

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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Labrador

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"for the record..."
STENOTRAN
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**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Sheshatshiu, Labrador

2 --- Upon commencing on June 17, 1992 at 9:40 a.m.

3 **MR. BEN MICHEL,**4 **FACILITATOR:** Excuse me, I think we're going to start now,
5 and we're going to start with the opening prayer by Mary
6 Ann Michel.

7 (Opening Prayer)

8 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** I guess
9 the next thing on the agenda is the opening remarks by
10 the Co-Chairman, René Dussault.11 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**12 Good morning. First of all, I would like to welcome
13 everybody to this first day of hearings by the Royal
14 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Sheshatshiu.15 We have been in Labrador
16 for the last three days. We visited Makkovik on Monday.
17 Yesterday, we were in Happy Valley. We hope that this
18 opportunity that is given to us to hear your concern, what
19 you feel should happen to your community, to your children,
20 in the coming future.21 We have been appointed to
22 try to see how to build a new relationship between
23 aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in this country.

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So we have to see the big picture, the relationship that there is with something like the idea of self-government and the delivery of social services, the education system, the justice system, the links that should exist between the possibility of getting an education and having jobs afterward, because it goes together.

We want to hear from people again who have to wrestle with the life conditions on a day-to-day basis. It is important to us, and we hope that at the end of the day, you will be able to recognize your concerns and some of the ideas that you might have put forward for solutions, to recognize that into the final report of the Commission.

We do not want to come and go just one time. We want to establish a dialogue, so that means we will come back to Labrador, not necessarily in this community, but in other communities.

We will publish a document this summer on what we've heard and what we think were the main concerns that were put to us during this first round of hearings. We started these hearings in Winnipeg

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1 two months ago, and we will complete this round next week
2 in Toronto and Edmonton in Alberta. So we will then
3 publish a document that will make a synthesis of what we've
4 heard, and put some of the major questions in order that
5 when we come back in the fall in other communities, that
6 we could focus more on what appears to be the priorities
7 and what the solutions should be, to move from where we
8 are now to where we want to be in five years from now,
9 in ten years from now.

10 I hope that this
11 opportunity will enable both aboriginal peoples and
12 non-aboriginal peoples to voice their concerns. It is
13 important that there has to be something happening and
14 being done out of the report of the Commission, that the
15 larger public, all Canadians, understand the problems,
16 the difficulties and the hope of aboriginal peoples, and
17 see that it would be for the betterment of the whole of
18 Canada to do things differently.

19 So this public education
20 process is very important, and that's why we're always
21 very happy to have the media with us, to tell the public
22 outside a room like this one what is happening, what are
23 the thoughts and the ideas that are put forward in a hearing

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1 Commission, four out of seven.

2 With me this morning are

3 Viola Robinson from Nova Scotia. She is a Micmac from

4 Nova Scotia. Also, Mary Sillett, who is at home in

5 Labrador, much more than, of course, we are, because she

6 has lived here for many years. We have the Commissioner

7 of the Day, Francis Penashue. His role is exactly the

8 same as ours, to ask clarifications from the presenters,

9 to make sure that we understand properly what is said.

10 We're going to discuss with him on what we've heard, and

11 this is in order to make sure that we have a good

12 understanding and grasp of the community and of what has

13 been told to us. The other Commissioners are Paul

14 Chartrand, a Metis from Manitoba, and the two

15 non-aboriginal Commissioners, apart from me, are Bertha

16 Wilson, Madame Justice Bertha Wilson, who just retired

17 from the Supreme Court of Canada. She is a well-known

18 judge from the Supreme Court of Canada who retired and

19 is sitting as a Commissioner with the Commission. Also,

20 Allan Blakeney, former Premier of the Province of

21 Saskatchewan for over a decade.

22 As we want to visit as many

23 communities as possible, we are very often splitting into

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1 two or three groups. This morning, there are two other
2 panels of Commissioners doing exactly what we will do here.

3 That means holding hearings in other parts of the
4 country. No Royal Commission has visited communities as
5 we intend to do. We hope to be able to visit over 100
6 communities in all the ten provinces and territories during
7 the coming year, plus the major cities in the south.

8 We hope again that at the
9 end of the day, you would recognize yourself in the writing
10 of the Commission, and we thank you very much for your
11 contribution. I would like now to ask my co-commissioners
12 to say a few words. I will start with Viola Robinson.
13 Thank you.

14 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

15 **ROBINSON:** Good morning. I'm not going to say very much.

16 I think our co-chair has given you a good overview of
17 why we're here and what we're all about, but I do welcome
18 the opportunity to be here and to be able to share some
19 of your views and concerns.

20 We're a listening
21 commission. We're here to listen to you and to hear what
22 you have to say and how you view your future in Canada.
23 So I'm not going to say any more. I look forward to

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1 hearing from you, so thank you.

2 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

3 [Few words native language, not translated]. I said
4 "thank you" [Innuamon?] is Inuktitut for "Chairperson."

5 Before I begin my comments,
6 I would like to introduce the staff of the Royal Commission
7 on Aboriginal Peoples. We have a lot of staff on the Royal
8 Commission, perhaps 70 or more, but the majority are
9 aboriginal people, and that means status Indian,
10 non-status Indian, Metis and Inuit from all across Canada,
11 and we are very proud of that.

12 Roger Farley is from
13 Quebec. He works with the Secretariat. He is part of
14 our staff, he's over there. Francis Abele, she also works
15 with the Royal Commission in the research section. Nora
16 Jarrett, she's a team leader for public participation.
17 She's an Inuk from Hopedale, Labrador, the same as I am.
18 There is Violet Ford. She's from Makkovik, Labrador.
19 She works in the research section. Rhoda Kayakjuak, she's
20 from Hull Beach in the Northwest Territories, and she's
21 an Inuk, and we have Michael Lazore, who is a Mohawk from
22 Akwesasne.

23 Before we had our hearings

10

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1 in Labrador, we met with the provincial native groups in
2 St. John's. At that time, we asked them, if we go to
3 Labrador to have our hearings, what should we do to make
4 sure they're the best. They said you have to have local
5 community co-ordinators hired three to four weeks before
6 you begin, because they know the community, and they can
7 make sure that their community participates in these very
8 important discussions.

9 I think we should thank
10 Etienne Andrew of Sheshatshiu very, very much for the
11 excellent work that he has done, and as well, we were told
12 when you come into our communities, do whatever is
13 necessary to make people understand. Respect the
14 aboriginal language of that community, find the best
15 interpreters, and get them to interpret for you, so that
16 we and you can understand, so we've tried to do that as
17 much as we can.

18 This is not the only time
19 that we'll be in Labrador. We'll be back sometime, maybe
20 not Mr. Dussault, maybe not Viola or myself. There are
21 seven Commissioners, and they want to come to Labrador,
22 too.

23 The Commission has

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1 discussed the possibility of holding hearings in Davis
2 Inlet because of the many social problems facing the Innu
3 there.

4 We're a commission that has
5 said over and over again that we will go to those
6 communities that have hardly ever had a say, that are hardly
7 ever heard, and we've done this to date, and throughout
8 the next year, we plan to go to the communities that are
9 remote, that are isolated, that are hardly ever heard from.

10 Whenever I say that I'm an
11 Inuk from Labrador, on the mainland, outsiders often think
12 I'm an Innu, I'm saying "Innu." As you and I know, there's
13 a culture of difference between the Innu and the Innuit,
14 and I hope that today that message will go out to a lot
15 of people, through the media.

16 Finally, I would like to
17 say that I used to stay in a dorm across the river to go
18 to school. In those days, there was only a cable car,
19 and the communities of Northwest River and Sheshatshiu
20 were very separate. Maybe the bridge has changed some
21 of that, I don't know. But I can tell you one thing, there
22 has been change, there has been a lot of change, because
23 I think earlier on, in those days, probably this Commission

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1 would have been meeting on the other side of the river
2 instead of this side of the river, and I think that's
3 something that we have to be proud of.

4 I think, too, that Labrador
5 is hardly known outside of Labrador, but the Innu have
6 changed that. Because of the publicity, because of the
7 efforts of the Labrador Innu and their protests against
8 the low -level flying, Labrador is now known nationally
9 and a little bit internationally, and I think that the
10 Innu of Labrador deserve credit for that.

11 [Few words native
12 language, not translated]. Thank you.

13 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

14 I would like now to ask our Commissioner of the Day, Francis
15 PenashuE, to say a few words.

16 **FRANCIS PENASHUE,**

17 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY, [INTERPRETER]:** I'm not going
18 to say very much. The only reason that I am here is to
19 help to give us a better understanding in the struggle
20 of how we go through in our lives. We cannot live in a
21 non-native people way, and now it is up to us to understand
22 how we live, to raise our concerns and what is the cause
23 for the future and how we cannot live like non-native

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1 people.

2 One of the purposes that
3 I've been asked to participate is to raise some concerns,
4 such as an Innu from--and another is another person, and
5 another is an Inuit, and we are the Innu from Sheshatshiu.

6 One of the reasons that I'm
7 asked to sit in this table is because we have different
8 cultures, we have different lives. To be able to come
9 together to voice our concerns is one of the reasons why
10 I'm sitting at the table.

11 I guess some of you have
12 some concerns, and there are things that you do not agree
13 to be able to say to this table, to give your concerns,
14 and how we cannot be able to live like non-native people.

15
16 That's it for now. I will
17 talk later on. Thanks.

18 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next
19 speaker is Sylvester Andrew.

20 **MR. SYLVESTER ANDREW,**
21 **[INTERPRETER]:** Good morning. My name is Sylvester Andrew.
22 I work here in school. What I have to say is what I have
23 prepared from my forefathers. Our forefathers learned

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1 from their fathers. This is how we learn of our history.

2

3 We know that the system of
4 government did not arrive with the arrival of Europeans.

5 We know wherever there were aboriginal people that they
6 were governing themselves, so we have been governing
7 ourselves before the Europeans arrived. We ruled our
8 lands in the way that pleased us and worked for us. We
9 took care of our animals, because we knew that they would
10 always sustain us. We treated the animals and things
11 around us with respect because they are a part of our lives.

12

13 With the arrival of the
14 Europeans, our forefathers tell of many changes that took
15 place. Our forest were cut down, our rivers were dammed.

16 We did not know why these things were happening until
17 it was too late.

18

19 This point of my
20 presentation, I know that there are aboriginal people
21 across Canada, and that the Europeans have named Canada.

22 I know the word "Canada" itself is an aboriginal term.

23 I also know that there are other aboriginal people to
the south of Canada in the country known as the United

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1 States.

2 I am part of that country
3 which is known as Labrador. In this part of the country,
4 which was once a thriving hunting country. Many people
5 from many parts of the country went to hunt. Many are
6 buried there in that area. Many grave sites are now
7 covered by man. Made lakes were created by damming. The
8 destruction of our land in this manner has disrupted the
9 lives of our people. In a similar manner, the government
10 of Canada and Newfoundland are still seeking to disrupt
11 our lives, and by introducing low-level flying jets. But
12 this does not only disrupt our lives, it also disrupts
13 wildlife, which Innu depend on.

14 The Innu are, however,
15 starting to wake up and take notice of this destruction
16 that has taken place, which will take place and is now
17 taking place. Because the Innu are more aware of what
18 is happening, there has been more effort on the part of
19 Innu to stop the destructive activities from taking place
20 or sitting in silence. There was, in many recent years,
21 when Innu put blockades on the runways to stop military
22 jets from taking off at the airports, or occupied by bombing
23 ranges so they could not be used for destructive target

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1 practices.

