COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good morning, everyone.

Thank you very much for being here patiently waiting for us, but we had the pleasure of visiting a site that Tony Jenkinson is working on. And it's the site where we saw that he uncovered Innu artifacts – spearheads and arrowheads, very beautiful – showing that the Innu were here, he thinks 3,000 to 4,000 years ago.

He pointed out that that is only one of many places in the area because he thinks that the Innu travel all of Central, Interior and South Coast of Labrador.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Sorry, Kevin. I'll do it the same for you.

We're sorry for being late but we had been invited to visit an archaeological dig that Tony Jenkinson is working on, on the other side of the river.

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Mr. Jenkinson thinks that the site may be at least 3,000 or 4,000 years old and shows where the Innu were and what they were doing that far back in time. He will give a more accurate number, he says, if he comes across bones that he can use to tell how old the site is.

This is our last day. It'll be a very short day. We're only going for one hour and then everyone will start heading back home.

As usual, we have so many people to thank: the community, Sheshatshiu, the Innu people and everyone who has attended these sessions during the week. I'll say tshenashkumitin now to all of the legal teams that were here representing the families, representing Canada and the province, and the Innu Round Table and Innu leadership. We're very grateful for all of these people being part of this Inquiry.

We're grateful to those who manage the Inquiry and administer all of the work that we do before we get here and while we're here.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Go ahead, Mike.

Oh. After that.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: After that.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah, you can press that button there. Right in the middle there, Penote.

ELDER ANTUAN: Oh.

Okay, first of all I want to say a few words. First of all, I want to thank all of you people who came from St. John's, Newfoundland, and I believe there are some people from Ottawa, Government of Canada and, also, there's Innu people from the community of Natuashish and Sheshatshiu.

And also, there's a few young people who were here yesterday too that we're very thankful for them, who also help this centre to be well cleaned, and everything that they does for the work here in the centre here.

And the other thing I want to say on behalf of the family of Shimun Andrew: They lost their son but they don't confirm yet whether he pass away or died inland or in the water.

But the other thing I heard this morning was that there is searchers from Sheshatshiu will be going on an 11 o'clock flight, going to Kamestastin to search the body in water now. I believe they started in water yesterday but they couldn't find anything yet.

And it's very hard for the family, for Shimun Andrew and his wife and his children and all, 'cause only recently, a week ago, that his mother pass away. Shimun Andrew didn't pass away but his mother passed away only just about a week ago. Then he

lost his son the other day – like, a week now.

And usually, the Elders were called to have a prayer for them. I was in the valley when I had a call to say a prayer for the family of Shimun Andrew and all the family there. I head to the valley. I managed to find hitch inside; I didn't have any vehicle. And when I got there we did say a prayer for him and the family.

And also, we almost lost Shimun the following morning, I think. Two days ago, I think, we almost lost Shimun. He was supposed to be put in dialysis that morning, the day he got – somehow, they lost him a brief. So they was trying to – they did succeed to come back on his own.

So that's the thing we were – like, every time we have sadness in our community, it's very sad to see young people. What they were doing is they're – if they follow the path that their ancestors were doing, that's the thing.

Sometimes, ourselves, we don't understand it. That's what I told Shimun the other day: You know, there's a reason why our children are going to the country, back and forth. There's something that they want to learn. There's something they don't satisfy themself whether they're in the country or they're in the village.

They want to do what they want to do. I think one thing, as a people, we have to remember that your grandparents were there. They all – everybody – was living in the country and they like it and they love it, the way they were in the country. And it's very sad to see the young people, they haven't experienced yet what they have missed.

Like myself. Like myself, I'll tell you my idea. Like myself. My father was a great shaman. He did everything about his people in Sheshatshiu, Davis Inlet or in Quebec – Quebec Innu people. He did a lot of things. Like one story that I heard, I was very – my impression was so high on him, to think of him, that he was doing.

While they were doing a trip in the country, while they were walking on, probably thin ice, one of the little women fell down through the ice. She was pregnant. She was pregnant. She had a baby in the womb.

And that day, everybody was saying that we should build camp here. And then my grandfather shouted to the people: Yes, we build a camp here and I'll try to do what I can, because he was a shaman. The way we say shaman is not – we look at, it's a person who can do what you call magician. But it's not a magician, it's just the will of that person by the help of our creator. That's the thing.

