



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

English Transcript

Volume 4

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

Thursday

16 February 2023

CLERK (Battcock): All rise.

This Commission of Inquiry is now open.

Please be seated.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Hello. Okay.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE:
Tshenashkumitin, Elizabeth, for your prayer.

Thank you, Anastasia.

So, the Commissioners feel compelled to make a statement.

Late in the proceedings yesterday, we have learned from – that some Innu were upset when a respected Elder was asked many questions.

Well, first of all, we want to thank you for showing us how much love and respect you have for your Elders, and that we get that message. We know you care deeply, and you don't want anybody to insult or harm your Elders.

Secondly, after the acknowledgement, we want to apologize for unknowingly causing stress on the Innu during the hearings, by the way that we continued to ask questions. We know that asking questions a second time may look like we're not paying attention; it may look like we don't believe what they have to say, so we ask the questions over and over again.

I want you to understand that as Commissioners, we want to get the details right. So sometimes we have to have, from very important witnesses like an Elder, make sure that we don't miss the opportunities, because we know what they have to say is so valuable. We want to know where they travelled, how they lived, their

impressions from a life well-lived for a long time.

We understand that for Elders so deeply loved and protected, the questions may seem disrespectful. Well, at the beginning, you remember, Commissioner Devine said: This is an Innu Inquiry; we want to try to do things the Innu way, and we will make mistakes.

We acknowledge our mistake.

But we thank you for continuing to teach us that things we take for granted can have harmful consequences. That's a message over and over again we have to learn.

Also on another point, we have heard that ceremonies and protocols

are very sacred. These teachings need to be given the due respect. Now Elder Nui is gone – he's gone back home, but anything that you repeat – the media repeats – should only be done by making sure he agrees and the Innu consent to those kind of details being put out in the public.

Thank you, media, for your co-operation.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

C. URQUHART: Thank you, Commissioners, for that.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Caitlin Urquhart. I am one of the lawyers with the Inquiry.

This week and next week we are learning about the history of the Innu. We are hearing from Innu about life in Nutshimit and what has happened since contact. This is important context to how things are happening in the community and in child protection today.

Innu will have the opportunity to share their own experiences in March in Sheshatshiu, and in April in Natuashish. When community members are sharing their experiences, they will not be asked questions by lawyers. And we will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak to the Commissioners.

Healing services workers are available to support you in preparing for your statement, the day you give your statement and after.

You can watch the proceedings or learn more about the Inquiry on our website and Facebook page.

And you can reach out to our community liaison, Nathan Penashue, or our healing services team lead, Jeannie Tuglavina.

This morning we will hear from Elder Tshaukuesh Penashue. This afternoon, we will hear the time – the Mushuau timeline from Mary Jane Edmonds and Emma Ashini.

Following that, we will hear about community well-being in Natuashish from Kathleen Benuen. We anticipate that this may require an evening sitting.

(Inaudible.)

Yeah.

With that, I'm going to pass it over to Benjamin Brookwell.

B. BROOKWELL: Good morning.

What would you prefer, for today, for me to call you: Tshaukuesh or Elizabeth?

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

This is swearing in – she's going swear in?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

INTERPRETER NUNA: Swear in – she going to be sworn?

B. BROOKWELL: Oh –

J. ASHINI: Yeah, but we're gonna ask her name first.

INTERPRETER NUNA: Okay.

B. BROOKWELL: Yeah.

CLERK: Do you swear that the evidence that you shall give to this Inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

ELDER PENASHUE: (Inaudible.)

CLERK: Please state your name for the record.

ELDER PENASHUE: I'm Elizabeth Penashue. My nickname Tshaukuesh – Tshaukuesh.

B. BROOKWELL: Do you want us to call you Tshaukuesh, today, or Elizabeth?

ELDER PENASHUE: Tshaukuesh.

B. BROOKWELL: Good morning, Tshaukuesh.

My name is Ben Brookwell, and I'm a lawyer for Innu Nation. Jolene Ashini and I spoke with you a few weeks ago at the Innu Nation office.

It's nice to see you again today.

There will be translation today and they will need to take some breaks. I will – I will ask you before a break to see whether it's a good time.

If you need a break at any time, please tell us.

ELDER PENASHUE: Ehe.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: She won't mind telling you; she got a big stick over there.

B. BROOKWELL: You can start when you're ready.

[Dialogue between Elder Penashue and Interpreter Nuna in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

ELDER PENASHUE: Okay. I'm Elizabeth Penashue. First I gonna speak English. I know my English not – not very good. And then I will speak little bit first, and then Anne, she's gonna help me.

Because when I was young, Grade 4, I was finished school because my parents always go Nutshimit. When I say Nutshimit, means in the country – in the bush, in the country – Nutshimit.

My parents always go Nutshimit. Sometimes just come home one month, two months and then go back Nutshimit again. And then Grade 4 I was finished school. That's why I don't speak English very good. But I learned a bit English; before I was married, I was work – old hospital.

And before I start, I was born Nutshimit. Everybody understand Nutshimit – Nutshimit, in the country – in the bush. I was born Nutshimit, closer to Wabush, Labrador City, in the bush, in the country. Meshikamau Lake. That's what she told me, my sister, Anastasia (inaudible) She said: That's where you born, Wabush in the country, Meshikamau Lake.

And then when I was born, the lake they call Kanekuanakau – Innu name – Kanekuanakau. Kanekuanakau means long beach. Sometimes I'm thinking, I wish – I wish I go there, I want to see where I was born. Long beach, I can walk on the beach sometimes, I'm thinking.

And I'm – I'm so happy, Anastasia, that's my sister daughter. Jolene, that's my sister – my sister granddaughter. Daniel Ashini,

her dad, I know so many years, so many years she help me when I speak everywhere. I went England twice, her dad with me. Many, many places I went: Toronto, Halifax, everywhere – speak.

And then I was – I was very happy, what I'm doing to speak many, many places. I wanna help my people, I wanna help the children. Protect the land; protect everything.

And it's not – it's not the – it's not many people alive – old people – I should say passed away. I'm thinking Joachim Ashini, when she speak, when I listen. Joachim work hard because only one old man – very old. He work two places, Sheshatshiu and Natuashish.

In Sheshatshiu there was old man, I remember, Uatshetshish, nickname Uatshetshish. And real name – she's named Shinipesht Pokue and nickname Uatshetshish. And another old man, (inaudible), Penote Antuan grandfather, I don't know you – your name. I think – I think Penote, she knows – he knows real name. I know nickname (inaudible) she come from Québec.

And I'm thinking Joachim Nui when he speak: Oh, Joachim must be tired. He's very old man. He work two places, Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. And Joachim, he never said when invite – when someone invite Sheshatshiu: Can you come, Joachim? Joachim never said: No, I'm tired, I'm tired, no. Always, always he's happy to come Sheshatshiu. Singing, speak and singing a drum.

And I forgot to say – I was gonna say, I got 50 grandchildren. Nine – nine my own children, seven boys and two girls, nine altogether. And last time when I count my grandchildren, 50. Last time when I count my great-great, 24.

I'm happy and then I couldn't believe it. I never thought – I never thought when –

when I was married I gonna have a lot of – a lot of children and grandchildren.

And I'm very happy I'm here to speak. I know my English not very good. I know a lot of people good speak English, but I want to try a little bit to speak, and then Anne, she's gonna help me.

And I'm so happy Jolene, my – my sister granddaughter.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

ELDER PENASHUE: (Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mm-hmm.

ELDER PENASHUE: (Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Great.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

B. BROOKWELL: You can go ahead again when you're ready.

ELDER PENASHUE: Ah.

And I'm gonna say a little bit more then I'm gonna stop and then I'm gonna speak Innu-aimun.

I wanted to say one more, Jolene – I hope I say right name, Jolene. When I heard that Jolene, she gonna go to school Toronto, she's gonna be a lawyer, I was very happy, I was very proud.

Sometimes it's happen – sometimes it's happen the children, he quit. She don't wanna try anymore: No, it's too hard for me, too hard.

I'm happy, I'm happy Jolene, she never give up. I'm happy. I pray for him every time when I pray. Don't give up Jolene, keep –

keep the school. Be a lawyer. This is first time this gonna happen if the – Jolene finish the school, be lawyer, this is first time.

And one more thing, I'm thinking about Anastasia and (inaudible) Igloliorte. He was a lawyer before, many, many years in Goose Bay. She was a good lawyer and work hard and he knows a lot of people Sheshatshiu. And then I'm thinking about him, I hope – I hope she's gonna do – do a good job – Anastasia and Igloliorte. I don't want – I hope I said right the name. Because Inuit and Innu very strong. When he try something he's gonna do it, and this is first time it's gonna happen. I hope they – they gonna work good to help people – Sheshatshiu and the children.

