nui, I understand you moved – the community – a lot of Innu families moved to new Davis in – in 1967, and what was life like in – in new Davis Inlet?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

What he said: In 19-6 – 1967, when they moved, he said, the problem I see, or like, the problem that we endured while the moving, in the new – in the new Davis, there were a lot of drinking going on, a lot of gas sniffing going on, and the outside workers

keeps bringing stuff like alcohol in the community. Give them – giving alcohol to the kids.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: He stated: In the evenings in the past, he said –

P. RALPH: Keep it close to your mouth.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Oh, sorry.

He said, in the evenings, like, kids usually go to a next town to buy some alcohol, a place called Hopedale, he says. That's where they usually go.

And the other thing he said that –

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

Yeah, that's the problem that we had that time, he said, when it comes to kids going to the next town to get alcohol.

The other thing what he stated is: The only – the only access that the kids usually had when it comes to getting alcohol, it's by ferry. That ferry that comes along every week. So the workers on the – on the ferry usually sell alcohol to the kids. That's during the summertimes. In the wintertime they usually transport alcohol from Ski-Doos.

P. RALPH: Mr. Nui, if you're – if – let me know if you're getting tired and you wanna stop. Do you wanna stop?

ELDER NUI: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: You're fine?

ELDER NUI: Ehe.

P. RALPH: Okay.

So there was – you said there's a lot of drinking in new Davis, and there was also gas sniffing.

How about before you went to Davis Inlet; was there much drinking in the – in your community with – in your families before the – they went to Davis Inlet – the new Davis Inlet?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, what he – talking about when it comes to the things that's been going on when it comes to alcohol and gas sniffing.

In the past, he said, people when they move to the new Davis – in the old Davis, they don't have any things when it comes to drinking. Like there's no – there was no gas sniffing.

So since then, when they moved to the new Davis, there was – there were a lot of drinking. Like there's a lot of contacts from different sources like ferry boats; when the people got their Ski-Doo's, driving back and forth to the – the other town.

P. RALPH: Mr. Nui, I was wondering, when you were in the country with your – with your family, was there any alcohol or gas sniffing then?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay.

He said: During in the country, like, he said, there – there was no drinking, there was no sniffing. In the past, he says, what the – what I talked about, there was no contact when it comes to the things that people are doing right now, drinking and gas sniffing. And what is it – there's nothing – nothing in the past.

P. RALPH: Mr. Nui, I think – I understand that – I think you worked at the airstrip for much of your life?

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay. He said: I used to work as a – back then, in Davis – as a heavy equipment operator. Like, I been working there with various jobs. I was airstrip operator. Like, every now and then I used to be called in, at school, to come to work.

And I'd been working five years with the store as a – a gas handler. After that I – after that I called in again to another job, as a plant operator for nine years.

Like, every now and then, he says, I'd switch jobs when I'm – when I'm asked to – when I'm asked to do – what people ask me to do – from outside people.

P. RALPH: Mr. Nui, I just – just a few more questions. In terms of new Davis Inlet, how do you think the families that were in new Davis Inlet – how did they do? How were their – what were their lives like?

Yeah.

Did – can you describe how well the community was doing when they were in new Davis Inlet?

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Old Davis?

P. RALPH: New Davis.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: New – Utshimassit.

ELDER NUI: Mm-hmm. [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Okay, he said: When the priest came to the – to the – came in contact with the Innu people, at first he says, like, everything was very good

when it comes to the first contact with the priest.

So ever – like – since – over the years, he says, there's a lot of turmoil going on when it comes to moving to two new community, I think – that they ran into a lot of hardships.

Like in the past, he said, before when they moved, we didn't have any problems in old Davis.

P. RALPH: Thank you, Mr. Nui, those – those are all the questions I have for now. We'll be hoping to speak to you a few more times, over the course of the Inquiry.

Certainly we'll be in Natuashish a few times, and hopefully we'll have many opportunities to speak to you at that time about your life; it's a fascinating story.

[Dialogue between Elder Nui and Interpreter Gregoire in Mushuau-aimun.]

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: We'll end for the day, Commissioners, and resume tomorrow morning at 9:30 and – yes, and Elizabeth will come up for a prayer.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

CLERK: This Commission of Inquiry is concluded for today.