When they build a camp in that lake – so what he did, he went over. She was not on top of the ice, she was in the water. Not in the water covered – well, he was halfway in the water.

Anyway, in the water, so she came – well, he came while the other Elders in that group build what we call a shaking tent in that spot. Not on the ice, it was in the tent. So the other Elders who were there, he told not to look outdoors until I get that lady up safe side. So one of the Elders told my grandfather: Whether you want to look, you can look but don't tell anybody.

So he got out from the tent where they were building the shaking tent and he walked towards the ice. He stopped at the edge of the ice where the water was open. At the edge of the water, he stepped in the water. And the person who was looking at him, amaze of him that he was walking on the water.

He said he didn't sink in the water. He just stayed, like, afloat – floating on water, and walked towards the person who was in the water and just took him from the hand and took her to the other safe ice. And that's what happened. I the story that I heard from my mother, and my father was there, too.

So those things, that's what I said: The people who are – I don't want to call them magician, but there are some kind of spirit helping them to be as a unique – well, I

guess a unique person to do that kind of stuff.

And I also want to say a prayer for this morning for Shimun Andrew and his family and all his children and all his uncles and aunts and everybody in the community.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

And this prayer, I was taught by the old Peenamin McKenzie when I was just about 10 or 12 years old, I think. That same prayer that I'm using today.

He mentioned to the people who are weak, very weak in their own lives, like if they fall apart from their families and all that, you should say the prayer for that at least a day. So that's a prayer that I'm using today, and a very –

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

And thank you very much for listening to me today.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: So before we start then, I wanted to express my thanks to everybody for their support this week; particularly, the community and, of course, our Elders who have been here every day.

In addition, to recognize and thank Nathan Penashue who is our liaison worker. He had the tent set up for us. And this week of course, Sean Allen is our counsellor and Edward Nuna from the healing services. And especially to thank them for their support on Wednesday, when Kevin was having some challenges and they were right there to provide that support.

Thank you.

P. RALPH: Thank you, Commissioners.

Continuation now of Lyla Andrew's testimony: Lyla, can you recall where we ended off yesterday? I know that's probably my job, but – let her –

Anne?

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

L. ANDREW: I guess the record will show where we ended off. But as I recall, I was trying to make the point that I understood a child welfare system – and I still understand this about the formal provincial child welfare system – that though the child welfare system focuses on distress in individual families, it doesn't focus on an entire community which is in distress.

P. RALPH: Did you understand that when you were working for Social Services from 1979 to 1984?

L. ANDREW: I'm sure that the provincial legislation of the day had a definition of a family and what constituted a family. This legislation was obviously applied province-wide, and the definition of a family would've been pretty much a mom, a dad and the children.

I certainly started to understand that Innu families were not defined – couldn't be defined – as a mom and a dad, or a mom and children, but were far broader than that. Innu families were large extended groups and I don't know if I knew the word at the time. I think I started – everyone in our family referred to my husband's mother as Nikau, which I think translates as: our mother.

So it didn't matter whether she was your birth mother, or she was your grandmother or your mother-in-law, she was our mother, Nikau. The language is different. The language describes a different kind of group.

P. RALPH: Yup. They get a chance now.

L. ANDREW: Yup. Sorry.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

L. ANDREW: I think it was the regulations or legislation around social assistance which really was very clear about those narrow distinctions as well, like a mother, a father and children.

P. RALPH: Ms. Andrew, I guess you're now – oh sorry, Kevin.

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: I understand, Ms. Andrew, that in 1984 you and three other people were fired from the Department of Social Services.

L. ANDREW: That's correct.

The three other people were Sebastian Nuna, Peter Bown and Dorothy Mills. Do you want me to describe a little bit more about the circumstances –

P. RALPH: Sure, yeah.

L. ANDREW: – of that?

P. RALPH: And maybe you could talk briefly about – again, can you recall who was entitled to get social assistance at that time, and then, how did you go about figuring out what they were entitled to?

L. ANDREW: The aspect of the job that we had for the Department of Social Services around doing social assistance, was the area of work that got us as workers really being at odds with the Department of Social Services – being at odds, being really – we questioned the direction that we had to take in terms of the delivery of social assistance.