And one more thing English, yesterday when I sat down – I came here Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday – I sat down there, I listened to people, and then I was thinking – I was thinking: I really wanna cry.

When I sat down I took – I ask one woman: Can you find for me writing paper and – and a pen, and she brought writing paper. And then I draw – I draw something – I know I'm not very good – I draw something. I try not – I try not to be cry.

I wanna draw – this is land – Innu land. Then I try to put animals – I don't know how to – I don't know how to draw animals. This is trees, this is lake, berries and medicine – Innu medicine, mountains, trees, river. I was – I was crying when I – when I – when I write it.

I was thinking, even I don't know how to draw, even I don't know how to speak English, I want – I want to try something to show – to show the people. This is the land before the government met – break our – our land. We had everything, everything. Water was clean, trees, rivers, animals, berries, medicine.

Innu people always been hunting and then we're saying: Why? Why the government to

come here, to break our land, make – kill environment, everything. That's making me cry when I think about those – everything – how we understand everything and that's why I make circle – everything and clean; animals, water.

I don't know how to draw. I should put all kind of animals: wolves, and ducks, beaver, black bear – I don't know how to draw. I ask someone help me – caribou, lake.

And then I'm thinking many, many times: Why the government – what he done, our land. Why?

Government, don't you think Innu people here hunting, and the children. When I'm gone, who's gonna teach the children? And where I gonna get what I need?

You take away everything. Government take away everything.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

B. BROOKWELL: Tshaukuesh, would you like to take a short break?

ELDER PENASHUE: Ehe.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

ELDER PENASHUE: Ehe.

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

ELDER PENASHUE: Ehe.

B. BROOKWELL: No problem.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Ten minutes, please.

ELDER PENASHUE: Ten minutes.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Ten minutes.

Recess

C. URQUHART: We're now going to resume.

Thank you.

B. BROOKWELL: Um, Commissioners, I'd like to start by just entering in as a new exhibit, the picture that Tshaukuesh has drawn for us.

P. RALPH: What number?

B. BROOKWELL: I understand the next exhibit number is 034 and the title would be *Drawing* by Elizabeth Penashue, dated February 16, 2023.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Elizabeth, we're going to sell that to the Queen and make a lot of money so –

ELDER PENASHUE: (Inaudible.)

B. BROOKWELL: Tshaukuesh, when you're ready, please go ahead.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA (providing English translation): Ever since government has destroyed our land, where are we going to teach our next generation, our children, the youth. There has been so much damage done; dammed our rivers, destroyed the land. And my (inaudible), when I do my walks on the land I take the youth with me, to teach them about our way of life on the land.

It's hard to see what the government has done to our land, because the land is our – is where we've survived, have survived for thousands and thousands of years ago, to this day.

The government never provided funding for Innu people to go in the country to practise their way of life. We did not take

government's money to spend our life in Nutshimit. We did go to Nutshimit, trap the animals that we will trade – trade with Hudson's Bay Company to get our supplies when we go to Nutshimit, trapped the animals that we would trade – trade with Hudson's Bay Company to get our supplies when we go to Nutshimit, the country.

There were usually three or four families together in one camp when they went to Nutshimit. Families were happy. It was the happiness that I experienced being there in Nutshimit. Young boys would learn from their father and their grandfather, and the girls would learn from their mother and their grandmother. I remember this because I was there. It was a happy place for me in Nutshimit.

I also remember that when the men went hunting, they usually went for two or three days. They would go trapping. Trapping, like – animals like beaver, otter; and when they came back, it was the women's job to clean whatever they brought back to the camp.

For instance, the caribou; they clean the caribou because it was brought back to the camp, and the women and the grandmothers used to clean it as the girls watched.

The feeling of proudness that showed us of the hard work that was done when we were in the country. I use this example, like, for you people here, the lawyers, your work – the hard work that you do and on – at the end of the day, I know you feel proud – proud of what you did from your work.

That's the same feeling when Innu people go hunting, trapping. Because they are proud of themselves that they have something for their children to have to eat, and the fur to trade to get the supplies for what they need in Nutshimit.

Being in Nutshimit in the past, Innu people were happy, were healthy, because everything that Innu people needed was

there. The medicine was there, and also when the women had their babies, an elderly women would help – would bear that child.

This part of the story that I am telling – the Nutshimit, being there, being happy and healthy – those are the parts of being Innu that I really miss the most. We were healthy and happy.

Whenever we went to Nutshimit I felt a happiness, even when women – young women that had a child within them, they went to Nutshimit because everything was there. There was midwifery from the elderly women.

This is what I really miss the most, and this is what the government has destroyed from us.

Children were very healthy in Nutshimit because they were reared up in tents – they were growing up in tents just like me.

And another thing I would like to mention is that at that time, there was no alcohol or drugs.

Also when the – in Nutshimit when families were together, children used to also help within their families. Example: Like, when an elderly woman wants to go pick berries in the fall – this usually happens in the fall, they pick berries – the kids would go and – go with their grandmothers, go with the elderly to help pick the berries, because berries also are medicinal.

And – and when the men went to check their traps, they used to take their sons with them so they can see, watch, and learn from the father and this is how she remembers. Also in those days, there were no wildlife wardens. There were none at that time. We were always careful of what – of how much to kill.

Example: the caribou. The hunters always looked at how many tents we have, how

many families are in that one camp and that is how they determine how many to take – caribou. Innu was always careful of what they hunted. They never took more than what they had in the – in that one camp – three or four families. They knew how many animals to – to kill.

When we hear stories about the Innu – Innu people, their stories are not lies; they are the truth. Innu always tell – tells the truth. Tells the truth about where they came from, and how they came to be here.

When we were – when she was in the country in the past, she says, she remembers there were no Ski-Doos, no bush planes.

They had their own – made their own tools to use. Whatever they needed for to get the animals and fish. They made their own tools. They had their own. What they needed to use to get the animals that they wanted.

And I will stop here. Maybe the lawyers want to ask me some questions.

B. BROOKWELL: Thank you, Tshaukuesh, for sharing all of that with us today.

(Inaudible.)

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: She said that she is not finished yet, but so far – maybe there is some questions for her?

B. BROOKWELL: I do have some questions that I think would help the Commissioners with their work.

Can you tell us when you were born?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken] 1944, May 15.

B. BROOKWELL: And you live, now, in – Sheshatshiu?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Yup, she lives in Sheshatshiu now, but her parents travelled from Quebec.

B. BROOKWELL: I want to ask you a little about life when you were young, in Nutshimit.

How long would you camp in one spot before moving?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: When they – when the Innu used to stay in one camp, they did not stay for long because where the animals were rare, the men from that camp would go and find where there are many animals in the area.

And then – that's how they used to move from camp to camp. It's regarding the animals, where they were and where there were many in the area they were going to go. The men decided where the animals are and the camp – then they would move camp.

B. BROOKWELL: And how many families would you camp with?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Sometimes in one camp there would be three, four, five families. That would be three or four, five tents.

B. BROOKWELL: And when you were in Nutshimit, who would go into town to get supplies?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: When they knew they were going to run out of supplies – run out of supplies –example: sugar, tea. And usually the – the father and the mother would have a discussion – the things that they will need – and after that discussion, the men usually went to get the supplies.

And usually there were two or three men that would go and get the supplies for that camp.

B. BROOKWELL: How long would they be gone for?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: When they start going to get the supplies, they walk fast – they go faster. It is when they come back, because of the heavy loads they have, they have to camp – stop along the way. Usually it took them 10 to 15 days.

B. BROOKWELL: I want to talk a little bit about other kids in Nutshimit.

Who would take care of children when you were together with other families?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: She's saying that the mothers will take care of the kids, along with the grandparents, when the men leave to go hunting. Sometimes the men will take the young boys with them and the girls would stay with their moms.

Yup and that's what –

B. BROOKWELL: If a problem came up or someone got hurt in Nutshimit, how did the community solve the problem?

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Can you elaborate more on what – she's asking, what kind of problem?

B. BROOKWELL: Yeah, I think I wasn't clear.

I wanted to know how were decisions made with the group of families – if they had to make decisions for everybody, how was it – decisions made?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Okay.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: The young people in the camps back then, the children, they – they did a lot of listening from the parents and the grandparents. If something bothered them – the mother or the father or the girl or boy – they would ask him/her to take them to berry picking, fishing, small game hunting.

And when they came back, whatever was bothering them, they were happy and proud to go back into the camp. They did not mention or they did not say anything regarding what was bothering them. But they came back feeling proud of what they got when they went with their parents or grandparents. And this is not far from the camp.

Today, I see the problem of young people not listening to their parents, grandparents, when problem arises in the household, in their families. It's very different from what I experienced, what I've seen in – in my experience when I was in Nutshimit in the past.