2 We must do these things to
3 reassert our authority on our lands. We have not given
4 permission for our land to be used in this manner. We
5 have not sold our rights to our lands, so they still belong
6 to us, and as we struggle to save our lands, we are faced
7 with other problems in our community. The school that
8 our children go to has been the biggest factor in many
9 of our people, abandoning our culture. Missionaries
10 forced our children to go to schools where they were made
11 to feel ashamed of who they were. They learned somebody
12 else's language, and were slowly losing their own language.

13 I predict
14 great-grandchildren will be speaking English only. Many
15 things will be lost to us if we do not hold on to what
16 we have and try to regain what we have lost already. We
17 will become--if we lose our land. There will be no other
18 lands that can take the place of our land, which is known
19 as Labrador.

20 We have seen changes that
21 have taken place over the years things have been happening
22 to the Innu. Let us look at Churchill Falls, for one
23 example. I know that many millions of dollars were spent

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1 because of Churchill Falls to provide electrical power.
2 Innu are not benefiting. In fact, they are being
3 double-dealed. Development in Newfoundland flooded the
4 thriving hunting areas that have been used extensively
5 by the Innu, and now we pay for our electrical bills.

6 What I have to say now is
7 getting short, and other people will be coming up to speak.

8 It has been two years. People are not allowed to go to
9 Aurora Hotel because of the racist attitudes. A lot of
10 people suffer because of one or two individuals. There
11 are funds, Innu funds and other funds. Why can--the Innu
12 are allowed to go to Aurora Hotel as ordinary citizens.

13 The government should not
14 act as if they own us, and we should be able to have
15 self-government, and that not for other culture, but the
16 provincial and federal government governing us.

17 I thank you very much.

18 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

19 Thank you very much for your presentation.

20 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next
21 speaker is Apenam Pone [few words native language, not
22 translated], and his topic, I guess, is going to be alcohol
23 related, and that's the next speaker that's going to be

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1 speaking, Apenam Pone.

2 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

3 Good morning.

4 **MR. APENAM PONE, INNU**

5 **ALCOHOL PROGRAM DIRECTOR:** Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
6 Mary Sillett and Chief Francis. I'm the Innu Alcohol
7 Program Director, and I work at the Innu Alcohol Program
8 here at Sheshatshiu, and I've been here for four years,
9 and working as a counsellor for two years and two years
10 as director of the alcohol program.

11 I'm also a concerned
12 citizen of Sheshatshiu, and I would like to read what I
13 have written in my speech about the problem of alcohol,
14 the very extensive problem of the community. Two-thirds
15 of the adult population in the community have difficulty
16 with alcohol. This is caused by the lack of power and
17 control the Innu have over their lives, the domination
18 of culture, control of education and social services and
19 religion and justice system. This lack of power and
20 control leadership make social problems such as family
21 violence, child neglect, sexual abuse and teenagers
22 experiencing problems. The alcohol program is just an
23 organization attempting to address those problems. The

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1 problems Innu experience will always exist until the Innu
2 regain control and responsibility for their lives.

3 The culture of the Innu has
4 been weakened. Due to the lack of control, people have
5 begun to feel that they lack power to direct their lives
6 and the lives of their children. The alcohol program has
7 some suggestions to make about our program delivery of
8 services. Others will speak on the global issues of total
9 control and independence. The alcohol program addresses
10 the individual needs and personal ones. We feel that there
11 has to be Innu going to the country and experience our
12 traditional lifestyle. Our children must learn and
13 experience the country. This will strengthen our culture.
14 We must know where we are coming from and know where we're
15 going.

16 There seems to be a
17 different financial scale for the Innu and non-Innu alcohol
18 program. The funding that the government provides for
19 our program is far less in terms of wages scale and the
20 program budget that of the other treatment centre programs
21 in the area. We cannot accept this double standard. We
22 need more staff. Our program does not have funding even
23 for the secretary.

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1 We would like to provide
2 mobile treatment in the country. We feel this would
3 strengthen our culture.

4 The justice system needs
5 to be renovated and changed to address the needs for the
6 Innu. It is and does not work. Rehabilitation will
7 happen when the Innu are involved and are responsible.
8 We need to rely on the teaching and experience of our
9 elders. Since the 1900s, outside people have taught us
10 about their religion. It has replaced our spiritual
11 beliefs, which means something again has been taken away
12 from our culture.

13 That's what I have written,
14 and I also have a concern about education in the schools,
15 and I think that when the Innu have control of their
16 schools, I think that the problems of alcohol will be
17 reduced, because we feel that we need to talk about
18 alcoholism in the school system.

19 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

20 Thank you very much for your presentation.

21 I would like it if you could
22 tell me what is the budget of the alcohol program.

23 **MR. APENAM PONE:** It's

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1 around 83,000 for three people, and sometimes we have to
2 move it around because some of the places are not funded
3 enough and there are needs in the community.

4 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

5 What is the program? What do people do when they--

6 **MR. APENAM PONE:** We
7 extensively have counselling and AA meetings, and we do
8 community things sometimes, like festivals and stuff like
9 that. Right now, this fall, we will be having a sexual
10 abuse counsellor coming in to work for half a day without
11 us providing funding. This is just a volunteer person.

12 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

13 So you don't have beds or--

14 **MR. APENAM PONE:** No, this
15 isn't a treatment centre, but we feel like we need to have
16 a treatment centre that is controlled by native people.
17 We feel that the rehab doesn't work for the community,
18 and we feel that in order for the rehab centre to work,
19 we need to join together with the Inuit and the Innu in
20 order to make it work, and just the Innu and the Inuit
21 run the programs the way they feel comfortable running
22 it.

23 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

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1 So what you're doing is mainly preventive, or trying,
2 through consultation and advice, to--

3 **MR. APENAM PONE:** Yeah,
4 that's what we're doing, just counselling and looking after
5 people when they come out of treatment. And right now,
6 we've been using the treatment centre in [Sept Isle?],
7 Quebec, which is outside the province, because we feel
8 that our people speak the language better there, and they
9 speak our language at the treatment centre, so we send
10 people there. In order for us to send them there, we have
11 to try to get people in the rehab centre first, and then
12 send them to [Washat?] if there's no beds available in
13 the rehab centre.

14 To me, I feel I would like
15 to see it going the other way. I would like to see where
16 people can speak the language better, look at [Washat?]
17 first, and then look at the rehab centre, because we don't
18 have any counsellors at the rehab centre right now. We
19 don't have Inuit counsellors. And most people have
20 difficulty speaking the English language.

21 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
22 How often do you visit schools? You said that you speak
23 to the students in the schools.

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1 **MR. APENAM PONE:** We used
2 to speak to students last year often, but right now we
3 have a lack of staff, and we couldn't do it all the time,
4 because we had to send one of our counsellors into the
5 country to see if mobile treatment would work, and we
6 haven't looked at it yet and see what happened.

7 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
8 Thank you.

9 **MR. APENAM PONE:** Thank
10 you, Mr. Chairman.

11 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** I guess
12 the next person that's on the list of speakers is Chieftess
13 Katie Rich from Davis Inlet, and I guess she's very well
14 known in the community here as the Chief of Davis Inlet,
15 and the first woman chief in Innu society, as far as I
16 can recall. I guess she is going to be talking about the
17 problems of Davis Inlet, and I'm just presuming this, Mr.
18 Chairman, that I guess she'll be talking about the report
19 that was released about two days ago, which has gone to
20 the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

21 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
22 Good morning.

23 **CHIEF KATIE RICH, DAVIS**

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1 **INLET:** Good morning. On February 14th of this year, we
2 had a tragic accident in Davis [Innugemasage?]. Six
3 children died in a house fire, and it's very hard to talk
4 about the deaths of these six children. It was the saddest
5 thing that ever happened to our community, and we have
6 seen so much tragedy in Davis Innugemasage. At the end
7 of my presentation, I will be submitting a report that
8 was released a few days ago, and in the report, you will
9 find that of the deaths in the community since 1969, of
10 these 66 deaths, 47 were alcohol related. But it was this
11 fire in February that has brought us together to look at
12 our problems, to bring our lives together, and to say that
13 we must do something. Too many people have died.

14 In February, after the
15 fire, we asked the Federal Minister Tom Siddon, to call
16 for a public inquiry. When he said no, the Innu nation
17 and the Moosha Innu Band Council decided to raise funds
18 ourselves and to hold the inquiry on our own. We chose
19 how we would do this, and this has been an important first
20 step in our rebuilding our lives.

21 In the 1930s, the Innu
22 people were settled into a place called Nutauk, which is
23 a few miles from old Davis. The Innu decided that they

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1 had enough. They did not like where they were settled,
2 so one night they decided to go back to old Davis. But
3 again, in 1967, they were moved again to new Davis Inlet,
4 in which we are now, and the promises of better living
5 conditions, better housing, water and sewer, but these
6 promises were never fulfilled.

7 As I mentioned before, we
8 called an inquiry after the fire, and we called this inquiry
9 [native phrase]. The inquiry is called "Gathering of
10 Voices: Finding the Strength to Help Our Children." We
11 developed a process in which we wanted to look back at
12 what happened to us over the past 30 years since we were
13 settled in Davis Innugemasage. One of the first problems
14 that we needed to talk about was the alcohol and the
15 gas-sniffing among children. Last Friday, a few of the
16 girls started sniffing gas, and during the early morning
17 of Saturday, they broke every single window in the school.
18 When they were asked why they were doing this, they said
19 they just want to get out of the Davis. They wanted to
20 go somewhere where they can live with water, with sewer,
21 with better conditions.

22 In the population of 168
23 adults, 123 are chronic alcoholics or abusers of alcohol.

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1 Ninety percent of all court cases in Davis Inlet are the
2 result of alcohol abuse. We looked at how we ended up
3 in Innugemasage, and what we had lost by settling there.

4 What we lost mostly was control over our lives. During
5 the weeks of the inquiry, we listened to our elders who
6 spoke to us of the life that we used to live as Innu people.

7 They can recall when we were healthy and strong and our
8 children were safe and happy. Then, we used to help and
9 not fight each other. In the village, we don't even have
10 water to drink. As early as 1969, water problems started.

11 People began to drink contaminated water, and many people
12 have been getting sick because of it. Some of our people
13 spoke of how they felt about living on the island where
14 we are now is like living in a dump. No one can live a
15 healthy life there.

16 Five studies have been done
17 over the past few years to find drinking water for the
18 whole community, and none of them has come up with any
19 that would be suitable for the community to have drinking
20 water. During the inquiry, we listened to each other speak
21 about the impact that the government, the church, the
22 school, the social services clinic and the police have
23 had on our lives. Many of the people expressed the belief

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1 that we have lost too much by giving over power to these
2 non-Innu organizations. If we are to have a future, we
3 feel that we must be the ones who begin to take
4 responsibility for such things in our lives once again.

5 As one of the couples in our village said during the
6 inquiry, in the past, we were like we were asleep. White
7 people were doing everything for us. We thought white
8 people knew everything, but we were wrong. The advice
9 they gave us never worked.

10 In the conclusion of the
11 report, you will find recommendations outlining steps that
12 we feel we need and are ready to take in order to work
13 together to regain control of our lives. We need to become
14 more self-sufficient once again, and to practice our ways,
15 our culture, traditions, values and spirituality. We need
16 to stop drinking, and our children must stop sniffing gas.

