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

English Transcript | Volume 25

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

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COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Okay, so we're ready to start the afternoon. Thank you, everybody.

INTERPRETER EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Okay.

So I just wanted to mention, again, the healing services.

INTERPRETER EDMONDS: Say again.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: I just wanted to mention, again, the healing services available.

So, we have healing support services and the people are Ivy Pijogge, Mary Jane Edmonds is here somewhere, Louise Bradley is our consultant and counsellor George Maringapasi – is that a good pronunciation, close enough?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, that's good.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Thank you.

So, just wanted to mention that as you're sharing your story or hearing stories from people about their experiences, it may trigger some things for those past memories, for those who have had experiences in the past. So you need – you should think about family or friends, or how you would have support if you feel that you've been triggered and are a having difficult time.

It takes great strength to reach out for help and support. Please take care of yourselves and each other.

Okay, so we're going to start with our first speaker for this afternoon. So, start when you're ready and just – sorry – and, please, just start with your name for the purposes of the Inquiry.

Thank you.

S. DICKER: My name is Samuel Dicker. I was born in Goose Bay, and I was raised in Davis Inlet, in this town.

And when I was a kid, I used to seen a lot of good and bad stuff. At first, it was good. We used to have a good family and we used to spend a lot of time together, like Christmas and all that. But when I got older, they turned into alcoholics. They turned to alcohol, and that's when bad stuff started to happen.

At a young age – when I was seven or eight years old, I experience a lot of mental health at a young age. I knew that my parents were – they were hurt, but they couldn't find any help, so they had to go towards the alcohol and that.

But, today, I would not like to talk about it. I would like to talk about something else. I would like to talk about how is this happening and how it's gonna be prevented to be – to stop it.

[Dialogue between S. Dicker and Interpreter Edmonds in Mushuau-aimun.]

S. DICKER: There's a lot of things going on into my community today, as I see. And I

wish you all can see this, but you don't see none of this. But it feels like – I don't know how to say it, but everybody's lost today because you have failed my people.

And I am sorry to say this that you've been here for so many years and all you guys do is cause more suffering for my people and more sadness. And today they are sick and you're still here sitting around, try to make us look bad or maybe try to make yourselves look good. But, to me, you just need to stop, please, and we have a solution for our people, and that is our Elders.

But it's – I'm sorry I got to say this, but we don't need you anymore. We need you to stop what you're doing and we can help you, too, if you wants help from us. We are independent people. We are strong people. This land here, this is our garden, and we cannot let you guys destroy this and our lives. Please stop what you are doing – please. I'm sorry.

And this is so hard on me today. This is my first time doing this and it hurts me so bad. We forgotten our Elders because of you guys interfere so many years into our lives. But I tell you this now: I needs you to stop what you're doing. Please, look at my people; they are suffering.

And you try to bring us help. All you guys do is create more problems. So, please, I am sorry to say this; I need my people to work together as one. I cannot do this alone. It's exhausting. That's how – exactly how my Elders feel. They are tired of it. They are waiting for a good time.

So, please, try and – to think about this. Talk to your leaders or something, because I can get all this back instead of all this suffering. I'm only a young man and why do I have to tell you this? It's supposed to be the Elders but youse don't know how to listen. But I tell you today it's time we stand our ground. Like I said, this is our garden, this is our land and, yes, we can help you, too, but it's – we have to make that balance. You guys cannot always be above us. We have to make that balance so we can work together to make things better for our future generations. Like, I really don't wanna do this. I have family to take care of, but I'm not gonna stop. I promise you that. I won't stop.

So, please, look at the children. Look at my people that are suffering. Look at the Elders. It's only you people in this room. Where are my people? But I will stand my ground. I will fight for my people if I have to because good things are coming, whether you like it or not. Every night and day I pray for my people, but I don't wanna show my weakness or any anger towards you because, to me, that is just a waste of time and it's time for you people to listen to us.

We respected you so many years. It's time for you to respect us. Like, we can do something together to help people come into this community. You people probably wants to hear the stories of our Elders, what happened back in the day or what's happening today. We can build a building for the Elders and that building will be their heart of our community and that's how we can – we don't need you guys. We needs you to stop. That's all I'm trying to say and that's all I have to say for today.

INTERPRETER EDMONDS: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

S. DICKER: Mm-hmm.

INTERPRETER EDMONDS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Well, first of all, thank you for speaking here today, and it might surprise you, but I do agree with that you have said. For too long, I believe, there have been so-called answers to problems being imposed by governments and white people.

This Inquiry, when we approached it from the beginning, we wanted to hear from the people in the community first, which is what we're doing. We'll also hear from – we've heard from Elders, but we'll also hear from leaders in the community, later on, in 2024.

And with regard to the child protection piece of this, we can't look at child protection in and of itself but look at the whole community and what the bigger issues are, what's causing the problems. And the Innu have been telling us that of what – why there's been problems in the past. So I'm hopeful and I believe that this is a turning point in terms of the Innu taking control.

And I think it's very good to see you here today, as what I see in front of me is a young leader in this community.

So, thank you.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

I'm just saying to Sam that I thank him for coming forward and speaking passionately about how he feels. I think that is important to hear all the voices of the people in the communities.

So, again, thank you.

Tshenashkumitin.

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CLERK (Battcock): No, I don't. We haven't heard from her. I think (inaudible) was the last one to talk to her.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Okay, five minutes.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

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