B. BROOKWELL: I know you're going to speak some more, and I may have some more questions after that, but what I'd like to ask you now is if this would be an okay time for a break?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Do you want a break?

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Break?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Break. Yeah.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

C. URQUHART: All right, we'll now take a break until 1 p.m.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay, 1 o'clock.

Recess

CLERK: All rise.

This Commission of Inquiry is now in session.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Can I just begin before you do, Ben?

I simply want to repeat for all of us – for counsel, for the Commissioners – how much we appreciate the work of the interpreters. Anne, Gerry, thank you so much for your great work.

Cheque is in the mail, I think.

Also we want to give a special thanks to Nathan Penashue, Michel Andrew and Jerome Pone for keeping us warm, keeping us safe and make sure that our building and all the stuff in here is secure.

B. BROOKWELL: Good afternoon, Tshaukuesh.

Before the break you mentioned that you had some more you'd like to say and share.

Please go ahead.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: I would like to start by saying that Innu – Innu people has very important things within themselves. They have everything from the land. Everything that they want to use, it's in within their land and I would like – just want to mention that.

What I am saying is that when – when I say that Innu has everything that they take from the land, I mean that Innu has everything that it – he or she needs and takes it from the land to support their families.

In Nutshimit we had everything that we needed to survive as people – Innu. We had everything from animals, medicine from the land. Innu people never questioned what will be needed because it was already there for them, in their land.

Even when young women were expecting a child, there was always somebody there for them to help them deliver their babies. There were elderly women who were midwives.

And whatever they needed to help with the women who had a child within them, the medicine is also – was also taken within, from the land or animals.

And now that is all lost. It was taken away from them, from – the government took that away.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And she says: And then after being told where the caribou was, then the men would leave early in the mornings and come back in the evenings with – yes – with caribou.

I am not the only one who misses this kind of life – our way of life, being Innu. I know there are still some Elders in our communities who miss it too. Who miss seeing, hearing children that – well-being and healthy within their families. And this is what I really miss so much today.

This morning when the lawyer asked me this question: What would you do when there was a problem arising among the camp – among the families?

The Elders, they gathered and talked about what was being told about the – about what had happened within, let's say, one family. They would gather and then together they would discuss in good ways which they would solve the problem within that camp. And that's how I remember it being done.

The Innu really respected their land for their use. For example, for pitching a tent, they would only use enough sticks to hold up the tent and enough just to make firewood.

Only if I can show you what I mean when I say respect – respect of the land, respect of animals. You would be very surprised to see me – to show you – for you to learn our way of life being in the country. Example: a beaver. After the beaver has been eaten, we used to gather the bones together and hang it up on – on tree to show respect. That's how we show our respect to the animal master.

That's one of the reasons we respect for all animals. If a person did not respect an animal that they're hunting, they cannot find that animal. They were – they disrespect it. They cannot find the animal that they hunt and because of it – he/she disrespected.

And this is what we – my meaning when we have to respect our animals who are on our land. To show respect in that way, that I was just mentioning. Like putting up the bones – gather the bones together after the animal has been consumed.

Young people were also told about the respect of the animals. Like, young men would be told to respect animals, and if you do this your hunt will go well. Also the mothers used to do small game hunting so they used to teach their daughters – young daughters, how to hunt and how to respect the animal that they bringing back to the camp.

And this is – this was our culture.

I hope you understand my story because Nutshimit was our happy place and our well-being. So were the young people, the children. They were happy and at peace.

I remember when my father used to come with the animals that he hunted. I was very happy, because I saw food that would be given to us. He brought home our survival, to feed us in that camp where we were, and I hope you understand.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Oh. Sorry –

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: And here is another part of Nutshimit – country – that I would like to talk about.

A tent is erected, and there is work to it to put it up. A stove is put in the middle. My father had the fire going all night because, I guess, he was afraid that we would get cold.

My mother used – also slept through the night; the next morning, same routine. She would start work – her chores – in the morning, very early.

Today it is very different. We are awakened in the middle of the night with knocking on the door. Awakened by my grandchildren – the older grandchildren or one of mine – my kids. And that is what I see today and what the difference is. They used – there used to be a peace within the tent because we did not have houses then, we lived in tents.

Today, I will start how we have been treated. How we have been treated by the white man, and the treatment is still ongoing today.

You may have seen or heard on the news regarding the children that were found in the burials near the – the residential schools. Also you may have heard about an Innu

woman from Quebec who was mistreated in the hospital by this nurse or doctor.

We are very saddened – I am very saddened by this, all the – the treatment – the treatment by the police, the nurses, doctors who have treated badly that – losing – losing lives.

It hurts me to see this – to witness the mistreatment; because I have kids, too, and I have grandchildren and that hurts when I think about it.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Oh, sorry –

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Social worker is not doing their job because I have witnessed – I have witnessed a child being taken away from the – from the family. That social worker who took the child away from the family did not further get more information on the family. That also hurts me, to have witnessed it, because of the wrongdoings that the social worker did for that family, to find out who is in that house, how many are in that house and all that.

And she said she – the social worker's not doing their job.

When the child is taken – was taken, immediately the child wanted to go back home – go back to its family. Asking for his or her mother. He tells this to the family: He wants to go back to his or – his mother.

I think the social worker was only looking at how much she gets paid.

But that child is hurt, wants to go back to his family. Instead of what has happened, that worker probably would have helped a child go back to his family, where he belong. And this child will always be with him or her throughout his life of what was done and

what happened, that he was taken away from his family.

I find it – I found it very hard, of what I have witnessed: a child taken away from its family. I couldn't help myself crying. I created – I cried all the way home, thinking of that child.

When I got home, I had a friend over and we called the Social Services.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: Mm-hmm.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

ELDER PENASHUE: Yeah.

INTERPRETER NUNA: I told my friend about the – the taking of the child by the Social Services and we called – we called them and waited for a return call. I thought they would – they would give me good news but they did not answer some of the questions I gave them. I was only told that the child is doing good and still in care.

B. BROOKWELL: Tshaukuesh, should we take a short break?

Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you.

Ten minutes, please.

Recess

C. URQUHART: Good afternoon, everyone.

The next session we will be showing a video first, and unfortunately we can't have that interpreted so our interpreters are taking a

much-needed break and we'll start with this video.

P. RALPH: Tshaukuesh tomorrow morning.

C. URQUHART: And Tshaukuesh is going to finish her testimony tomorrow morning as well.

[Video played.]

P. RALPH: (Inaudible.)

C. URQUHART: (Inaudible.)

Yeah.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Right there, look.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Oh, okay.

I think I'm gonna (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Caitlin – okay.

C. URQUHART: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Huh?

C. URQUHART: What are we waiting on?

M. J. EDMONDS: Emma's coming in.

C. URQUHART: Okay, so the one thing is that when you're doing your presentation, Anne is going to be in the back doing her Sheshatshiu translation – in the back.

Yeah

(Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Sheshatshiu for us?

C URQUHART: (Inaudible.)

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Not Sheshatshiu.

P. RALPH: Gerry, are you staying here for the presentation?

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: Ah.

M. J. EDMONDS: No, no I'm gonna do Mushuau.

P. RALPH: You're gonna do Mushuau? Oh yeah.

P. RALPH: When you go, take it out, okay?

B. BROOKWELL: I think –

C. URQUHART: Do you think we should have –

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: (Inaudible.)

C. URQUHART: – just the monitor on –

B. BROOKWELL: Yeah.

C. URQUHART: Okay, so what we'll do is –

M. J. EDMONDS: (Inaudible.)

B. BROOKWELL: We're gonna set this up so you can hear Anne.

C URQUHART: So you can just hear when she – when she's not (inaudible).

INTERPRETER GREGOIRE: (Inaudible.)

B. BROOKWELL: Just leave them – leave it on the table (inaudible).

C URQUHART: Yeah, you should be able to.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

C URQUHART: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

C URQUHART: Yeah.

So we'll do a quick test.

P. RALPH: Try really hard to stop and then wait for the translation.

C. URQUHART: To be quite honest, because she can – while she's interpreting –

P. RALPH: Okay.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay. That's right.

C. URQUHART: – Anne will interpret the same time (inaudible) –

P. RALPH: Okay, that's fine.

C. URQUHART: – but just to make you hear – hear herself speak.

P. RALPH: Yes we can.

(Inaudible.)