17 It was the view of all
18 people that in order to achieve a new and healthy life,
19 we must relocate, to move away from this island to a place
20 where there can be better health and living conditions,
21 a place where we can deal with the problems facing us.
22 Relocation is the first priority for us, and this time,
23 it will be an Innu decision, not the decision of the

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1 government or the church.

2 During the inquiry, we have
3 tried to listen to our children. All children need to
4 be healthy, they need to be loved and cared for. In many
5 ways, this inquiry and our desire to change expresses the
6 hope that we will find the strength to help our children.

7 Thank you.

8 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

9 I would like to thank you very much for coming and speaking
10 to us this morning. Of course, we are all too aware of
11 what has happened on February 14 in Davis Inlet, and we
12 are certainly happy to have a copy of the report that was
13 released on Monday.

14 **CHIEF KATIE RICH:** By the
15 way, they are \$15 each.

16 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

17 I hope that this Commission will be able to visit Davis
18 Inlet in the other round of our hearings. We understand
19 from what we've heard and read so far that the basic problem
20 has to do with the relocation that happened many years
21 ago and the situation that has developed from there, and
22 we would like to hope that a basic solution will be brought
23 upon as soon as possible. So certainly, we know that there

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1 are problems of alcohol and other problems that you've
2 mentioned, but we know that there is a more basic problem
3 that has to be solved before starting, really, to improve
4 the situation.

5 We thank you very much
6 again.

7 **CHIEF KATIE RICH:** Before
8 I go, I would like to ask the Commission if they would
9 do an interim report of the report that I'll be submitting.

10 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
11 First of all, we're going to have a look at the report
12 of the inquiry, and generally speaking, we have the power
13 to issue interim reports or studies or particular
14 commentaries or whatever. But I can't, this morning,
15 commit ourselves, but what I can say is we will do
16 everything we can to visit Davis Inlet--

17 **CHIEF KATIE RICH:** Would
18 you be able to tell me the date you will be coming to Davis?

19 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
20 Well, we will be in touch long in advance with your
21 community to make sure that we will have an agreement on
22 how and when it will be acceptable and the best for
23 everybody when we will come here. So we won't come without

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1 consultation and discussion beforehand, but we'll try to
2 do so in the fall.

3 Thank you very much.

4 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

5 **ROBINSON:** I want to thank you for your presentation here
6 this morning. Did I hear you correctly here that when
7 you asked for the Minister to do an inquiry, you were
8 refused, and you raised money to do your own?

9 **CHIEF KATIE RICH:** That's
10 right.

11 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

12 **ROBINSON:** So you had to raise money to do your own inquiry.

13 **CHIEF KATIE RICH:** That's
14 right.

15 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

16 **ROBINSON:** I really commend you and your community. I
17 think that if there ever was a self-governing thinking,
18 I think that certainly evolved there.

19 **CHIEF KATIE RICH:**

20 Actually, it was the Innu nation that raised funds.

21 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

22 **ROBINSON:** Yes, that's what I'm saying, that's a
23 show--when people say "What's self-government?" I think

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1 that's a good demonstration of real, true self-government.
2 I also want to tell you that
3 in our first round of hearings in places where I've been--as
4 a Commissioner, we don't always travel together, we're
5 always going to different places--the issue that has been
6 brought up here with respect to alcohol and with respect
7 to the problems that you're having there has been raised
8 over and over again, and it's so very true that I think
9 our people are lost. I think they've been overcome by
10 other cultures and other dominance, and we've lost our
11 way, our spirituality, language, culture, which are the
12 most important things. You can't have a culture, you can't
13 be a nation, if you don't have the language, first, and
14 that's been lost through no fault of ours. And I think
15 this has created, in this day and age now, the generation
16 now is really lost and very confused, and now they're trying
17 to find a way back, and it's the elders, and there are
18 not too many elders left, that have to come back now and
19 to help our people. I think that they're calling it a
20 healing process. Alcoholism and all the problems, social
21 problems, that our people, and particularly our young
22 people, are going through, experiencing in their
23 communities now is like a sickness, and we need a healing

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1 process, and we need a healing process that's our own,
2 and I think we can only do that ourselves, and this is
3 what we've been hearing. Somebody in this country has
4 to realize that this is what's needed, and this is what
5 we have to do, and it's only us that can do that.

6 I share your views here,
7 and when I heard that, because I'm from Nova Scotia and
8 I'm a Mi'kmaq, and I heard and I watched what happened
9 in February, I had a very strong feeling that that's where
10 we should have gone in the first place. That's where we
11 should have been as a Commission. These are the places
12 we have to visit, so I hope that somebody from the
13 Commission will go to your community and do whatever we
14 can to support, because I really think you know what has
15 to be done. All you need is to be able to do it. So thank
16 you.

COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:

17
18 I, too, would like to thank you very much for your
19 excellent presentation. I think congratulations are in
20 order to you because you are the first Innu woman chief
21 in Labrador, and congratulations. And I think you
22 demonstrated this morning that the community of Davis Inlet
23 is in very capable hands under your leadership.

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1 I would also like to
2 commend the Innu nation for raising the funds on its own
3 to do something that it thought was necessary, and I think
4 there are no righter words than the ones you spoke which
5 says this time it will be a decision of the Innu, not of
6 the church or the government, and I wish you well. You
7 can rest assured that the Commission will take the
8 recommendation to come to Davis Inlet very, very seriously.

9

10

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

11 Thank you very much.

12

MR. BEN MICHEL: The next

13 speaker is George Rich. He's the executive assistant to
14 the vice-president of the Innu nation, and he's also a
15 counsellor on the [Muswoweno?] Band Council in Davis Inlet.

16 I'm not sure what issue he will be talking about.

17

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

18 Good morning.

19

MR. GEORGE RICH, INNU

20 **NATION AND DAVIS INLET BAND COUNCIL:** Good morning. I
21 only have a few things that I want to say that need to
22 be addressed. I think it's the right way to get attention.
23 You're saying that this Commission will be over sometime

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1 in 1994? I think that's going to be too late then.

2 I want to elaborate more
3 on what Katie was saying. In the past three or four days,
4 our kids have been sniffing gas and doing damage to a school
5 at Davis Inlet. We estimate the damage to be around
6 \$10,000 to repair it and have the windows shipped in and
7 all that. That's a sign that somebody is not listening
8 to us in both levels of governments.

9 We have approached
10 Premier Wells back in 1991. Our major concern of gas
11 sniffing was on the agenda. He was saying that he would
12 do everything in his power to help us out, but this was
13 coming from Premier Wells, which I don't believe what he
14 said any more.

15 The band council has been
16 working closely with the alcohol program for the past two
17 years, and I said we have been successful in identifying
18 our problems and the solutions.

19 One of the things that we
20 identified is to have a treatment centre in the country
21 where people were gathered before many years ago. I think
22 the kids in Davis Inlet right now, we're trying to send
23 out to a group home here in this community, which I don't

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1 think is the right approach to handle that problem, because
2 it's a band-aid solution. What we need are concrete
3 solutions, long-term solutions, and that solution, we
4 believe, is to have a treatment centre in the country,
5 and that's something that should be addressed right away
6 in both levels of government, because right now, we have
7 someone working with us. It seems to me that nobody is
8 listening, nobody is listening to us, because we are not
9 entitled to most of the Federal programs that are available
10 to other native communities across Canada.

11 Usually--referring to the court system
12 right now--usually when this persons, the gas-sniffers,
13 were locked up in jail, they were usually sent to St. John's
14 for psychiatric treatment, and nothing has been done to
15 them. We have a young fellow who stayed there at one of
16 those institutions in St. John's, and later, back in the
17 community, he had done the same thing again, and the next
18 thing that happens is he's going to court again and sent
19 to a correctional centre here in the Valley. And that's
20 not a solution. And that young fellow now is still
21 sniffing gas because there's doesn't seem to be access
22 to other native treatment centres across Canada, because
23 they seem to be full all the time, or maybe there's no

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1 person there, Jim Maloney I think, and I think that is
2 credible, and that could do a much more better job than
3 the other RCMP institutions or the other provincial police
4 training institutions.

5 We met with the Provincial
6 Minister of Justice and Clyde Wells just recently, a couple
7 of weeks ago, to discuss this issue. This seems to be
8 turned around, and they're saying that you are treated
9 as equals like any other people in this province, which
10 I don't believe is right. I think we really have different
11 opinions and different ideas from any other governments.

12 They want to pin down on us that this is my idea, you
13 do this and you do this. Apparently, we haven't heard
14 anything about that yet, and just to [graduates?] will
15 probably be in Davis Inlet within two or three weeks' time.

16 I think another thing here,
17 too, is the Innu have approached in the right direction,
18 like you've talked about the self-government now, because
19 we are trying to do what we think is best for our people
20 in our communities, like trained police officer, rather
21 than the RCMP or RNC doing that for us, because we don't
22 have the RNC, maybe that's what may be in the plans right
23 now to get those people in there, but there's always been

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1 a question about that, and that's one of the things that
2 I want to outline.

3 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
4 Thank you very much for your good presentation. I think
5 that your request in particular for a treatment centre,
6 an Innu-controlled treatment centre, is certainly
7 something we would want to look at. We realize that the
8 situation is a bit more difficult, specifically in
9 Newfoundland, because of the situation that the province
10 is facing as far as the Innu people are concerned and their
11 relationship with the Federal Government.

12 When we were in Makkovik,
13 we had been asked also to--they mentioned that they would
14 like to have a permanent officer of the RCMP, so it has
15 to do with the whole organization of the policing system.

16 What is the actual
17 population of Davis Inlet?

18 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** 500.

19 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
20 500. And the closest RCMP is--

21 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** Is 60
22 miles south in Hopedale, which also they cover Makkovik
23 and Postville, I think.

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1 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
2 And do you send people to the treatment centre near Goose
3 Bay?

4 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** No, here
5 across the river, I think there's probably around 30
6 families already went there in the last two or three years,
7 and what we don't have is a support system in the community.
8 Also, when somebody returns from the treatment centres,
9 they usually see their house is in a bad condition, this
10 causes them misery, and also there's no jobs available
11 in the community for them when they return. There's also
12 the problem that they usually turn around and drink again.
13 That's what usually happens.

14 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
15 In this community, do you have something like that, a
16 program--

17 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** Yeah, we
18 do have an alcohol program. Right now, our workers are
19 in a treatment centre right now in Kentville, Nova Scotia.
20 They're undertaking training.

21 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
22 But normally, what is the budget of your program and--

23 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** The

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1 budget, I think, is about the same as in Sheshatshiu.

2 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

3 As here.

4 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** As the
5 program here. And you have to look at the high cost of
6 living in northern Labrador, too, and the salaries are
7 not very good. You couldn't have someone working
8 full-time, 12 hours or 20 hours a day. You can't have
9 someone on 21,000 salary to go for that. What we've been
10 trying to do for the last four years now is trying to make
11 the salaries look much better than we had in the budget.

12 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

13 Thank you.

14 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

15 **ROBINSON:** Did you say you don't have the same access to
16 programs as other communities have?

17 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** Yes,
18 that's what I said. The other final is the health--social
19 work, we don't have access to social work. We don't have
20 education, we don't have the same--

21 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

22 **ROBINSON:** CHRs, and stuff like that, you don't have them.

23 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** We do

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1 have a little bit. We do have a health agreement here,
2 and we provide a CHR course. What we don't have is access
3 to other training programs that are available.

4 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

5 **ROBINSON:** That other bands have?

6 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** Yeah,
7 that other bands have.

8 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

9 **ROBINSON:** I wonder why? What is their reasoning for not
10 giving you the same kinds of programs? You've obviously
11 made the approach to them, did you?

