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

English Transcript | Volume 40

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

Wednesday | Natuashish | 26 June 2024

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: She's going to say a prayer.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Oh, okay.

[redacted] What's going to come out of this? What does it come out, me talking? Is there anything that come out of it? Get help or something or –

P. RALPH: It helps us understand –

[redacted] Okay.

P. RALPH: – what's happening in the community and what needs to be done to help people in similar situations as you and (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

[redacted] It's better for me to do it.

[Smudging performed.]

ELDER M. RICH: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

[Song performed.]

ELDER M. RICH: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

P. RALPH: Okay.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

That's for tears.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: The box.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: We put our tears in there.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Yeah.

P. RALPH: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Do you want to mention it or Nympha?

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Nympha can mention it.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You can bring that up, Nympha, for us.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: Yeah.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

And that's it.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much to Nympha for offering the smudge. Thank you very much to Mani for offering the prayer. We're very grateful to both of you for your service to the Inquiry.

We welcome [redacted] back. She has indicated that she's tired. And when you feel that this is getting too much, you can just let us know, or let Elizabeth know that you need a break or that you want to finish. But we thank you very much for coming back today.

You were asking what happens to your testimony; what do we get from hearing from you. And the answer is that we have heard from many people in this community, and Sheshatshiu as well, telling us about their youth, how they grew up; and from that, we learn about why Innu would prefer to have their own way of dealing with child protection and child services.

Your testimony and your story tells us that we should rethink how child services and child protection is done and what you have gone through should not be repeated.

So we thank you because what you tell us and what other people tell us allows us to let governments know and let the Innu Round Table know that there should be changes based on what you have gone through.

Yesterday, you went through your life story as a child and you ended up when you were around 16 years old. And you felt that you were being taken advantage of by having to care for somebody else's children.

Today, we invite you to continue with what you've been thinking about or how you'd like to continue to tell your experiences.

[redacted] Hello.

Yesterday, I started off with when I was 16 years old. That was the last part I was telling you guys about.

It wasn't a home where I grew up. I never felt like anywhere is a home or I felt I don't know where I belong, I don't know what's going on. But I grew up in that house where it was very violent and I took care of my little cousins, practically raised all of them. Still today, I still help out and raise those kids with their kids; I still help out anywhere.

And part of me, as Innu, was taken as I was growing up because I lost my language when I was growing up and I was removed from my home community. For me, it's a lot to take in because I'm 35 years old today and still can't find a place where I feel connected and feel belonged. So I'm kind of very lost still today because of the system, and that was done to me and all the damage that I experience in my childhood.

So –

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Give Nympha a chance to interrupt for one second, [redacted]

INTERPRETER BYRNE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

[redacted] Can we take a break?

INTERPRETER BYRNE: She wants to take a break.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Sure.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: She's having a rough time right –

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: That's fine.

There is a place where you can meet with the Commission as well.

P. RALPH: If you want.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

There is a room in there.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah. We'll take a short break.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: Okay, I'm going to translate what she just said.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yes, thank you very much.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much. We're going to have a short break.

Recess

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much.

Please proceed.

[redacted] Where do I start off? When I was 16, that was the last time I was talking about – when I was 16 years old.

I moved out of my aunt's house but it was very violent because she beat me up because she didn't want me to move out, because I was the babysitter and I was like the cleaner and the cook in that house. And she beat me up inside of her porch because she told me CSSD are still taking care of me until I'm 18 years old.

And I told my cousin about it. I told my cousin: I'm 16 years old. I need to move out of here because my aunt is dating my ex-boyfriend and I'm like a slave in this house.

I need to talk slow.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: [Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

[redacted] So do I have to talk about when I'm only 16 or do I have to go further if I want to?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Whatever you wish to tell us about your history, yes.

[redacted] Whatever I wish? Okay.

So after that attack happened, my aunt called CSSD on me and the cops and said I was trying to commit suicide, which I wasn't planning on doing. I just wanted to get out of that house there.

So the police and the CSSD got involved, and I told CSSD that I'm not under your system anymore and that I'm moving out of my aunt's house. So I stayed with my other cousin; he's a male. My cousin knew what was going on inside that house and that I needed to get out.

That's when I became an alcoholic and a drug addict, after that. It was very, very violent even after I moved out. I was still getting attacked by my aunt. The thing is it could've been prevented by people getting checked up on all the time. That could've been prevented.

I'm not feeling all right, right now.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Would you prefer to –

[redacted] I don't want –

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – come back at some other time?

[redacted] Yes, I can come back other time. When can I come back?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: We are making –

P. RALPH: [redacted]

Yeah, sorry.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: So we're making plans to return to the community and, again, tomorrow. But you speak with Paula on your way out and she'll help you set a time.

[redacted] Okay. There's a lot on my plate now.

P. RALPH: Yes.

[redacted] 'Cause I'm practically on my own so I need to watch out what I do and say.

P. RALPH: Fair enough. This is why we –

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Also, if you need support in getting here, if you need a ride, you just make sure that you get Paula's contact number for that and we'll help you out.

[redacted] Okay. I'm not feeling all right. I've got a lot of anger in me. I need to go for a walk.

P. RALPH: Yes.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good.

P. RALPH: Does she have your number if you need to speak to Elizabeth or if you need to speak to anyone this afternoon or tonight, if you're feeling you need to speak to someone?

[redacted] Yeah. Oh, there's that – Nympha, here.

I need to go for a walk.

P. RALPH: Yeah –

[redacted] I'm not feeling all right.

P. RALPH: Yeah. Okay.

I just want to make sure if you –

[redacted] I'm halfway through that.

P. RALPH: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: Okay, halfway through it.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you so much.

Thank you, Nympha.

INTERPRETER BYRNE: All right.

[redacted] Thank you for listening.

P. RALPH: Thank you for sharing.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You're very welcome.

Recess

[redacted]