B. BROOKWELL: (Inaudible.)

Okay, where's – oh, there you are. Hey I'm –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you want –

B. BROOKWELL: – I'm Ben. I never –

M. J. EDMONDS: Hi.

B. BROOKWELL: – said hello.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you want this?

B. BROOKWELL: I've – I've got one here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

C. URQUHART: Do you want to swear or affirm?

Do you want to swear on a Bible or do you want to just affirm that –

M. J. EDMONDS: What's that mean?

C. URQUHART: Like, to say you're gonna tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Do you wanna –?

M. J. EDMONDS: But I don't know if I'm telling the whole truth. These are not my stories. These are –

C. URQUHART: But this is –

M. J. EDMONDS: – these are – these are the Elder's stories.

C. URQUHART: Exactly. But that's all you're your saying. (Inaudible) but this is what I knew – to the best of your knowledge – (inaudible).

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay.

Does everybody do that?

C. URQUHART: Yeah.

Okay, do you want to do it on the Bible (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

C. URQUHART: (Inaudible.)

So for Mary Jane's presentation, if you want Sheshatshiu interpretation, you'll need to use the headsets on channel one, and we're just gonna do a test.

Does someone have a set of headsets on? Can tell me if – and can you hear us?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good.

C. URQUHART: And if anyone has – needs help, just put up your hand and we'll come and –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's good.

C. URQUHART: Okay. All right.

Thank you.

CLERK: Do –

B. BROOKWELL: Good afternoon, everyone.

There's going to be a presentation now about the Mushuau Innu timeline by Mary Jane Edmonds, Senior Innu Representative in Natuashish for Innu Round Table Secretariat; and she's going to be supported by Ms. Emma Ashini, and she will provide her own translation today.

Please go ahead.

CLERK: Do you – do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give to this Inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yes.

CLERK: Please state your name for the record.

M. J. EDMONDS: Mary Jane Edmonds from Natuashish.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

So, I don't know when to pause for – when do I pause?

B. BROOKWELL: We're going to it bring up, then you'll be able to hear it.

Okay. When Anne's talking you'll hear from here.

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: Perfect – or Jolene could give you hand signals whenever you need them.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

P. RALPH: Yeah.

M. J. EDMONDS: My name is Mary Jane Edmonds. I'm from Natuashish.

I'm Mushuau Innu and I have been invited to make a presentation here on the Mushuau timeline, and I'm happy to be here.

On – on my right side of the wall, here, you'll see banners for reference and – because I – I can't do – I can't do – with everything – I won't be able to talk about everything, but I'm gonna keep referring to the banners on this left side.

And in front of you, you'll see the Mushuau Innu Timeline that I'm gonna be presenting.

When I talk about the timeline – the timeline is easy to talk about – it's easy to talk about and for an audience, you know, the facts are right there. But what you don't know is the history behind the timeline. And when I do this presentation, to me it's very important that you also know the history – the Innu history of Mushuau.

This is the first time I've done this timeline presentation with – to a group of Innu, Innu Elders and its – it's the first time, so its – it feels strange that I have to present my own – our culture to our own people. And I just want to tell them that I'm gonna miss some things because they know the history better, and I'm gonna – I'm gonna leave out some

things that I don't – I don't know everything, you know, I'm – I'm up here, I'm Innu, I'm not an expert. But I've lived through this timeline, and I've heard stories; stories from my Elders, from my own family, aunties, uncles and grandparents.

I – I also wanna let you know that I've done this timeline many times, for new teachers, new – new staff, new employees, the clinic, teachers – you know – RCMP or – and I've done it outside my community and I usually try to make it a fun thing, that you're not going to go home and say: What did she talk about?

You think I should still speak Mushuau? There's no Mushuau here.

P. RALPH: Yeah, so –

M. J. EDMONDS: Are we online?

P. RALPH: Yes, we have people online.

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay, okay. All right.

P. RALPH: Anne is (inaudible) –

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay, I –

P. RALPH: – you can do the Mushuau then.

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay. Righto.

You see here Emma, she's my assistant, she's – she's making necklaces for every one of you.

Ten dollars each.

So – I'm gonna need two hands to do this – we're gonna – I – we're gonna start doing an activity.

Mm-hmm.

So this is gonna be part of you – Innu culture orientation; you get a gift.

(Inaudible) can you – then give some to (inaudible).

To you this is just a piece of yarn – string. It is. It is a piece of yarn, and just a string.

This piece of string is child's play. It brings hours of entertainment to the parents, grandparents and children. Today you're gonna learn how to make a mammoth on a piece of string. Does anybody here know how to make a mammoth on a piece of string? Anybody? I'll give you ten dollars. Hundred dollars.

No? Nobody knows how to make mammoth? He knows how to make mammoth. I taught him last week.

B. BROOKWELL: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Oh. No ten dollars for him.

He wasn't listening. He didn't learn.

So – I think people know here but's not saying.

P. RALPH: Want me to hold the microphone?

M. J. EDMONDS: Huh? Yeah.

P. RALPH: Want me to hold the microphone?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah, hold it for me.

P. RALPH: Okay, that's up to you.

M. J. EDMONDS: So you watch and learn and I'll show you how to make a mammoth on a piece of string.

Put the string on your hands – thumb and on your index like this, and take your middle finger and put it through the string. So you should have this – got it?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yup.

M. J. EDMONDS: You can – you can practise and practise and practise, close your eyes, do it in your sleep – you know – it's ... you got it?

So if you can – if you can watch me – watch my fingers now – watch my fingers – how my fingers work. You take these two fingers –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: No – no this –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: – take the thumb string and put it up on those fingers up there – so you got – you have this.

You got it? Is everybody following good?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nope.

M. J. EDMONDS: What kind of – yeah.

And then take your thumbs, you grab – you grab the last string at – at the end of your hand there – those last fingers – got it?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

Then you grab that, and what's going on here – you should have this. There's two fingers right here and there's a string over – put that over your thumb like that and then turn your thumb.

Are you following me?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

M. J. EDMONDS: I'm gonna fire you.

P. RALPH: You wouldn't be the first one.

M. J. EDMONDS: When you get that done – when you get that done, then you remove two of the strings without removing – your

thumb and last finger, and then you get a mammoth.

Does that look like a mammoth?

P. RALPH: A very skinny one.

M. J. EDMONDS: But see this is child's play. A child can do this in their sleep. And this is the easiest string game you can do – you can make – the easiest. There's a lot more string games – did anybody get the mammoth?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No –

M. J. EDMONDS: Anybody?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: – not a single one.

P. RALPH: Not a single one.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Oh my gosh.

P. RALPH: I would have gotten this.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Ehe.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: She's got – she knows her stuff. Those – yeah.

If anybody can do the mammoth we'll stop, okay? And you won't go home until you've done the mammoth. So if you – if you wanna watch me again do this.

Grab that thumb – thumb string – then grab the end – should look like this and those two fingers – the line go over the thumb – then you turn it over – then you let go of the two fingers.

P. RALPH: Gonna have to be detention tonight – they're gonna be in detention.

M. J. EDMONDS: There will be lots of detention.

Oh my. Ben – Ben, you – Ben should know this. I spent some time with Ben last week.

Okay.

P. RALPH: Okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay.

Mike is determined, look –

P. RALPH: He is determined.

M. J. EDMONDS: Mike –

P. RALPH: He's the star pupil.

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Like this – like this – I think – below the thumb?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

The thumb goes – no, no, no, no, no, no, no – the thumb – the thumb string go up.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This string going up, is it?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah – the thumb – you have this now, right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

M. J. EDMONDS: Then you take the thumb, the thumb string goes on top.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay, so it's up here.

P. RALPH: Yeah, on the top finger.

M. J. EDMONDS: Don't – don't twist anything up. Don't twist –

P. RALPH: You put it on the top finger – you're putting that inside.

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

P. RALPH: The other way –

M. J. EDMONDS: No, no –

P. RALPH: – underneath –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Underneath?

P. RALPH: There we go. Yes.

M. J. EDMONDS: No.

No twisting – no – you – you don't twist anything, you just transfer to the other finger – yeah.

P. RALPH: That's it.

M. J. EDMONDS: You got it.

P. RALPH: You got it.

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay.

Take your thumbs, grab the last, last, last line – no, no, no, no, no – last line – last – yeah – grab it over your thumb like that – yeah – you got it – you got it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She got it.

M. J. EDMONDS: And then those – those strings here, put it over your thumb –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yup.

M. J. EDMONDS: – put it over your thumb –

P. RALPH: The first one?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah the – the first finger. See, this is what you have right now, right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah – and take those two – those –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: You got that – take this – take this – put that over – put the other one over.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This one?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My grandma showed (inaudible) –

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah. Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: – my grandma's (inaudible).

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah, this is what you have now – and now twist it – yeah, twist it – no, no, no – your – your thumbs – okay, hold on – hold on, Caitlin, hold on. Good – good –

B. BROOKWELL: Like this?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah – no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. See, this is what you have now, look. This is what you have now. Your thumbs, twist them –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Yes (inaudible) –

M. J. EDMONDS: – and then remove those two – there's two lines – remove those two lines – yeah – remove those – without letting go the – don't let go of your thumb.