12 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** Yeah, I
13 couldn't answer that, ma'am. Maybe someone in the Innu
14 nation could answer it. But one of the major problems,
15 I think right now, is the terms of union with the
16 Newfoundland and Canada--

17 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

18 **ROBINSON:** They're treating you differently than the rest
19 of Canada.

20 **MR. GEORGE RICH:** Yes.

21 They don't have reserves in Labrador. We're non-status.
22 We are not Newfoundlanders yet under federal--

23 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

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1 **ROBINSON:** And treatment centres--like, for instance, we
2 have two in Nova Scotia, one on the mainland and one in
3 Cape Breton. And you said somebody was training in--did
4 you say Kentville?

5 **MR. GEORGE RICH:**

6 Kentville, [Crosby?] House. It just recently started this
7 week, because I think that's the only one that is available
8 in the Maritimes. If you want to send someone next month,
9 it's going to take awhile to get them processed. Right
10 now, we are in a very desperate situation. We've got kids
11 who are heavy gas sniffers, and there are no treatment
12 centres available in Canada.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

14 **ROBINSON:** Well, I think you've got a very strong case
15 here for something. O.K., that's fine. Thank you.

16 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next

17 speaker would have been David Nuke, who is the
18 vice-president, but he has cancelled because he's going
19 to wait for it to happen in Davis Inlet. He's not here,
20 and I don't see Ann Marie Penashue, who would otherwise
21 have been the next speaker, so we'll go to the next one,
22 who is a an elder of this community here, Simon Michel.

23 **MR. SIMON MICHEL,**

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1 **COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE, [INTERPRETER]:** I'm not going
2 to say very much, I'm going to be brief, and what I'm going
3 to say is what I feel about how the government is treating
4 us through low-level training programs in our land. They
5 are polluting our land, and this is one of the things that
6 I don't like, and also the animals are paralysed, polluted.
7 Government is polluting our land.

8 If the government is really
9 trying to help the Innuit, then--how we live in the past.
10 We never interfere with the government, and that there
11 was no such thing as non-native people living--when the
12 non-native people found this land here, this is where they
13 lived.

14 Today, all the native
15 people across Canada are going to stand tall for themselves
16 and what they want to do with the resources in the land
17 and how they can profit from this land.

18 Everywhere in our land it
19 is that you stand tall, and treating us better. They're
20 not treating us any better. You're treating the native
21 people and also the Innuit people the same--unfair. When
22 we used to live in the early days, we lived peacefully
23 and in a healthy way.

In the Churchill Falls

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1 hydro, the dam was closed, and the trees were over-flooded.

2 When you look at the industry, the lumber industry, you're
3 preventing us from doing things. It is our land. You
4 should not prevent our doing things.

5 This is how I feel, this
6 is how I think. Everyone of the Innu people doesn't like
7 the low-level flying. It's wasting our lives. The water
8 is going to be contaminated, the water will be polluted.

9 This is all I have to say.

10

11

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

12 I just wanted to tell you that we are very happy that you
13 came to tell us how things have changed, and we hope that
14 we will be able to hear about what could be done to make
15 it a better place, and we understand that there have been
16 problems with development, with Churchill Falls, but the
17 low flying is the major issue.

18 I just wanted to thank you
19 for coming and telling us your view of the changes that
20 have occurred, and the difficulties that these changes
21 have brought to the community. We hope that we will be
22 able and we will be given an opportunity to hear about
23 what should be done to bring a better balance between the

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1 quality of life and the development that has occurred.
2 It's certainly true that what has happened with the
3 Churchill Falls with the low flying project has had a
4 profound effect on your life, and we hope that with better
5 understanding between aboriginals and non-aboriginals,
6 that some policy decisions would be able to be made in
7 consultation and in partnership in the future.

8 Thank you very much.

9 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next
10 speaker on the list is moi, me, so I guess I'll go to the
11 table.

12 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
13 Bienvenue, Monsieur Michel.

14 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** Thank you
15 for welcoming me, Mr. Chairman and fellow Commissioners.

16 I guess I'll be talking a
17 little bit about the situation that I have seen over the
18 years with regard to the dissemination and disintegration
19 and the social collapse of the many different peoples in
20 the North American continent.

21 I think it's valid for me
22 to say that I welcome you here today, and yet I have a
23 lot of reservations in the welcome that I give, simply

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1 because I think when you look at the history of the Innu,
2 because in 1965 when the community of Sheshatshiu was
3 built, and in that short span of years, and in the community
4 of Davis Inlet, in a very short span of years, as to how
5 well the oppressor have achieved to attain assimilation
6 on a people like ourselves. This is a language, I think,
7 that's not heard enough by the Federal Government, by the
8 representatives of the government, by the agents of the
9 government, at both levels of government, for all the
10 provinces and the two territories included. I think it's
11 important to state these things openly, honestly and very
12 much to the point.

13
14 You sit there as a
15 Commissioner and a judge, and so the language I think that
16 I'll be using, I'm sure you're very well aware of, because
17 I think your province, I don't know whether you're a
18 federalist or a Quebequois--I won't say nationalist--at
19 this point. But you sit there as a representative of the
20 Crown, I think is the best way to put it, and I think when
21 one is talking about justice, one is talking about social
22 order, the social welfare of a people, of a group of people,
23 such as the Innu, or the education of the Innu or the health
of the Innu.

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1 I think it's very fair to
2 say and very honest of me to say that everything that has
3 been imposed on us by colonialists has been very, very
4 harmful to the health, and not only to our health, but
5 to our educating our young as to who they are, because
6 the Innu number between 9,000 and 10,000 people. That's
7 not very much, but nevertheless it is and was once a great
8 nation, a nation that has never been understood or
9 recognized, simply because of the schemes and the
10 systematic growth violations of human rights that have
11 been committed by our oppressor, Canada, initially, Great
12 Britain.

13 I think it is also fair for
14 me to say that under resolution 15-14-15, sub-section 15
15 of the United Nations is a very appropriate one in this
16 case, and that is the granting of independence to colonial
17 peoples and countries, colonial countries and peoples.

18 I think what I'm expressing
19 here has been expressed throughout with many different
20 headings. One that's in the process right now which really
21 doesn't mean very much, but it sounds very good is
22 self-government. I don't know what the Federal Government
23 means by it, it won't define what it means. When I speak

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1 about a people's right of self-determination, I speak of
2 it in terms of the international communities meaning, and
3 that is that Canada has no right to make a choice for us
4 as to what our politics are going to be, as to what our
5 economics are going to be, as to what our education is
6 going to be, as to what our religion is going to be, and
7 to what we want to build ourselves culturally into. I
8 think Canada has destroyed that, and I might cite some
9 of the things that the chief of Davis Inlet cited earlier
10 of the social collapse that's happening there, and I can
11 honestly attribute that I think has a cause of colonial
12 mentality.

13 I think it's very important
14 that this Commission sets its standards, because the issue
15 is the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, as I see
16 it to be. I think it's very important that this Royal
17 Commission, in whatever hearings that they have, also take
18 their findings not only to the Canadian Human Rights, but
19 act as a special rapporteur to the United Nations so that
20 these can be dealt with at the United Nations forum, at
21 a global human forum, because these are gross violations
22 that I think the people are outlining as to what Canada
23 has committed against the many different peoples of the

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1 North American continent, and I will keep on referring
2 to it as such, because I think in terms of the land claims
3 policy, the government again is trying to mask itself so
4 that its good friends in the international community will
5 regard it as a respect of human rights, which I think is
6 on the contrary.

7 I think it's also very
8 important that I say a few of the things that I have written
9 here, and that is to say the debate that is on the Royal
10 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is not only profound,
11 but ridiculous, to the point of it being paternalistic,
12 colonial and oppressive. In today's reality, especially
13 after the breakdown of the evil East Bloc countries, it
14 is quite evident that democracy is more evil than that
15 of the Communists. At least we see here and learn of the
16 newly independent countries which were once a part of the
17 Soviet Union, albeit that they are not going very well,
18 but at least the people are making their choices, and
19 they're hopefully going to resolve their differences.

20 Historically, we know that
21 big empires do fall. No matter how small a people, they
22 must never give in to systematic oppression, suppression,
23 and colonial exploitation. Canada has not only attempted

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1 to assimilate us, but taken away our self-esteem and
2 dignity and pride as a people. The liberty of a people
3 taken away have always fallen, withered and died. There
4 are those of us who have been so assimilated that we can
5 no longer believe that we have the will to resist, but
6 believe that if we don't go along, we will lose everything.

7 The means to express our resistance has been "You are
8 breaking the law." That's a quote. Whose law? Are we
9 a people? Have we been conquered? If so, when and how?

10 In the 1945 Treaty, when the League of Nations was first
11 formed, conquest was totally erased. That is why I
12 say when and how. If not, how did Canada, the provinces
13 and the territories, gain control of our lands, resources,
14 sea, ice and air space? Can a country like Canada take
15 over lands, resources, sea, ice and air space of a small
16 populated people--is it just and right--with its show of
17 military might? Can a people like the Innu cease to exist
18 because they are told by a country that they have no rights
19 because they are protected by a military might country
20 like Canada? Will Canada allow me to tell my children
21 that they have no rights as Innu, but have rights as
22 Canadians? Will Canada allow me to speak to them of the
23 right of self-determination? Will Canada allow me to

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1 speak to my children of their language, culture, history
2 and race? Can Canada deny and deprive my children of their
3 language, culture, history, religion and race? If so,
4 why is it going to the extreme of having this Royal
5 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples? I say Canada cannot
6 do these things because the international law does not
7 allow any country to do these things, nor does the
8 international community favour these violations to be
9 committed against a people like ourselves.

10 Canada once again is
11 masking itself in the form of a Royal Commission to
12 legitimize its denying of a people's right of
13 self-determination and rightful place in the global human
14 community. Furthermore, it has and is seen as a respecter
15 of human rights by the international community because
16 we, as peoples of the North American continent, have not
17 educated the international community to the point of
18 exposing Canada of gross violations of human rights and
19 denial of the people's right of self-determination.

20 I can go on forever, but
21 I feel I can do more justice if I speak a little on the
22 panel of Commissioners we have here. And the way I would
23 like to start is, I used to watch cowboys and Indians movies

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1 where there were Indians being used as scouts for the
2 cavalry or the yellow bandannas, tracking Indians who had
3 escaped and didn't want to be in reservations so they would
4 be free people. I pray that there will be no more scouts
5 for the government to use so that we may be free. Don't
6 legitimize the government mask. Instead, expose them.
7 United, we are strong. At the time, the scouts probably
8 said to themselves we are doing the right thing by bringing
9 back other Indians who resist. Today, we see the wrong
10 in that. How are we going to say that today? I hope we
11 no longer are a scout for the government, because I think,
12 for us, I think I speak quite strongly of my personal
13 feelings as an individual, and I think a lot of people
14 right across this country feel that way, because they're
15 talking about self-government, but the ideology of
16 peoplehood and nationhood is not yet fully understood or
17 cannot be expressed in the language that can best be
18 understood by, in inverted commas, "the European norm."
19

20 For me, I am proud to be
21 Innu. At one time, I wasn't sure who I was, because of
22 my education and because of the assimilation machine that
23 I had gone through. I was confused, totally confused,

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1 as to who I was. I would look at my skin sometimes, it's
2 brown, and I would say I must be a brown face or something,
3 you know. But today, I think I know who I am. I know
4 where I belong. I know what my rights are, as far as the
5 contemporary international law is concerned.