P. RALPH: I just will point out, Ms. Andrew, that we don't have that regulation but we should have it soon. We unfortunately couldn't get it in time, but certainly the next time that you're here we'll admit the regulations that were of concern to you and others.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: If I could take a few liberties –

P. RALPH: No, that's fine.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – with regard to this regulation 'cause I do have some recollection of it, having worked in the system at the time.

During that time in the early '80s, it was a time of austerity and cutbacks with provincial government in a number of programs and services.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: Austerity. It's like no money.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Cutbacks, yeah.

P. RALPH: But it's like the government's finances were –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Sorry.

P. RALPH: Okay, it was a time when government was doing spending cuts. Spending less money and spending less money on things.

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: This included the social assistance program. And what it did is it assessed if somebody was receiving social assistance in a household as a family, other people who were in the household were assessed as boarders. And there was a rate of 20 per cent that was used to cut their social assistance.

So that if there were two families in a household, one is considered to be the family that were taking care of the home, but the others were considered to be boarders which meant a significant reduction in the boarder's side of it for that second family.

So in a household, as we talk about in Innu communities where there may be several members of the family and extended family, it meant drastic cuts in their social assistance rates.

So this meant that for people who were already living well below the poverty line, they now had big cuts; particularly, Innu families in their already very, very limited income.

L. ANDREW: What you've just said, Commissioner, other than the piece about the provincial austerity program: all of those other elements of what you've said is exactly what I would have also said that we understood, that the rules of social assistance said somebody was either a homeowner or a board and lodger. Those were the categories.

P. RALPH: Before you continue, so at that time, '79 to '84, how many genuine employment opportunities would there have been for Innu in Utshimassit and Sheshatshiu?

L. ANDREW: There were still very limited – oops, sorry.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

L. ANDREW: My recollection is that there were still very few full-time wage opportunities for families – for fathers or mothers. And certainly, there was no employment for people – the people that were being employed in those early years were the young men and women. Women like Mary Pia described, who could speak English.

So the entire generation that was over the age probably of 25 or 30, most of those people were not speaking English as a second language and they were, in other words, almost unemployable.

P. RALPH: Also, Ms. Andrew, if I could just ask one other question: I understand that there were, over the years, perhaps many Innu that were entitled to social assistance, but for perhaps linguistic or cultural reasons they didn't actually receive it. Is that your understanding?

I don't know about 1979 to '84, I'm just curious.

L. ANDREW: Yeah.

I know that – whoops.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

L. ANDREW: In later years, the social assistance system became much more centralized. And I am very aware that when I went back to work for then CYFS – Child, Youth and Family Services – in the mid 2000s, say 2005, 2006 and onward, that in Natuashish for example, you had to phone St. John's to apply for social assistance.

So you had to have a phone. You had to speak English. You had to get a hold of all your documentation. So it actually, with time, became much harder for Innu to apply for social assistance and they became reliant on the Band Councils to provide food vouchers and other basic support.

P. RALPH: Ms. Andrew, are you able to answer the question: would every Innu household that was in Sheshatshiu or Utshimassit, where a person wasn't employed in the household, be eligible for social assistance, when you were working?

Do you want me to – okay.

Every Innu household in Sheshatshiu or Utshimassit where there wasn't someone working, would they have been eligible for social assistance when you worked 1979 to '84? Is that better?

L. ANDREW: I think the regulations then, and I suspect the current regulations, would say that if you do not have any source of income – and welfare would be the last source of income – you would be entitled to apply for welfare.

And I don't remember at the time if there was any kind of cut-off. Like your income had to be below a certain level or something like that. It was strictly if you didn't have a source of income that you could apply.

The issue for us as workers at that time was that because we lived here and worked here, we knew that the majority of families lived as extended families in limited amounts of housing. And the social support systems such as pensions for Elders, those were non-existent.

I honestly don't know what older people lived on because they'd never contributed to – they were living in the country. They were born and lived in the country. So Elders had no source of money and the community, it was widespread that many of the households were dependent on social assistance.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Counsel, I'm going to give a five-to-seven-minute bell now.

Thank you.

P. RALPH: So, Ms. Andrew, can you describe then, the consequences that you saw from that policy of calling some of the people in the home homeowners and the others boarders?