P. RALPH: Oh, Jolene.

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

P. RALPH: We got two – is there anyone else?

M. J. EDMONDS: We got two.

P. RALPH: We got two.

M. J. EDMONDS: Wait I'm gonna – I'm gonna get –

P. RALPH: Okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: – come here, Mike – come here – come here. Put that up here; put that up here.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Put this – okay –

M. J. EDMONDS: No –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – this –

M. J. EDMONDS: – no, no – don't twist anything – don't twist anything – just –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Here and there –

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: Now take this over your thumb –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – and this –

M. J. EDMONDS: – this here over your thumb – yeah –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: – and then this goes here – then this –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Wrap it right around –

M. J. EDMONDS: – goes over here –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: – now twist – twist your thumbs. Yup. Your – your hands are too stiff.

Okay, take – let this go without letting go – don't let that go –

B. BROOKWELL: Oh, okay so just that –

M. J. EDMONDS: – don't – let that – that go – let this go –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – then that –

M. J. EDMONDS: – and then let this go –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – this –

M. J. EDMONDS: – then let this go –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – this.

P. RALPH: Yay.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: A lot of supervision.

M. J. EDMONDS: – and there's your mammoth.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The mammoth would be very (inaudible) –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: – (inaudible).

M. J. EDMONDS: So we had three successful mammoth.

So – that is – there's probably 20 more of those shapes that you can make out of this string. This simple string, that can provide hours and hours of entertainment to a family.

I also – there is also something I want you to know – so I wanna talk about mammoth.

We are Innu people. We come from the woods; we come from the barrens. Where does the elephant or the mammoth come, in Innu history?

So, I'll tell you where mammoth come – comes in with the Innu history: through legends and storytelling. Because the elephant or the mammoth has no place in Labrador. So how did the Innu know about the elephant or the mammoth, and how did he become in one of our Innu string games – games that's been passed on over generations and generations.

I grow up listening to legends. Both my parents, you know, telling – telling legends to us at nights in tent.

And one day my mom – my dad told my mom, he says: Agathe, you know what you're saying, you're telling lies – you're telling all lies.

And mom said: Edward, you're right, I'm telling lies. I wasn't there when this happened, so I'm just passing on the stories.

So even though we weren't there, the stories became our history. They became – they were passed on generations after generations.

So the simple string game, and just one form of the mammoth, you know, tells many stories. It tells history.

We don't know – we don't see what happened in the past. We weren't there, but we heard stories. And that – oh – and that doesn't mean they were all telling lies.

So I wanted to let you know, too, this string – this string game? I said there are probably 20 or more figures – you know – that you can work, and if you want to we can sit here all night and I'll show you all ... but with every – every string form or picture, there's a story. There's a legend.

I'm gonna talk about the caribou. You can refer to my banners over here – over – back over there – I'm gonna talk about nutrition – the nutrition part of a caribou, and why the caribou is really important in our culture.

The – the caribou provides an important – important piece of our existence – of Innu existence. It sustains our lives, it sustains our culture. There's so many but I'm gonna touch on one.

The Innu, they tell the truth when they say: We only take what we need, because they had no freezers. There were no freezers to put their food in so they learn by drying – drying the meat, making pemmican and also harvesting the caribou stomach.

In – in – in the white man's world, you drink milk for your vitamin D. You need vitamin D for strong bones. So what did the Innu have, to have strong bones?

The caribou stomach provides loads and loads of vitamins – of vitamin D for strong bone formation. That's why when we harvest caribou we also keep the caribou stomach for flavour and for other – other things.

So the caribou stomach provides not just nutrition, it provides your health. And this is – and iron – iron for your blood, and other things – other – many medicinal purposes, you know, come from this animal.

But this is what I'm just gonna leave you with to think about, because I'm gonna come back to these banners as we – as I talk about the timeline.

If – is everybody understanding what I'm saying? Good Students. You're all gonna pass.

I'm gonna go to the timeline now.

Oh I need – I need this. I need this so I can listen to Anne.

Can everyone see? Am I in the way? Emma is hiding.

So – so you've heard – so you've heard about the history, that you heard from the Elders – talk about way before my time. And

they – and they know more – more about the history than I'll ever do.

So you look at the banner and you see, you know, what was happening. People were –

In the 1900s, that's when the – the missionary priests start coming – coming into the community and – to baptize the children, marry couples. At this time, too, kids – the marriages were still being arranged. There was no dating.

In 19 – around – around 1928, the Innu were documented in history by Mina Hubbard, William Brooks and William Duncan Strong.

William Strong, you know, lived with the Innu. He has a book out called Labrador North [sic] and the Innu called him the man who measured skulls. He was an archeologist from Smithsonian, yeah – Smithsonian, and that was his job, he was – he measured skulls at his job; so the Innu just called him the man who measured skulls.

There was – there was no settlement then, you know, in 1948 – no settlement for the Innu – the Mushuau Innu, but they were scattered everywhere. When they were at – at old – at Davis, at the Hudson Bay Company, the government relocated the Innu to be with the Inuit together in Nutak and they were transported on a – on a shipping vessel.

So one – one morning they decided – one night they decided, you know, this is not our lifestyle, we gonna go. And early in the morning they found that the Innu had moved. They were gone.

In the '50s the Innu were still travelling on the land, going up to the barrens, to Border Beacon, Kamestastin, to (inaudible), to George River, those places. They were still travelling on the land, living off the land but they still returned to Davis Inlet.

There was an appointment of first Chief in the '50s and this was Joe Rich, who was fluent in English and the Innu. Because Joe – Joe Rich – was the one that lived with William Duncan Strong when he came to live with the Innu, so he learned English through here. And that's why the priest made him as the first Chief, because he could speak English and he could speak Innu.

It was around this time a school was built and the – the priest was a teacher and also a doctor. It was also the time when the abuse happened – the strapping – abusing children, and this time, too, the parents feared and respected the priest.

I should have mentioned the drum – you know – the important piece of our history.

[REDACTED]

The celebrations of a successful hunt used to come with the drumming and dancing. That was – they couldn't practise that anymore when the priest said – you know, you can't, because it's evil and it's making you do evil things.

The drumming that was once their way of life, the Innu could not practise it anymore in front of their own.

So in the '60s there was the Sixties Scoop. Children were taken at birth by child welfare. This time, too, families were still living in tent forms and they're still travelling into land, hunting.

So in '67 the third relocation happened, to new Davis Inlet. In Innu-aimun, it's Utshimassit, which translate: the new place of the boss.

There was – there was another archeologist that lived with the Innu and he published a book about the Innu and – I'm not too sure –

but I think it's called: the Innu on the edge of white man's world?

A school was built but it went up to Grade 8 – as far as Grade 8, and there are more nuns and teachers ran the school. And this time – and this time strapping and abuse was done in public places, that people saw.

A new trend was happening; the Innu settled to be close to the school, to be close to the store, clinic and the church, and very few families went in – went inside interior to hunt and camp.

Houses were poorly constructed. Our blankets, they froze to the walls. There's sink – there's sink in the kitchen, but there's no water. There's no toilet so we used – the Innu used honey buckets for the next 35 years.

So in 1969, the men hunters that used to be very proud Innu, are now jail hunters on the island. Once strong leaders, providers for their families, are now depressed and stripped of dignity and pride.

They now turn to alcohol in the two short years since the location.

I remember my – our first phone – our phone – I still remember it is 8-6-9. I was only three years old.

P. RALPH: Mary Jane, (inaudible) a good time to take a break?

M. J. EDMONDS: You want a break? How about I take a break at 1970?

P. RALPH: Okay.

M. J. EDMONDS: 1970 was – the RCMPs made their first presence on – in Davis Inlet. They were on visiting rotations, and it was also the year a Ski-Doo was introduced for easier access to interior land during the winter.

Five minutes? Hmm. Two minutes?

P. RALPH: Say five or ten minutes –

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay.

Ten minutes.

P. RALPH: Okay. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: That means she's got to.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Yup.

Mary Jane –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

Recess

P. RALPH: We just spoke to Mary Jane and what we're gonna do is we're gonna break until five.

Come back, and hopefully that'll be enough time for people to go home and – and perhaps get a quick bite and then come back and then – well, we're hoping that we won't be too long this evening.

I believe Mary Jane, you think you've got a half an hour left?

M. J. EDMONDS: Yeah (inaudible.)

P. RALPH: And then we've got Kathleen.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Right.

And there's some fruit and some food here if anyone wants to take a bit of refreshment and I'm sure we can find some other things out back somewhere to share to keep us all going for a little while.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay. Break.

Recess

P. RALPH: Okay, Mary Jane, are you ready to go – resume again?

Great thanks.