6 I heard some ridiculous
7 arguments about the philosophy of myself. Just recently
8 on the national news, I heard why don't we give them a
9 bow and arrow and send them off into the wild. What a
10 stereotype, racist, rhetorical statement. If I were to
11 answer that, even if the Prime Minister of Canada were
12 to say that, as the Premier of the Province of Newfoundland
13 has just said about the report the [Muswoweno?] Band
14 Council that got out there a few days ago. What if an
15 Innu comes to St. John's, Premier Wells was saying, and
16 he says no, the laws don't apply to me here. I don't think
17 that was the issue. If the Prime Minister were to say
18 to me, I will give you a bow and arrow, and you get back
19 to your life the way it was, I would say thank you very
20 much, but I would return the favour, and I would tell him
21 take all the Europeans back to Europe.

22 And I think that's a very
23 sensible argument, because when Canada was still a colony

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1 of Great Britain, before it became Canada, and it was still
 2 under the control of the British North America Act, I think
 3 it's very important to say that the British had the very
 4 same problem in the Sahara situation, the Western Sahara
 5 situation, and they called it the Bluewater Doctrine.
 6 And the very same principle applies here. Great Britain
 7 is over there. Newfoundland is on an island. There's
 8 still the water, the blue water, which was a principle
 9 used for the Western Sahara to become an independent nation
 10 state.

11 Maybe you can tell me this
 12 is out of line, this is not the thing that we want. But
 13 as much as I respect Canada for what it has done for itself,
 14 and for its achievements as it ha built itself to the state
 15 it's in today, it's all a lie. It has built itself, its
 16 foundation, on lies.

17 At the time, we may have
 18 been very primitive, and as far as I can recall, even in
 19 1963, I think we were still, in the province of
 20 Newfoundland, and especially Quebec in the dispute of the
 21 Labrador boundary. The land was said to be "Terra
 22 [Nolius?]", which is a legal term, I think, to mean that
 23 nobody lives there, which meant, of course, that we were

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1 nothing, we were animals, we were savages. But we were
2 here. We are here now, today. It is not my fault that
3 Canada is in the crisis that Canada is in today, and I
4 have no sympathy at all for Canada in the situation it's
5 in.

6 Like I said, historically,
7 we have known that empires do fall. And I hope in the
8 very near future that the empire will fall in North America,
9 and that new nations will emerge, as they rightfully
10 should, and become a global human family, because I think
11 we can be damned good leaders in the fight against the
12 environment issues throughout the world, because we can
13 live as what was once thought to be bad, backward,
14 primitive, and I think we've going to be getting back to
15 what was once bad, backward and primitive. But I think
16 we can learn a lot from that, or otherwise, we'll all
17 destroy ourselves. I think we can become a great nation
18 and a good, honourable global human family.

19 Thank you.

20 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

21 Thank you very much, Mr. Michel, for presenting us, in
22 a forceful manner, with a good reflection on what are the
23 fundamental issues that have brought this Commission to

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1 and cured and strengthened, and that's the reason why we
2 need your participation. We need you not only to remind
3 us of what you told us, but also, I hope that you will
4 be able to give us a hand in terms of how we should start
5 to turn the things the way they should be in the future,
6 in the coming century.

7 So we thank you very much
8 again for your eloquent presentation, and we are certainly
9 going to use it as a backdrop or background for our hearings
10 here in Sheshatshiu. Thank you very much.

11 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** Thank
12 you. But I think when one is talking about equality, and
13 the Royal Commission being the sounding board as to how
14 we can have commonalities, I think we do have
15 commonalities, and I think we have to respect those
16 commonalities, not only as equals, but as peoples, a
17 nation-to-nation situation, and sovereign and sovereign,
18 because I think these are important.

19 That is why we have the
20 social collapse. We have seen that right throughout the
21 world where colonization has been the instrument of having
22 peoples being dispossessed of the lands and the very base
23 of which they subsist. And when assimilation plays a role,

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1 we see social collapse, death and violence and everything
2 else. I mean, not violence, necessarily, in the context
3 that we have seen in Mozambique or other countries that
4 have recently become independent, but there is a way, I
5 think, that death has already happened, and that is the
6 way of how India became an independent nation state from
7 Great Britain.

8 I think we have always
9 allowed Canada to do what it will on us, but I think it's
10 time we said look, we're adults, we're civilized, and
11 respect us as such and recognize our responsible role.
12 And if democracy is to work, it has to allow us to be that.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA**

14 **ROBINSON:** I want to thank you for your strong, eloquent
15 presentation. It's something, I think, that has to be
16 said, and it has to be said more often by our people, has
17 to be said to this Commission. And I assure you I'm not
18 going to be a scout, either.

19 When you talk about people
20 who their nationhood is not understood, you're so right
21 in that. It's not understood by Canadians, and it's not
22 understood by a lot of our own people, it's sad to say,
23 but that's the truth.

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1 I think what you've said
2 has hit the nail on the head, it's not being said enough
3 by our people, and I think we need to hear these things,
4 because it's something that I believe in, as a Micmac who
5 has been, as you say, colonized, ever since the early 1500s.
6 We've done well to survive, barely survive, and we almost
7 lost it, but we're there, and just coming back into the
8 nationhood that we started out to be back in the 1500s.

9 So we've had to go through
10 an awful lot. We've gone through every process of
11 assimilation that you can talk about in Canada, and
12 certainly we managed to survive. You end up having to
13 rely on the courts, like we did, and even with that, you
14 can't convince the rest of Canada of what you mean by
15 peoplehood and nationhood. And as you say, we need respect
16 and dignity, as a people and as a nation. That's being
17 changed by government attitude and by legislation and
18 policy, and it was almost lost.

19 But I'm certainly glad that
20 you made this presentation, and it will be recorded, and
21 I hope we hear more of these kinds of presentations, so
22 I thank you.

23 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** As I said,

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1 maybe I should remind you once again, as Commissioners,
2 that I only hope that you use this material, as
3 Commissioners, as Royal Commissioners, but take all these
4 grievances to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and
5 then furthermore, if necessary, take it to the Human Rights
6 Commission or the Human Rights Committee in either Geneva
7 or New York, because these are violations of human rights,
8 all the things that you will be hearing, so that they can
9 be properly registered in the global community.

10 Thank you.

11 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

12 I think it is time to adjourn for lunch now.

13 ---Hearing is recessed at 1226 hours

14 ---Upon resuming at 1353 hours

15 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next
16 person that's on the speaker's list is Kirk Lethbridge,
17 and he is with the Metis Association, and I'm not sure
18 what he is going to be talking about.

19 **MR. KIRK LETHBRIDGE,**

20 **LABRADOR METIS ASSOCIATION:** Good evening, ladies and
21 gentlemen. My name is Kirk Lethbridge, and I represent
22 the Labrador Metis Association. I would like to thank
23 the Royal Commission for coming to Labrador and giving

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1 us this opportunity to speak.

2 I would like everyone to
3 think back for a moment, if they will, back before
4 Christopher Columbus and before the Vikings--forgive me
5 if my voice shivers, O.K., I'm a little shy--when all
6 aboriginal nations were living in peace and harmony with
7 each other, and there was no such thing as poverty or
8 hunger. I know you know what I'm talking about, Mary.
9 No such thing as murder or prison or licenses or suicide
10 or war or rape or alcohol, a time when the people shared
11 their food, they danced and they laughed and sang and loved
12 together, and they worshipped together. From generation
13 to generation, they passed on their knowledge. They
14 developed their own traditions.

15 I'm not very good at
16 reading off a paper. It took me all night to write this.
17 I slept for about half an hour.

18 This was aboriginal
19 self-government. It was around maybe 100,000 years. Who
20 knows? Certainly 10,000 years before the Europeans came.
21 And today, as we sit here in this gymnasium, we have,
22 through the Royal Commission, the era of the Canadian
23 Government. Well, here's my message to the Canadian

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1 Government. This is why you are here. We demand the right
2 to decide our own destiny. We demand the right to prove
3 that we are capable of managing our own affairs. Let us
4 decide what we want taught in our schools. Let us decide
5 how to manage the salmon fishery and the caribou and the
6 forests. Let us set up our own structure where we can
7 help our people to stay out of prison, or can teach our
8 young people that sniffing gasoline is not the answer,
9 suicide is not the answer, a structure of government that's
10 built on our own traditions, where elders are brought back
11 into their rightful place as the real leaders and given
12 the respect that they deserve.

13 All of us together, status,
14 non-status, reserve, off-reserve, Metis, Inuit, women,
15 children--give us the right to decide how to fix our broken
16 homes, how to help our poor and our sick, whether they're
17 sick mentally, physically or spiritually.

18 I could go on for hours
19 about this, but I'll keep it a little short because I don't
20 want to take up all your time. I was told I had ten minutes,
21 so I thank the Innu nation for giving me the ten minutes.

22 I didn't speak yesterday because I was too shy, but I
23 think it's too important not to say something.

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1 I'm an aboriginal person,
2 a member of the Labrador Metis Association. I'm on the
3 board as of the last election. This is an unfunded
4 organization. Everything we do is done through much hard
5 and dedicated work by volunteers. My reasons for
6 involvement, I believe, are quite obvious. I wish to help
7 my people, am committed to helping my people. And by "my
8 people," I mean all aboriginal groups. I don't care where
9 they live. I don't care what language they speak. It
10 makes no difference to me. We're all the same. We're
11 all from the same tree.

12 I had a dream about
13 attending university and coming back to help organize some
14 of our Innu government, and by this, I also mean territorial
15 status for Labrador. I realize there's no way I can attend
16 any college anywhere because I'm not considered to be an
17 aboriginal person by the province of Newfoundland, and
18 I don't have any money. This is not easy to swallow, but
19 I'm hoping that by the time my children are old enough,
20 there will be a system of self-government in place for
21 them to go to school.

22 I respectfully ask the
23 Commission to tell Ottawa that we're not going to stop,

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1 we're not going to go away. We demand our rights as the
2 first peoples of this land. They can bury us at the bottom
3 of some file in an office or some pile of rubbish somewhere,
4 but we'll be back again, and we'll be back again, and we'll
5 be back again. My personal determination will rub off
6 on my children and their children. Some day, all
7 aboriginal people in Labrador, and indeed Canada, will
8 be under the same flag.

9 That's all I have to say.

10 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

11 Thank you very much. I think that it was certainly very
12 useful for us that you decided to come and tell us what
13 you wanted to tell us. Thank you.

14 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** I would
15 like to say that the next person on the agenda is Pien
16 Penashue. He's not here yet, so we'll go down to the next
17 person on the list, and we'll come back to Pien whenever
18 the occasion presents itself. We'll go to Elizabeth
19 Penashue now, who is an Innu spokesperson and an Innu elder.

20 **MS. ELIZABETH PENASHUE**

21 **[INTERPRETER]:** I want to thank you for inviting me here
22 to make my presentation. It has been many years since
23 we're been here occupying our land since government have

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1 come to the Innu people, not only here, but elsewhere too
2 across Canada, all Innu here and in the Quebec north shore.
3 Every Innu community knows what has been taking place
4 through the governing of the Innu people.

5 Government has changed a
6 lot in our communities. Our children will live quite
7 differently than they used to. Our lives have changed
8 because of the destructive things that Newfoundland and
9 the provincial and federal governments are doing to our
10 land and to the people and to the culture. It is very
11 important and well respected by the Innu people for the
12 wildlife and the culture of the Innu people.