L. ANDREW: The result –

P. RALPH: Sorry.

L. ANDREW: Sorry.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER PASTIWET: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

L. ANDREW: Repeat your question.

P. RALPH: Sorry. Yeah, I'll repeat the question.

Ms. Andrew, you were working 1979 to '84 and you see that you're required to reduct [read: deduct] people's social assistance because there are extended family in a home. Is that right?

L. ANDREW: Yeah.

The underlying premise or idea behind making deductions from a board and lodger was that they would pay some of their social assistance to the homeowner to stay there like they were renters.

But that underlying premise was not true. It was false. People didn't pay their grandparents to live in their home. So it just meant overall there was less money in a community that was already very, very poor. The majority of the population was poor.

P. RALPH: Ms. Andrew, I think this will have to be the last –

L. ANDREW: Yeah.

I would say at that time, when you factor in the many widespread social issues that were clear to the eye, especially alcohol misuse in the community, the overall impact was that the most vulnerable in this village and in Utshimassit – and those were the Elders and the children – the many children – were the most impacted. And there was suffering as a result. There was suffering and you could see it.

P. RALPH: Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much.

I appreciate that you're sticking to the timeline.

The counsel who must leave are free to make their way now. Some people have other responsibilities. We're working on our accommodation plans for Natuashish at the

end of the month so we'll keep everyone apprised of that.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Tshaukuesh – or sorry. Penote?

P. RALPH: Do you want to keep that?

L. ANDREW: Keep it did you say? Do I want to keep it?

P. RALPH: Yeah.

L. ANDREW: Yeah.

ELDER ANTUAN: I'd like to say a few words that I have.

I'm very thankful for especially interpreters. I forgot every morning I have come here to say thank you all you people.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: We appreciate that.

ELDER ANTUAN: Especially Anne and Kevin. They're doing a tremendous work in the gathering here and he spoke both languages: Natuashish and Sheshatshiu. And to me it's very worthwhile to come in every day because I understand them.

And the people who spoke about their duties while they were here in the community, like I say Lyla and the other person who was read by her, his report, Peter Sarsfield. I don't where he is now at the moment but I believe he's still alive. I'm not sure. I can't tell.

So anyway, the only thing that I want to say today is that those reports that were done by Lyla and Sarsfield I only just got a word from today, like when the people were read about their reports. And that's what, about 47 years? Somewhere around there.

P. RALPH: Yeah. You're right.

ELDER ANTUAN: Yeah, 47 years. And I'm up to 75 now.

And those words are very powerful for themselves who understand the problem in our community in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. Because like Lyla was saying, the people in this community and Natuashish, they didn't speak the English language. They didn't speak.

There were only few generations that have spoken. Like I know for sure there was one person spoke English. It was Ponas Nuke. He was the first one in my age. And I'm probably the second one who can speak fluently the English. I did learn the English when I was 10 years old – nine years old in St. John's.

And every word that I hear at my ears, some of them were good, some of them were bad. Like the way I notice – what's his name – Mary Pia saying the people, your people, call us: dirty Indians. I did hear that. And I did hear redskin which totally, to me, it's like an assault to a person.

I had a sense in my brain telling me not to talk back, whoever you hear, what they're saying to you – never. Because my grandfather would, saying to the people: Don't ever, ever take revenge on other person, what they do to you. That's written also in the Bible.

And I thank to the new Elders; like me, I'm just a brand new Elder now in the community here. And I was so proud my other Elders who are gone before me, they're trying to teach our people here to be as reasonable persons. People to understand what other cultures are doing to them.

Like me, when I first understood why are the white people saying to us we were dirty. We're not dirty, we're just as normal as they are. And I say: Why are they saying that we're redskins? We don't have red skins on our bod.

So that's something I will never understand, I don't think, because it's so complicated in our style because we did love everybody in the community who has come far away from us. Like me, when I was listening to Lyla – he couldn't find any person when he came here first. And there was two of us – like my

wife and me were available for her to understand the community because we were helping her throughout her lifetime.

And also helping the priest when he came here first; it was Father Pierson who came here. I was a little fella about seven years old when he came here. And I grow up with my mother because my mother was the only person that I can call my mother because she was my mother and my father passed away when I was only two years old.

So that's the things I do remember. And, also, I always will be in my heart with my mother, my uncles, my aunts, my grandparents and any other older person that lived in our community. I'll always remember them.

So I'm going to say a prayer now.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

Thank you.