M. J. EDMONDS: Hello.

Can you hear her? Can you hear –?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: You know my neck is – hurts when I do this, because I'm left-handed, so I do this. So –

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: Hello. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: Good? Good to go?

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: Good to go.

M. J. EDMONDS: So in 1973, that's when we had – start getting our ferry service from Goose Bay, and it was *Nonia*, *Bonavista* and *Northern Ranger* that were coming up on the coast – the coastal ferry – and with it, you know, brought new – new things. And one of them was the bootlegging off the boat.

So there was an increased use of alcohol. You know, also the time there was – kids were starting to sniff gas, and they had access to gasoline.

In 1977, that was – you know – the important dates of tragedies start happening. And the first alcohol-related deaths of a family – family drowning. Mom and dad, six children; three survived.

So in 1977 also we started having elections for Chief and Council. Very few policies; people don't know – we don't know what we

were doing, so alcohol was used to buy votes.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken] 1970 – 78?

M. J. EDMONDS: Seventy-nine.

[Dialogue between Unidentified Interpreter and M. J. Edmonds in Innu-aimun.]

So around this time – around this time, too, there was – abuse was still happening – was still happening at church and at the school.

In 1980, the first idea to relocate to a mainland – you know, from an island – you know – was brought up by an Elder, and people were already talking about Natuashish.

In – around – around that year, 1980s, we had a – a social worker – a 70-year-old social worker with MCC and he was – she was from California. She lived in Davis Inlet – she worked and lived in Davis Inlet for two years.

Also that time, too, this was a significant year because of dog population. A two-year-old was killed, mauled by the dogs.

We had a first suicide in 1983 in – in Davis Inlet, a 16-year-old female. We had a – a drowning accident; again, you know, alcohol-related, by two adults.

That year we had the drowning of two adults, alcohol-related, and also our first case of diabetes was documented.

So in 1985 we had another suicide of a – a woman and a young girl. At this time, too,

the sexual abuse in school and in the church is becoming a public knowledge.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Low-level flight.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Ehe.

So in 1980 – in 1987, there were no nurses in our community, Davis.

They weren't there because they were afraid of the Innu, they were afraid of working in the community. So we were without nurses for several months, and there were two janitors working there, became nurses overnight.

They – they did sutures, they gave prescriptions, they gave shots, they gave everything that nurse does.

It was very frightening – very terrifying. And we were the two janitors, me and my sister Emma. It was fun and terrifying and we were –

That's why we went and became – and started to be nurses – we became nurses in our community and we're still with the health and promoting health.

So – and around that time, too, there was – in 1990, the idea of relocation to Natuashish came back to the table.

And when – 1992, six children died in house fire. The children were left unattended by parents who were out drinking.

The gas sniffing became national news.

We had four Innu people graduate from tribal – tribal police in British Columbia.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] Nechi Institute – Institute graduate Innu counsellors.

Innu children were sent out for treatment without parent's consent.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Innu protest at Voisey's Bay.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken] 19 –

M. J. EDMONDS: – '94 –

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: – '94 –

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Sweat lodge is being reintroduced and back in the community.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] Outpost gatherings.

Around that time, too, we – we needed help. We know we needed help, so we invited western – western healers from west. Medicine women and men, they came to visit our community and help us – assist us in our healing. They teach us self-care and when we adopted smudging.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] 1987, land-based community treatment programs for families, women, men and children at Health Commission [Mushuau-aimun spoken].

Hope started becoming into our lives and started having hope for – for our health, for our future.

In 2000, that year there was plans to take control of the Innu education. In 2002, there was – there was a writ – BCR – bylaw of zero tolerance of alcohol in the community.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Ehe.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Two thousand, two –?

M. J. EDMONDS: Two thousand –

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: Four.

M. J. EDMONDS: – two thousand – ehe, 2002.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: 2002, ehe.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: In October 2002, we moved to Natuashish – our fourth relocation. Outpost was still happening every year, seasonal – fall and spring.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] – 2004 –
[Mushuau-aimun spoken].

It was – it was a milestone in our community because that was the first time – the first year 50 children had been born and the number is growing since.

And it was that year, 2005, we realized how hard it was to contain social workers to work in our community; they keep getting fired.

Men started taking groups of boys on the land, and the women followed – started taking girls out on the land.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken] Ehe, “Women Empowering Women.”

There was still gas sniffing.

In 2009, Mushuau in Sheshatshiu took control to run their own school under Newfoundland curriculum – Mamu Tshishkutamashutau school board was born.

In two thousand – in 2015, there was a talk of taking self-government over child welfare. It came because two boys perished in a blizzard after being released from CSSD care.

So in 2017, the IRT – Innu Round Table – hired community prevention services and their own social workers to work for the community.

And started to – was the land, the women’s walk expeditions out on the land.

It was around this time, too, there was a – a start of annual Elder’s gatherings in every – in every reserve and always – always a talk of bettering their communities and talking about what’s not working.

In 2021, we all know that COVID stopped everything and everything got closed.

And that’s the end of my timeline but if you look over here – over here and look at – it’s more detail but there’s no dates, but it’s – this is exactly similar to this without any dates. And just looking at it, you know, you see what happened over time.

And I think the most important thing here is the vision.

P. RALPH: If you want to go over and point it out, just walk over with the microphone, Mary Jane, and just point out –

You can walk right up to it (inaudible).

M. J. EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken] –

– respecting – respecting the culture, animals, fish, plants – [Mushuau-aimun spoken].

You see those lines around the caribou and the drum, it was around this time – you know – it was – we were – the Innu were told: It's evil. You know, you cannot be living that – that lifestyle anymore.

Emma? [Mushuau-aimun spoken] – Emma, what's Hank Williams doing here?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

M. J. EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken] Utshimassit and Old Davis. You can see – this is a – this is an island, we'll – the Innu lived in island. This is a – this is all water all around it, and the hunters, they can't go hunting during freeze-up or breakup.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: It's a mistake.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Okay.

In old Davis when we moved in 1967, you see we were in – we were – they're in an island and on the line – on – life on the island, you know, became despair and – [Mushuau-aimun spoken] – family breakups, family violence, community divisions, jealousy, anger, money, elections, alcohol, power, gas sniffing, disrespect – [Mushuau-aimun spoken] – drownings, suicide, accidents, assaults, rapes, children neglected – [Mushuau-aimun spoken].

[Dialogue between Unidentified Interpreter and M. J. Edmonds in Innu-aimun.]

M. J. EDMONDS: Ehe.

Those are the new problems that we are facing now.

But there are also good things happening in our community: There's social gatherings, there's help now, AA, NA meetings, there's sports and there's creation and leaders – leadership is starting to spend wisely, you know, trying to look at the past problems, and present and the future. And there's education, there's more – there's more high school graduates every year, and we're learning from mistakes. And there's treatment programs on land base.

That's where we are presently. The important thing is our vision – our vision for the future and the gifts to come. What's coming or already in – in our schools is the Innu curriculum in high school.

I wanna share something – something that's always with me, that stayed with me. Even when in 2009 – when we were starting to take control of Innu education –

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken] 2009?

M. J. EDMONDS: 2009.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

M. J. EDMONDS: – there was a lot of scepticism, there was a lot of racial remarks towards the Innu. I was there because I was part of it.

And – and towards us, as Innu, that – we are just Innu. We'll never be able to run our own programs, we're not ready to run our programs, is what they were telling us in 2000 – when we start – in – in 2000, when we started talking about Innu control.

Thirteen – 13 years later the school board and the system – the curriculum is thriving and – and – and producing graduates every year.

And now in – when we talk about child welfare – controlling – Innu control, we're hearing that same scepticism we heard years ago – 20 years ago about the Innu control of the education. And they're saying the same thing again, you know: We're not ready to control child welfare, we're not ready, when are we gonna be ready. You know, the – the lack of respect from the people that work for CSSD are the ones saying this.

So we're not gonna say anything; we're just gonna do it.

So the vision is to have a healthy balance between the Innu world and the white man's world; because, we'll never go back to the nomadic life again, but we can develop a healthy balance between the two worlds.

So in our vision for a healthy – healthy future we see more of the gatherings, land-based programs, land-based activities, gatherings. You know, the drum dance is coming back, and people learning how to make drums, how to make snowshoes, and more camping on the ground – you know. And more – more Nutshimit – more Nutshimit hunting, and singing Innu and just outdoor activities for children – and more of the spirituality, you know, more of giving thanks and offerings.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] community working together hundred per cent.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] and managing and budgeting revenues. Sharing information, membership, mentorship.

Ehe.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken] healthy families
[Mushuau-aimun spoken] healthy children.

That's it.

Thank you.

P. RALPH: Thank you, Mary Jane.

That was a phenomenal presentation.