13 And everything that
14 governments do to the land, they never asked permission
15 from the Innu people in our communities. They just go
16 ahead and do it. And the damming of the rivers, destroying
17 our trees. I know the big projects here, one of them the
18 low-level flying on our land. Many times, I think, and
19 other Innu people think, that this is the we use for
20 hunting, not to attract low-level flying or other military
21 activities on our land.

22 The Innu people are not
23 being heard. They are being ignored, and also they're

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1 looking at us as animals. They don't respect us. They
2 don't respect our rights and our culture. The first thing
3 the white man says, they go ahead and listen to them instead
4 of listening to the Innu people themselves.

5 The low-level flying used
6 to be not here in Labrador, but it used to be elsewhere,
7 and then we've seen on TV news, the crash, many crashes
8 the military had in the past, and now they come here and
9 do their practice in the interior of Labrador. It didn't
10 take long for the white man to transfer their activities
11 from their countries to here in Labrador, to do their
12 low-level training.

13 Everybody wants to live the
14 way they're supposed to in their countries, and we want
15 to do the same as well. Everybody should be treated
16 equally, not favour other people. All people should be
17 treated equally, the Metis, the Innu and the Inuit. They
18 don't respect the Innu people and the Inuit people here
19 now, in Labrador. They are probably the ones that are
20 treated worst.

21 It is very hard for us, what
22 the government is doing to our land, destroying it and
23 destroying the wildlife. The government doesn't see what

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1 this destruction has been doing to the land and to the
2 animals, and they don't experience because it's not there.

3 We're the people that are living on the land and living
4 off the land, so we're the ones that are experiencing the
5 difficulties that we're encountering now.

6 Everybody knows and has
7 experienced what government is doing to not only us, but
8 other Innu people and Indian people across Canada as well.

9
10 We feel this is just the
11 beginning because in the future, it will get worse. What's
12 going to happen to our grandchildren and our children and
13 the people that will be in the future? How is it going
14 to affect them?

15 We've been struggling over
16 many years, and we'll continue to struggle, and the
17 government just won't stop and say this is the end. They
18 are destroying the Innu people and their way of life.
19 The government can't come to terms to stop what it is doing.

20 They are destroying the culture and the Innu way of life.

21 In our efforts, we have tried everything in our power
22 to stop what is taking place on our land, and also to stop
23 whatever is coming in the future.

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1 When the process was going
2 on on the airstrip in Goose Bay with our land, and why
3 we were taking into jail, because we occupied our land.
4 This is our land, and we try to show it by struggling
5 to maintain our land, and it has been many years we've
6 lived on this land, and other people should recognize that
7 we are the rightful owners of this land.

8 We were saddened, and it
9 is very hard for us to be in jail, because of the rightful
10 thing that we did, but not in the eyes of the law. It
11 was hard for us to stay in jail because of our beliefs.
12 We were fighting to maintain our land.

13 We felt it was a good thing
14 we did, and other people didn't realize the hardship we
15 went through by going in jail because of the strong beliefs
16 we have. We had a lot of support. Some were in custody
17 in Goose Bay, and some were elsewhere in the Island, I
18 think it was Stephenville. During the incarceration, we
19 gathered together and we would talk about why are we being
20 incarcerated, why are we in jail. We did the right thing,
21 but not in the eyes of the law. It was very hard for us
22 during the incarceration period. We saw our children
23 through the windows of the jail. What would the government

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1 think or other people think if they had to go in jail when
2 they didn't do anything wrong? How would they feel? We
3 knew we did nothing wrong by going in jail, and we didn't
4 know why we were in jail, because we did the rightful thing.

5 We kept strong in there with other people that were in
6 there along with us. By taking us to jail, they are trying
7 to scare us, trying to put a stop to our activities. But
8 that's not going to stop us. We believe in what we believe
9 in, and we'll stick with that. We'll stay with our
10 beliefs. While in jail, we weren't treated right. We
11 were treated unfair, and the meals weren't good.

12 Long ago, why the Innu have
13 been so strong with their beliefs is because in early years,
14 this is how we got our clothing, from the caribou skins.

15 And today, we still follow our old ways. We still use
16 caribou moccasins, caribou hides, and now the government
17 is trying to take that away from us.

18 Years ago, we hunted
19 freely, our grandfathers and fathers hunted freely, and
20 now we can't do that, because the government has put a
21 stop to that. Not only are we not allowed to hunt the
22 caribou, but we're also not allowed to hunt other game
23 as well, and sometimes the Innu people are being harassed

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1 by wildlife officers, their guns and other stuff are being
2 confiscated, including caribou. Rifles and shotguns are
3 very important to the Innu, because now, if an Innu person
4 gets caught, that is being taken away. If they take the
5 rifles, how are the Innu going to hunt? They're trying
6 everything in their power to stop us from living our Innu
7 life in the bush.

8 It's very hard now, and
9 we're saddened by the government regulations, what we have
10 to put up with. In the early days, we didn't have to put
11 up with any of this. There was no such things as
12 regulations, government regulations, in the bush, because
13 of hunting and living the way we used to live.

14 The Innu didn't change the
15 way they live, or haven't changed. It is the government
16 that are changing us, that wants us to live the way they
17 live, but we can't do that, we have to maintain our way
18 of living as well. If they hadn't bothered with the people
19 in our communities in the early days, we would still have
20 what we had in the past. And now it's different. We can't
21 live the way we used to live, and a lot has been taken
22 away, a lot has been destroyed through the governments.

23 There have been a lot of

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1 changes, a lot of things brought in by the white man, such
2 as alcohol and other stuff that is destroying us very
3 slowly. In the early days, there was no such thing as
4 alcohol, and there was no such thing as houses being burnt
5 down. There was no such thing as the problems that we
6 are encountering now in our communities. You wouldn't
7 have heard or seen what happened in February when we lost
8 six children in the community of Davis Inlet because of
9 alcohol related. There was no such thing as people going
10 in jail, people taking pills and other substances, as are
11 in Canada now, and there was no such thing in the early
12 days when we lived in the past, but now it's changed.
13 Now there are courts, people taking pills and abusing
14 alcohol.

15
16 And now I am going to tell
17 you about how there is a lot of people who went into the
18 bush in the interior of Labrador, and they can't live a
19 normal way. You hear stories of people can't sleep because
20 of that, a lot of low flying and a lot of other stuff.
21 How can the Innu survive in the interior when there is
22 low-level flying going on from dusk to dawn?

23
24 There was an elderly woman
25 that died in the bush, and she was terrified of the

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1 low-level jets. Every time she would hear jets flying
2 over, she would crouch over or crouch down because of the
3 noise that the jet produces. I've seen and other Innu
4 people have seen the elderly lady, how terrified she was,
5 and how terrified children were. Every time there was
6 a test flight, she would think that there had been shooting
7 of a gun or a blast because of that noise.

8 Now the Innu are afraid
9 what government has done to the Inuit people because
10 they're afraid of going in the bush because of low level
11 flying and that everything is changing in our life because
12 of the government deception.

13 Government should be
14 satisfied now that they have been destroying our way of
15 life and they're still doing, this would put a stop to
16 it, this would realize what damage they are doing to us.

17
18 I want to thank you for
19 having me here to make my presentation. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

20
21 I would like to thank you very much for meeting with us
22 and sharing your experience and your concern. It has been
23 of great help to us. Thank you again.

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**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**1 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**2 I share with Mr. Dussault the extension of thanks for
3 a presentation you gave.4 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** Mr.5 Chairman, the next person on the list is Jack Penashue
6 who is an individual I guess speaking on education and
7 possibly on behalf of the youth probably. Jack Penashue.8 **MR. JACK PENASHUE:** My
9 name is Jack Penashue and I want to speak on the perspective
10 of the young generation people.11 I want to talk about the
12 education. This is from the personal experience that I
13 had from coming to school Pennamin MacKenzie, in the high
14 school. I would like to talk about the Innu culture and
15 how the system of the school was handed out to me or put
16 out to me forwarded by the high school or the school itself.17 From my perspective from
18 learning the school system I was taught not by the Innu
19 culture or by my own culture. I was taught by different
20 cultures. I think I know of lot of cultures of different
21 worlds but none of mine were taught of my own cultures.22 I was taught about Newfoundland culture, which is not
23 my own culture at all. I can tell you different types

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1 of nets, boats and all that kind of stuff, but, you know,
2 I think from young people or young generation today tends
3 to think that the white system or the cycle or they're
4 caught up in a cycle that they think it's a good way of
5 life. You know, this is the way to live. That's how I
6 was brought up. I thought my culture was the enemy, the
7 bad way of living. But I think there should be more
8 emphasis or more study put in to the Innu culture into
9 the school or school systems because young people today
10 have a tendency to drop out in high schools. That is when
11 they're in the age of 14, 15, 16. Like when I was growing
12 up there were five classmates that were mine, and none
13 of us graduated because we were taught just the white
14 system--we were up in the cycle and I like to say that,
15 you know, how would I say this. But if more--it was like
16 a state of confusion from pulls from different cultures,
17 from the white and the Innu. And I think today from the
18 young people and the young generation there is a tendency
19 to find that--they tend to think that this the good way
20 of life of the white system, the white culture, which it
21 isn't. That's when I found out that in high school when
22 I was 14 or 15. Then I learned my culture and then I was
23 there and put there and didn't know what to do. If I was

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1 white, if I was more Innu or more white. This is where
2 the education is lacking.

3 The system is lacking of
4 the Innu culture and, you know, it's really hard to find
5 out when you're 14 or 15 to think that all of a sudden
6 you are an Innu person and you have beliefs, and different
7 beliefs from different people or different, you know, from
8 the whit system, you know, it's really different.

9 Like I have some solutions
10 of this education. I think that there should be more Innu
11 culture taught in high schools and there should be more
12 person to personal thing going with teachers and students
13 which they should bind together, not just from the school
14 or education system, but also outside. They should tend
15 to--the teachers or the people who want to learn the Innu
16 culture should have the advantage to learn the Innu culture
17 and get a credit, get accredited for a credit for that.

18 You know, the--what I mean the white system in the school,
19 thought I had this all in my mind but-- It's really hard
20 to speak out from what's in your mind and what's in your
21 heart and, you know, there's a tendency to mix them up
22 sometimes.

23 Like how do I--for me

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1 brought up in the system I have a tendency to--and I found
2 out also from young people, tendency to get into trouble
3 a lot. Because this is the reason--the reason for this
4 for some people is the state of confusion, not knowing
5 where you are. Also I would like to say from the parents'
6 perspective that we weren't--they weren't even taught also
7 how to--how the young people, how the system is set up,
8 you know. They weren't even taught, they weren't--they
9 should have given the lesson of how the white system works
10 and the parents did not even know the--we were just ordered
11 to go to school, which is--we weren't, we did not know
12 what to do. We were just ordered to go to school. We
13 were told that this is the way of living, you know, it's
14 a good way of living but it wasn't, you know. I think
15 there should be more looked into with the education system
16 between the cultures. Thanks.

17 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

18 Thank you, very much. It's always good to hear from young
19 people. Thank you.

20 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** Did you
21 want to ask him any questions or--

22 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

23 Before I begin I'd like to say I'm really glad to be

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1 in Labrador, no one knows but myself how glad I am to be
2 here. And I'm particularly glad to see a high school
3 friend of mine just walk in. Hi, Kenny, it's been a long
4 time. I'm really glad that, you know, you're
5 participating in these hearings. I think public education
6 is a very important element of these hearings and I'm glad
7 to see as many people participate as possible.

8 Jack, I'd like to thank you
9 very much for your excellent presentation. I'd like to
10 ask you a question about--you said that the kids drop out
11 of high school at the age of 14 or 15 and I'm just wondering
12 is there a lot of kids who drop out of school and if there
13 are a lot, why do you think they drop out of school?

14 **MR. JACK PENASHUE::** When
15 I say, because it's a state of confusion. There is a lack
16 of information of the Innu culture, you know. When do
17 they get to the age of understanding and when they're
18 growing up you have a tendency to you know all this white
19 system then all of a sudden you're given this system of
20 the Innu culture. You have a tendency to have a state
21 of confusion where you stay, where you belong. And all
22 of a sudden the white system essentially to describe as
23 a bad thing now. I think there should be more a level

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1 of cultures be taught, not just this is it and you should
2 learn, you know, there should be a tendency to be levels
3 on both cultures, be taught in both cultures.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

5 Thank you, very much. Do the parents--what do the
6 parents tell their kids about school? Do they say you
7 should finish school, that you should get a job or that
8 you should learn how to live of the land?

9 **MR. JACK PENASHUE:** This
10 is where they were told also that their students or children
11 have--like for me I was told from personal experience I
12 was told that you will have a good job, you will have a
13 lot of money, you will live as a white person, it's a good
14 way of life, which it isn't. This is what I was taught.

15 Which I did not know they were also told also like from
16 now growing up they were told that they had to get the
17 children to go to school. They were put in that position
18 also to get those students into school. They were not
19 given any--no choices to get the kids to go to school or
20 to get the kids to go to the country with them.

21 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

22 Thank you very much.

23 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** Okay.

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1 The next person on the list is--it says here but I've told
2 that Francis won't be able to make his presentation at
3 this time. So in his place I will put David Nuke. He
4 is who will be talking about the justice system I think.

5 Mr. David Nuke.

6

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

7 Good afternoon.

8

MR. DAVID NUKE: Good

9 afternoon. One of the things I would like to discuss with
10 the panel here is the judicial system within the province.

11 I'd like to get my things together here. My name is David
12 Nuke and I am a Innu.

13

First of all, I would like
14 to welcome the members of the panel here in our home land.

15 One of the things I would like to address is the justice
16 system if there is any.

17

Justice has not been served
18 to this society in terms of incarcerations by being
19 transferred to an institution from the community. I would
20 like to address this to you, panel, for you to take my
21 submission very seriously. Maybe if I can say it on behalf
22 of the Innu who have served time in prison, which I am
23 one of them.

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1 I was sentenced to a prison
2 11 years ago for committing or breaching the old laws.
3 My terms was 11 months. But due to parole I was released
4 on a conditional basis which I was given a parole at an
5 early stage. I did not finish the 11 months. It was about
6 11 years ago. I am not talking about the political
7 incarcerations I've been getting due to protests and so
8 on.

9 Over the years I have
10 observed the justice system and how it treats my people
11 politically, socially and culturally and how it has failed
12 them. Prior to my observation I have always felt the
13 system was there to protect our interests. Anyway here
14 is what I have to say or present to you. For example,
15 just to get to the point where what I want to discuss here
16 with the panel is that would it be possible, say for
17 example, to try to modify the judicial system in a manner
18 that the parties involved benefit from it. You see what
19 I'm trying to say here is that the laws that we breach
20 are not our laws. The institutions we are put into are
21 not our institutions. If all three parties were to work
22 together, the system, the Innu and so on, what ways and
23 means can all three parties benefit from it. For example,

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1 when an [Imik?] or a defendant is sentenced to a prison
2 he is then considered as an ex-con once released. But
3 once that ex-con is released, he's a double criminal in
4 my view because you don't know and you don't learn about
5 your culture in prison, in an institution. You hear about
6 crime and you feel the discrimination within the system.
7 That leaves an ex-con as a double criminal once released.
8 I'm here talking about the summary conviction offences,
9 not an indictable offence, such as murder, rape, arson
10 or whatever. I am talking about the summary convictions
11 such as B&E or disturbance or whatever they may classify
12 as a summary conviction. Would it be possible, would it
13 be beneficial for the a defendant to be sentenced to
14 [nutrame?] to a country where he or she knows best. To
15 practise that kind of a system would alleviate crime rate,
16 the alcohol abuse, in my view. If the elders--if the
17 committee were to work together to try to implement that
18 kind of a system.

19 To carry on with my
20 presentation I will give you an example. If I was to be
21 incarcerated today serving a time of one year, 12 months,
22 the Department of Justice would spend \$126 a day in the
23 institution to feed me, to clothe me an whatever they may

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1 provide in the institution. Multiply that 126 times 365
2 days a year comes up to \$45,990. What better ways and
3 means can Canada or can the system try to implement a better
4 program for the aboriginal nation of this country. Canada
5 is now talking about self-government to the aboriginal
6 groups across the country. Canada now recruits aboriginal
7 judges, aboriginal police officers, aboriginal court
8 workers, and aboriginal lawyers. What about the system?

9 The system has failed the Innu, in my view, for so many
10 years. With the implementation of the Innu guidelines
11 and working with the Innu in trying to better the community
12 or better the individual. It will be better in my view
13 not to aculturate the inmate in your culture and brainwash
14 the inmate into your system. It's a failure to your system
15 and just a failure to us.

16 The kind of system I would
17 like to see be in place for the Innu is the kind of system
18 I mentioned. The amount of money you spend to incarcerate
19 somebody is a waste of money in my view. It pays a judge.
20 It pays the police. It pays the guards. It pays the
21 lawyer. It pays the prosecutor. Is that the kind of games
22 you play economically with the Innu? Is that your source
23 of economic development?

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1 And I would like to thank
2 you.

3 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
4 Are you finished?

5 **MR. DAVID NUKE:** Yes.

6 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
7 Okay. Good. Thank you very much for your presentation.
8 I think it is very important that we benefit from the
9 experience and thinking of people like you. The justice
10 system has been studied tremendously in this country by
11 many commissions of inquiries. In Manitoba, in Nova
12 Scotia. The Law Reform Commission of Canada has also
13 studied the justice system.

14 What we have to address is
15 the question of the necessity for a different system.
16 A system that would--when we speak about sentencing, it's
17 the easiest part, I think, for one that could be changed
18 and adapted to a situation. But I understood from what
19 you said at the beginning that the major--you didn't see
20 a distinction for the major crimes. You were talking about
21 summary offences, not indictable offences, and in this
22 area certainly that the way we could come back or design
23 a system that would be more adaptive and more productive

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1 and that would avoid the alienation that occurs when
2 somebody goes into a jail would certainly be of great help
3 for many, many aboriginal people in this country.

4 So just what I want to say
5 is that justice is a major concern for this Commission.
6 We are going to have an opportunity to see how it goes
7 with self-government. Not only the justice system but
8 it's part of a larger picture and, again, if you have
9 additional thoughts or ideas to give us we will be back
10 in Labrador or you could always get in touch with us.
11 We have an 800 line in Ottawa and we feel that it is very
12 important that we hear as much as possible on the justice
13 system and not only its failure but how it could be designed
14 to avoid the failures of the past. Thank you.

15 **MR. DAVID NUKE:** When you
16 said the studies are being done under the justice system
17 for the aboriginal nations all I have to say is that I
18 have a son who's 18 months old. I'm 32 years old. I hope
19 my son won't be sitting here at the age of 32 talking about
20 the same thing I'm talking about.

21 And when you said you'll
22 be back for another hearing I was hoping you would I won't
23 be back because things will be done from now on.

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1 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
2 Well, we hope that not long will be soon and when I mentioned
3 that we would come back it's in terms of the dialogue we
4 have entered into and this particular process. But
5 obviously action is need in the justice area and so thank
6 you.

7 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**
8 I'd like to thank you as well. Just one question. When
9 we went to St. John's and visited the Inuit inmate in Her
10 Majesty's Penitentiary they said that there's absolutely
11 no opportunity to have any cultural activities. There's
12 no one who speaks Inuktitut in that facility.

13 And I'm wondering is there
14 a difference with the Labrador Correctional facility do
15 you know?

16 **MR. DAVID NUKE:** Well,
17 there are family members in this building and I should
18 not probably mention names but there was an Innu who worked
19 with the system. And I really supported the Innu who are
20 working for the system but then he had to resign for
21 cultural reasons. And I believe that the system did not
22 fit him in in such a way that he felt he would be fitted
23 in. I'm not saying that the more we recruit RCMP, the

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1 more we recruit judges, the more we recruit social workers,
2 the more we recruit workers will not solve the problem.

3 The problem needs to be
4 changed. The justice system needs to be modified and
5 changed for the benefit of all parties.

6 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** I don't
7 know whether that was finished or there were questions,
8 but anyway I will say that the next person on the list
9 is Jean-Pierre Ashini and he's an individual in the
10 community of Sheshatshiu. I'm not sure what he's going
11 to be talking about.

12 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
13 Good afternoon.

14 **MR. JEAN-PIERRE ASHINI:**
15 My name is Jean Ashini. I'm here to inform the Royal
16 Commission regarding the low level flying that takes place
17 in [Tsena?] or Labrador, so-called Labrador.

18 I am a hunter and I was
19 picked for the Innu hunters as well. That I spent about
20 16 years in the country with my family. And since those
21 low-level flights have taken place in the past ten years
22 that they have real impact with the noise that they make
23 and we use and occupy the land every year - every spring

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1 and fall.

2 Since those flights have
3 taken place that they really have startle effects on
4 children as well. They fly as low as 15 to 20 feet about
5 the ground and the noise that they make is really
6 devastating for the children, the old people and I guess
7 they have an impact on the animals as well because we cannot
8 live normally and we cannot hunt because those jets that
9 they make, you know, it's unbearable. And they even fly
10 at night around 12 o'clock at night and my children are
11 really scared. Sometimes they cannot sleep because of
12 those jets, and in the past ten years that the animals
13 are thin, you know, they used to be fat, but I'm not saying
14 that I'm blaming low-level flying but certainly there is
15 something wrong with the animals. Patridges are declining
16 and caribou. They move a lot.

17 It's kind of hard to
18 describe what is happening in the country. What I want
19 to inform the Royal Commission is that I wish that low-level
20 flying would be stopped and we don't want our land to be
21 destroyed because of money that the business people have
22 brought into Goose Bay.

23 We want to live on our land.

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1 We want to govern ourselves and our land and I do spend
2 a lot of time in the country and we like the land. We
3 like to spend a lot of time in the country and I guess
4 that's how that whole community is thinking about - the
5 land that we're occupying. And I guess that's all I have
6 to say. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

7
8 Thank you very much for your presentation on a subject
9 that is obviously of great importance for people of this
10 community. When you mentioned that you've noticed
11 throughout the years the changes--some changes occurring
12 and you be careful in saying, well, I don't know exactly
13 where it comes from but certainly it wasn't like this
14 previously.

15 In fact what was the---what
16 has been the effect on your going to the country? You're
17 saying that you abstain--you don't go as often as you would
18 like to. Is it that you--because of the--that the animals
19 are moving? Because they're different or does it prevent
20 you to--and to what extent does it prevent you to do what
21 you would like to do? Could you just expand?