M. J. EDMONDS: – yeah, I just – I – I forgot something.

This timeline, the Innu lived – lived it. I lived it. I come from the timeline. My parents came from the timeline. My brothers and sisters came from the time – everybody – everybody in my community come from the timeline.

All those tragedies, we were all affected because it's in a small community and we also – I want to talk about those two boys, you know, that perished. The whole community searched, the whole community went out on the land. We searched for days in the storms, in the rain because this was in the spring.

When we found the bodies, we all cried because these were our children not just one family's child. This was – these were our children. We found them and then we had to bury – bury the children.

So don't think one child is just one family, it's the whole community. It's the whole community's child.

So when something happens like this, the whole community comes together. They come together, they weep, they grieve and then they have to work on moving on.

So it's not a singles-person tragedy, it's the whole – it's – it's us – the Innu.

Not just Innu in Natuashish, but when something happens in Sheshatshiu, too, we feel it, because these are our people, these are our friends, our relatives, our aunties, uncles. Those two communities are connected. When one tragedy happens the two communities know it, they feel it.

I think it can't go away thinking, you know, this is just one family; it's the whole community. It's families together.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER:
[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Yes.

(Inaudible) Rich and (inaudible) Rich.

P. RALPH: Again, thank you very much, Mary Jane.

That was a very powerful presentation, and I'm sure everyone that has – has witnessed it here today won't – won't soon forget the courage and the thoughtfulness that went into preparing this timeline.

You would hope that every politician, every civil servant, perhaps every person in the province would have an opportunity to – to have you present this – this timeline. Like I said, it's – it's quite a – a very powerful and – and – and moving presentation.

Thanks again.

So I guess we've got one more witness this evening. Maybe we can take five minutes to get Kathleen set up?

C. URQUHART: Tshaukuesh is going to do her prayer (inaudible).

P. RALPH: Oh yes, okay.

Tshaukuesh –

Tshaukuesh is gonna do the prayer and then she's going to go home, and come back tomorrow morning for the –

We can bring a microphone to her if – (inaudible) –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: She's coming.

(Inaudible.)

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: Yes, you can go this way.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Oh okay.

Thank you.

See you in the morning?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Have a good evening.

Recess

CLERK: Do you swear that the evidence you shall give to this Inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Please state your name for the record.

K. BENUEN: Kathleen Benuen.

B. BROOKWELL: Good morning – or good morning – I should change the notes.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Try it again.

B. BROOKWELL: Good evening, Ms. Benuen.

Thank you for joining us tonight. I know it's been a long day and I really appreciate you sharing your time with us.

K. BENUEN: Thank you. Thank you.

INTERPRETER RICH: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

K. BENUEN: Ehe.

INTERPRETER RICH: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

K. BENUEN: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER RICH: Ehe.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

K. BENUEN: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

INTERPRETER RICH: Okay. Sure.

Okay.

B. BROOKWELL: I understand you have some notes today with you, please feel free to look at them or if you need to read at any time, that's fine. The Commissioners are here to listen and to take in information and I'm going to ask some questions today to help them with their work.

INTERPRETER RICH: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

Okay.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

K. BENUEN: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER RICH: Can you say it again?

B. BROOKWELL: If you need to read your notes or to look at it while I ask questions, that's okay. The Commissioners are here to listen and my questions are to help them with their work.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

B. BROOKWELL: Could you start by telling us when you were born.

INTERPRETER RICH: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

K. BENUEN: November 10, 1958.

B. BROOKWELL: And – oh sorry.

And where were you born?

K. BENUEN: I was born in Happy Valley.

B. BROOKWELL: And where did you grow up?

K. BENUEN: I was – I grew up in Happy Valley and moved to Sheshatshiu and from Sheshatshiu I went to Davis Inlet.

B. BROOKWELL: And where do you live now?

K. BENUEN: I live – I live in Natuashish.

B. BROOKWELL: Can you tell us what your current role is for Mushuau Innu First Nation?

K. BENUEN: I'm the health director.

The Health Commission health director.

B. BROOKWELL: And when – when did you start as health director?

K. BENUEN: August 1998.

B. BROOKWELL: As health director, what programs do you oversee?

K. BENUEN: I oversee the coordinators of different programs in the community. We have the Healing Lodge. They run programs like treatment and counselling. We have a shelter for woman – for woman who are homeless and run away to get away from domestic abuse.

Then we also have a day – daycare and Head Start Program. We also have an NGG, Next Generation Guardians. They consist of parental support, FASD, youth workers, community health programs, public health nurses – they run the home care, child – child health and immunizations.

B. BROOKWELL: I wanna ask you a bit about how things were when you started as health director.

How many staff did you have when you started?

K. BENUEN: In Davis Inlet we had one person who was public health work – public health nurse. The population at that time was 450.

In Natuashish we had two or three positions but we went down to one nurse because we couldn't recruit any new nurses because of the remoteness of the community.

B. BROOKWELL: And what health issues did you see when you were starting your job as health director?

K. BENUEN: When I first start working in Davis Inlet our community suffered a lot of alcohol abuse. It was rampant in the community and there was a lot of gas sniffing, and there were a lot of social workers apprehending kids.

B. BROOKWELL: What was your experience with Social Services?

K. BENUEN: I work as the community health – community service worker in Davis Inlet. I work as a youth – youth corrections worker, and I did reports on the youth who – who were – who appeared in court – I did reports on them.

[Dialogue in Innu-aimun between K. Benuen and Unidentified Interpreter.]

B. BROOKWELL: Was that before you were health director, or after?

K. BENUEN: Yes, before I was a health director.

B. BROOKWELL: As a community service worker what did you see?

K. BENUEN: The social worker will ask us, community service workers, to assist them in translating for the parents. Sometimes they asked us to – to tell them what's going on – and to say that they're going to be – they're going to take the children away. And the parents will get mad and – they didn't want the children to be taken away.

B. BROOKWELL: And at that time, when you worked in youth corrections, what did you see?

K. BENUEN: When youth had to be taken to court, I was asked to do a youth predisposition report on them. I tell them – I write down what they – what I see in their family life. I talk to the parents, the family. I tell them: If I know there was alcoholism in the family and family violence, I will write – write it in my report, and when the parents seen what I write – when I tell them what I'm – what I'm writing they will get mad, they will deny what's going on in – in their family.

A lot of times – there were some incidents where I had to do a report on one youth for many times. He was a chronic gas sniffer. For many – few times, I was asked to recommend – what do I recommend for him to get help. Many times – few times I recommended he go to treatment, then he'll be sent off, then he'll come back and do it over again.

Last time, I did a report on him.

When – when I did the report on that last youth –

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: Tissue (inaudible)?

[Mushuau-aimun spoken]

K. BENUEN: No, I'm a – I'm okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If you need to take a break (inaudible).

K. BENUEN: I did the report on the kid – one youth – for many times. I broke down in court. The judge asked me: What do you recommend? And I cried because we didn't have programs in the community, we couldn't find a program for him. I didn't know what to recommend to save the boy, to keep him out of trouble and to keep him out of gas sniffing. It was very hard.

B. BROOKWELL: Would you like to take a short break for a few minutes?

K. BENUEN: [Mushuau-aimun spoken] – continue.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: She wants to continue.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay.

So, at this time, what – what led you to the health director job?

K. BENUEN: In August of 19 – in July of 1998 there was a job advertisement for health director. Couple of the community leaders asked me to apply for it since nobody in the community wanted to apply. So I took a chance and applied for it and I got hired.

B. BROOKWELL: Can you tell me about the Grace Hospital at that time?

K. BENUEN: When there was a lot of gas sniffing in the community by youth and young adults, we struggled what to – to find treatment for them. There were no programs in the community for them, to help. The Chief decided to go to Ottawa, and we had a team of people trying to help the youth. We went to meet with Jean Chrétien and then – Jean Chrétien and the government listened to the leaders and they agreed to help us. They decided to open up

the Grace Hospital in St. John's and a lot of the youth were sent there to try – to get assessment done on them and to find programs – how to help them.

B. BROOKWELL: I'd like to ask you now a bit about the programs that are in place today. Can you tell me what the health services programs – sorry – what health services looks like for Mushuau Innu First Nation today?

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: [Innu-aimun spoken.]

What else – what else did he say?

B. BROOKWELL: I think I asked too long a question.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: Yup.

You have to make them short, so –

B. BROOKWELL: How many staff do you have today?

K. BENUEN: Currently in public health we have four nurses. They do immunizations, healthy baby checks and they also offer health programs in the community – in the – in the school. And we also have now a home care nurse who does assessment for clients in need of child care [read: home care] services.

We also have a woman's shelter that we provide shelter for woman who suffer from violence and homeless. We also have a program called Next Generation Guardians. It's a program target for youth and woman in the community.

The staff takes youth on trips on Ski-Doo – on Ski-Doo trips, boats. They walk in the barrens, go fishing and hiking. They are taught culture activities and enjoy activities away from social media and electronics.

We also have the Healing Lodge. They offer counselling and treatment. Before, when we

first moved to Natuashish, the counselling happened in the clinic. It was not very appropriate place to have counselling because there was a lot of human traffic in the building. The offices – they only had three – three offices for counsellors and it was not very private.

The community decided to ask for Healing Lodge to be built and the community was asked: Where do you want to – the Healing Lodge to be situated? And they said: “We want it away from the community so it’ll be more private.

So the Healing Lodge was established and situated at – a few ways – a few minutes away from the community.

B. BROOKWELL: Can you tell us a little bit about the Healing Lodge? What kinds of programs run out of the Healing Lodge?

K. BENUEN: The Healing Lodge offers healing programs for people who wants to go for treatment for their addictions, like alcohol and drugs, and they also do counselling. We’re – we also involved in doing sweats for the community; sometimes the youth are involved.

We also invite traditional healers from the west to do workshops with the community.

B. BROOKWELL: If somebody is very sick with a severe illness, what do they do for treatment?

K. BENUEN: Our people who suffer chronic disease – diseases travel to Goose Bay, St. John’s and St. Anthony for treatment. Some of our people cannot return to Natuashish because their treatment is usually in Goose Bay – they cannot return home.

The – the Band Council pays for them, for housing and accommodations, and the family has – have to move to Goose Bay with them, because they end up staying there for many years.

B. BROOKWELL: Is there a possibility for treatment for things like diabetes in the community?

K. BENUEN: A lot of our patients who are on dialysis are – live in Goose Bay, but recently we had a home dialysis patient come to Natuashish and did dialysis at the unit in – at the clinic. This only started a couple of months ago, and it seems to be going well.

B. BROOKWELL: I do have some more questions to go through, but I wanted to check with the translators if you wanted to have a short break, with – Kathleen, are you okay?

K. BENUEN: Yeah, I’m okay.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 1: [Innu-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 2: [Innu-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 1: [Innu-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 2: Nope.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 1: No.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay.

Commissioners, how are you?

All right. Where do youth go today if they want treatment for addictions?

K. BENUEN: Clients will – who wants to seek treatment, they will go to the Healing Lodge and if there’s – if there is a treatment program they will enter the program. But if they wants to go outside the community they have to do a referral and go to another treatment centre on the outside of Natuashish.

B. BROOKWELL: How do these programs compare to the treatment that you were

doing in Davis Inlet if someone needed help?

K. BENUEN: In Davis Inlet, the Health Commission used to have a land-based program out – out on the land. The clients would go out by Ski-Doos and camp out away from the community. Sometimes they used the planes.

But when we moved to Natuashish we couldn't continue that program out on the land, because we were told we didn't have enough funding to do stuff out on the land, because of high costs of travel by planes.

B. BROOKWELL: I want to change a bit to another area that you oversee.

Can you tell me about child care in Natuashish, and the programs available?

K. BENUEN: We have a Head Start Program but it – it's mostly outreach. We had a building a couple years ago and the kids vandalized the building, and it became (inaudible). So that building is out of commission – it has to be teared down. So the daycare and Head Start Program cannot run programs in – in – in the building. So we are only doing small activities like outreach.

Today, the woman who wants to work cannot find babysitters, and it is very difficult for them to find babysitters in the community. It's a real struggle in the community.

B. BROOKWELL: There's quite a few medical services that fall under health, and I want to ask you a little about that.

Where do people go if they need to see the dentist or the eye doctor?

K. BENUEN: Just recently we had an optometrist come to our community since the fall, and they make a visit two or three times a year so the – the people do not have to travel to Goose Bay for eye – to get their eyes checked.

And we're also doing something the same with the dental program. Currently our first dentist will come in March. Right now there are – they can be seen in Goose Bay if they don't get bump – bumped off by the Mission plane. They need space to get on the Mission plane – they travel to Goose Bay. But it's very difficult to have a confirmed seat on the Mission plane when there's another urgent case on the – on the plane. They get bumped off.

B. BROOKWELL: Others might know this but I don't know so, can you tell me what the Mission plane is?

K. BENUEN: The Mission plane is the – is the plane that takes patients to Goose Bay three times a week.

B. BROOKWELL: And is the Mission plane just for Natuashish or does it stop in other places?

K. BENUEN: It goes to all the coastal communities in northern Labrador.

B. BROOKWELL: How often is that plane full?

K. BENUEN: Yeah – yes.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 1: Ehe.

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER 2: Ehe.

B. BROOKWELL: You mentioned if the – the plane is full, then people trying to get into Goose Bay for medical services can't get in.

How often does that happen?

K. BENUEN: Usually the nurses will refer you if you needs to go to Goose Bay. It's the nurses' decision to put you on the list.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Mr. Brookwell, I'm going to give you about another ten minutes.

B. BROOKWELL: Okay.

So just a couple more questions.

When people need to see the doctor, how do they do that – a family doctor?

UNIDENTIFIED INTERPRETER: [Innu-aimun spoken.]

What was the second question?

B. BROOKWELL: If people need to go see a family doctor, how do they see a family doctor?

K. BENUEN: I think it's safe to say most of our community members do not have a family doctor.

B. BROOKWELL: I'm – I'm gonna move over some of the other questions, 'cause there's one that I really think that you wish to share.

So, would you like to tell us about your experience with accessing health care?

K. BENUEN: I'm gonna tell my story about my own health.

For two years I suffered pain and I had my – I was dragging my feet – my foot – my right foot. I was weak on my right side of the body.

The nurses sent me to – the doctor sent me to Corner Brook for MRI in – one in the fall and one in the – one in the spring and one in the winter – I had two MRIs.

When the results came back, that doctor said: I can't find anything on your scan. And I ask him: What about my – my back? My back is painning and my – and my – I drag my – my foot.

He – and he said to me: There's nothing I can do about it. I can't see nothing on your scan.

The nurses are working the clinic at the health centre and I know the nurses there and they know me and they see me every day. And they said: There's something wrong with you, Kathleen, you should be treated.

They refer me to St. John's to a neurologist, but I was on a waiting list.

For the past year I became weaker, more pain, then I got depressed. But I continued to work during the day. When I come home, I just lay in – on the couch because I couldn't stand the pains.

I couldn't do anything in the house. I couldn't bake bread, I couldn't cut vegetables and meat to cook for my family, I couldn't – I felt so useless. I couldn't even clean the house. My family keep urging me: Seek help. Go for help. But I couldn't. I didn't wanna have another letdown.

Finally, in June, my husband said: I wants to take you to Montreal to get a second opinion. So I agreed. In July we went to Montreal to see a doctor. I went to emergency.

I went to emergency in Montreal and the doctor on call checked me out and he – I had my – my reports from the clinic with me, and I showed him what's – what's been happening, what's been done.

He looked over my paperwork and asked me questions. Then he said: We have a neurologist on call, can you wait around? I'll get him to see you. So I waited around in the emergency.

Finally in the evening the neurologist on call had time for me and he – he came and checked me out, asked me a lot of questions, look over my paperwork. Then he said: I think you have Parkinson's disease but I cannot be sure. He said: I have another colleague who works in a different hospital. I want you to go there.

So the next morning I went to the other hospital and waited in emergency and finally seen the – the neurologist who was an expert. And finally he examined me, asked me a lot of questions and he said: Yes, you have Parkinson's disease.

That was a relief.

And he said: You can be treated. He said: You're gonna have your life back. And I was very happy to hear that.

Finished the assessment, and he gave me a prescription. Since July, I have no pain in my back. I'm able to do a lot of stuff in the house again; cook for my family, clean the house. I have no escort now, I used to have an escort before. Somebody had to hold me up to walk, but I walk by myself now.

I'm back to my old self.

I seen my doctor in December, and he was – he was impressed with the improvement, but he said he wants me to be seen in St. John's. He would – he will send a – a referral so I can be seen in my province.

So I'm still on waiting list for appointment in St. John's. I find it very difficult to be assessed and be taken seriously in Goose Bay and Newfoundland in particular. I hear a lot of these stories – these kinds of stories from my community members. Some friends I have lost because they weren't taken – taken seriously. There's not – there's a not – there's a lot of medical service – medical students working at Goose Bay hospital treating our patients, but they have no experience. A lot of my people don't trust these medical students at all. Too often it is too late for them when they get the answer they need.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: So I think we'll close up, because we can continue with Kathleen in Natuashish over time. We won't say that she's concluded. We'll allow her to go home tomorrow but we can

certainly hear from her later on down the road.

Finish up now please.

CLERK: All rise.

This Commission of Inquiry is concluded for today.