MR. JEAN-PIERRE ASHINI:

22
23 Well it's kind of hard to describe, you know. When you

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1 see those jets fly low, 15 feet above the ground, with
2 nine jets, you know, 17 times within one hour it's
3 unbearable and I guess it's kind of hard for us to live
4 with the noise that they make, you know, and I guess about
5 two years ago, I've seen dead fish float ashore. You know,
6 I don't know what's wrong with them. There's no marks
7 on them. And that's the kind of thing that--like I don't
8 know how to blame, you know--it's kind of hard for us to
9 leave the country. I can't think of--

10

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

11 Thank you very much.

12

MR. JEAN-PIERRE ASHINI:

13 Thank you.

14

MR. BEN MICHEL: The next

15 person on the list and the last person before coffee break,
16 I guess, is Miss Mary Ann Michel.

17

MRS. MARY ANN MICHEL

18 **[INTERPRETER:** One of the things I want to say for the past
19 is how the government is treating us. How come the
20 government is sending the white man?

21

Ever since when I was

22 young, Ben Michel was only four years old, when the white
23 government was after us. That he was always--after our

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1 land. God gave the government to live separately. God
2 gave us land individually. Differently. He said how come
3 the government is preventing us to live because no native
4 people are given land to live separately--that we were
5 each given us land separately.

6 He said we all know where
7 God is coming from. And he said how come? He said how
8 come we are being treated differently? He said to bring
9 the non-native people, he said as far as I can remember
10 when I was young, I wasn't old, and ever since he said
11 how many more years can I sit? How many more times can
12 I sit? She said as well as I know that as long as I sit
13 here I'm going to die. She said I will never get back
14 the things that I will ask for. She said I will never
15 get the land back.

16 He said you are giving us
17 differently and he said you're treating us poorly. He
18 said how come? He said this is where the misery comes--he
19 said when I gave up my kids to be taught--to teach, to
20 live healthy, to live normally he says as far as I know
21 now my kids are all poor. He said as far as I know that
22 my kids live normally. It's now my grandkids want to live
23 poorly.

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1 He said how about my other
2 generation. He said what's going to happen to them? He
3 said these are the things that I see - misery. He said
4 I have thought--he said if I have never thought or think
5 this way my kids would never live this way nor my grandkids.
6 She said we are poor. We
7 are sad. She said look at these things--look at this.
8 This is how I walk from City of Quebec. We travel by canoe,
9 settees. Suddenly he said we're using snowshoes. He said
10 we never used the airplanes before. That's when the
11 government never fight with our land. She said the
12 snowshoes is more like our land. This is the things how
13 we use, we walk where we find food. Where we find food,
14 she said, we kill ten caribou, she said. She said these,
15 we never used the money. We shared the food individual
16 to other Innu and also the man, sharing the things with
17 other Innu people. She said when you buy things, she said
18 people have \$40 a month, she said, so you can only buy
19 a small amount of groceries, she said, when there's a high
20 cost of living. She said when you buy sugar and tea, she
21 said, how can anyone survive even though the Innu were
22 sharing with one another. How can we survive on \$40 a
23 month? She said, not only that about the clothing. If

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1 he or she doesn't go to the clothing store when clothes
2 are very expensive, she said, for sure in this community
3 we are very poor. Where there's a high cost of health,
4 crisis, she said when we're sick, we were always given
5 drugs. She said when we're in the country, we were never
6 sick. There was no such thing as illness. It is since
7 we live in the communities that we heard everybody has
8 a different kind of illness. She said how long and how
9 many years can I sit here to bring the white government,
10 to bring another non-native people here, to stand outside
11 the wood, the bows to make for the tent. My drugs, she
12 said, for the things that I see when I'm in the country.
13 She said just take a look. She said when I go outside
14 I see little kids who are poor. She said when I wake at
15 night I look through the window and I see these little
16 kids wandering around in the dark. She said then right
17 away, I see myself how we look like in our land. The kids
18 go to school. Kids sleep. She said this is how I see
19 my grandkids. She says I want you--this is all I want
20 to say and I thank you very much for coming here and I'm
21 very glad you're here and it's an opportunity for me to
22 say that the non-native government are still in our land.
23 What will God do to the white government? Will God punish

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1 these non-native people? She said we all know that God
2 is here. She said this is how I feel. This is how I feel
3 that God will punish me and it's up to me. She said, I
4 would be afraid if God would control over the land and
5 I would be afraid. She said this is all I want to say.

6 I'm sure there's other people who want to talk.

7 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**
8 Thank you very much for a speech that certainly is coming
9 from the heart and has been very effective. Merci, thank
10 you.

11 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next
12 person on the agenda to speak is our president of the Innu
13 nation, Peter Penashue.

14 **MR. PETER PENASHUE, INNU**
15 **NATION:** First of all, I'd like to thank the commissioners
16 for being here to listen to our people. At times it is
17 very hard for our people to speak from the heart, especially
18 with cameras rolling, strangers coming in to talk to us,
19 different people coming to hear what we have to say. And
20 this is certainly not the first time that we've done it.
21 We've spoken to many different groups here and abroad
22 about our situation here. And I guess the most that has
23 come out of the process at this point is that more and

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1 more people are understanding who the Innu are and are
2 history and our situations.

3 As I'm sure the people who
4 have spoken today have told you, since Canada has come
5 to us, our lives have been very difficult and sometimes
6 we live in a world of chaos. It's very important that
7 I think the commissioners understand that we didn't come
8 to Canada. Canada came to us. Out of that came Canada
9 has created dependency from our people. They have become
10 dependent on government social assistance, have become
11 dependent on social welfare, social services, band
12 councils and many other agencies that have been provided
13 for the community. We have lost all control of our own
14 lives and I think Davis Inlet have really pointed out
15 clearly, we've lost control of our own children and our
16 own people and our own future. We don't decide. Someone
17 else decides in Ottawa or in St. John's how we're going
18 to live.

19 For us, I think my
20 interpretation of the history is that when the fur traders
21 came in, it was an understanding that we had with the fur
22 traders. We traded with them. We had access to supplies
23 that we never had before. We became dependent on them.

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1 We had access to guns, supplies like tea, sugar, which
2 we became adapted to. But because our people were nomadic
3 and moved around in the country from one place to another,
4 the Europeans didn't have that much influence over our
5 people because the trading posts were in one place and
6 our people would trade there.

7 The real change for us
8 really happened, I guess, around the forties when the base
9 started getting built here and then later on we had our
10 lands and our territory brought into the Canadian
11 Confederation without our consent. First, in 1927, the
12 Inuit territory was split in two. Part of it became Quebec,
13 the other one became the colony of Newfoundland, which
14 is what's known as Labrador. In 1949, as I've mentioned,
15 we were brought into Canada and when we were brought into
16 Canada in 1949, not only that our lands and the rest of
17 our property were brought in, but we were brought in as
18 Newfoundlanders. And that policy still remains today in
19 the Newfoundland government. In the eyes of the
20 Newfoundland government, we are considered citizens of
21 Newfoundland.

22 We are in the process of
23 completing the research from '49 and onwards, which looks

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1 at the relationship between the province and the federal
2 government and how they dealt with the Innu of Labrador.

3 I just got off the phone with our researcher and we just
4 found another document which no one seems to have, and
5 that is a letter between, I think it was Lester Pearson
6 and Joey Smallwood. And clearly, in the letter from Joey
7 Smallwood, he states that they're not willing to push the
8 jurisdiction to be a federal jurisdiction under the
9 aboriginal peoples but that the province will take the
10 responsibilities and jurisdiction, but that they expected
11 the Canadian government to supplement or put forward
12 funding to provide these programs.

13 A lot of these programs
14 were, what they call Canada and Newfoundland Native
15 Agreement, still exist today. In our opinion, the federal
16 government at that time did not take its responsibilities
17 and still has not fulfilled its responsibilities up to
18 this day. We feel that we should be getting funding
19 programming from the federal government and not be
20 funnelled through the province as it is today. For those
21 who have seen the agreement, it is pretty clear that the
22 federal government does not take that responsibility but
23 it sees itself as supplementing the funding for the

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1 province to administer what they call, I guess, aboriginal
2 programs. And all the chiefs today will tell you that that
3 agreement does not work. The province is involved and
4 they give the chiefs and the councils a hard time in the
5 way they administer these agreements. So we see that it's
6 time that the federal government takes its
7 responsibilities and that we have direct negotiations with
8 the federal government on the issues of funding
9 arrangements and the other programs. We feel that the
10 Canadian government has not fulfilled its constitutional
11 responsibilities and jurisdictions.

12 We are told that in Davis
13 Inlet one more study will be done into the housing and
14 water and sewer situation. We have said to the province
15 and Newfoundland that there is enough studies done to
16 answer those questions, but it has come forward from John
17 Crosbie and Tom Siddon who told us when we met them in
18 February that no funding will be coming forward unless
19 that study is done. So we feel even though we recognize
20 that the water and sewer situation and housing conditions
21 in Davis Inlet should be a priority without any further
22 studies, which causes delay in the implementation of the
23 program. But because we were told without this study that

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1 funding for the water and sewer and housing would not be
2 coming through, we ended up agreeing to the process. It
3 is these types of situations that I think we find ourselves
4 in. And I guess my point is that, if I can refer back
5 to the situation that I mentioned, we didn't come to Canada,
6 Canada came to us; therefore, I think a new relationship
7 has to come forward so that we too can clearly state our
8 own policies on how we're going to deal with the issues.

9 It is my belief that as long as other people control and
10 administer our lives, we will never take the type of
11 responsibility that our people should take. I am aware
12 that it has been 30 years or so since our lives have been
13 controlled by the province and the federal government and
14 that the programming and the policies that come along with
15 those programs have made it very difficult for our lives,
16 in the sense that we don't decide the best way to spend
17 those funds. And as I've referred earlier, we've become
18 very dependent on those. So my message, I guess, is that
19 we have to control those funds. We have to control those
20 programs and we have to administer them the way we see
21 them so that they best benefit our people. I realize that
22 it's going to be very difficult in the beginning, but this
23 is a process that we have to enter and we have to take

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1 the good and the bad that comes along with that. But as
2 long as someone else is calling the shots, I think you
3 will continue to find the aboriginal people in the
4 situation as you find them today, in chaos.

5 If I can refer to, as you
6 are well aware, we are under negotiations with federal
7 and provincial governments over land issues and we are
8 under the process of what is called framework negotiations.

9 And essentially what this is is to set out the agenda
10 and the timeframes and the process for the actual
11 substantive negotiations. We've been in the process for
12 a year now and it's been difficult. It hasn't been easy
13 because there are certain things that the governments don't
14 want to talk about. And we always from the beginning have
15 been saying to them that we have to have interim protection.

16 We have to stop the developments that are taking place
17 or further developments until such time as the land issue
18 is settled because you cannot negotiate on one hand and
19 continue to develop the resources on the other, because
20 we find ourselves at the end that there is nothing left
21 for us.

22 So the land claims policy
23 has to be seriously looked at by this commission and that

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1 recommendations for a new way of doing things should be
2 put forward. And I am sure there will be other people
3 across the country who will speak more eloquently on this
4 issue.

5 One of the issues that we
6 had problems on the framework is airspace. Somehow the
7 province thinks that we can talk about land and not talk
8 about airspace. Our position has been that if it our land,
9 then it must be our space as well. The federal position
10 is that the land may belong to you, but the air belongs
11 to the federal government for sovereignty issues. And
12 we do not agree with this because we know that the land
13 belongs to the Innu and the air space must also belong
14 to the Innu.

15 If I can speak about the
16 issue of low level flying, which is also a very big issue
17 for the Innu. I myself sometimes find myself in a strange
18 position because there are people in this room who do not
19 agree with the land claims process and there are those
20 who aren't sure what to think. The way I look at it, if
21 we do not enter into this process, then Canada will take
22 the resources and all other rights as well and that has
23 been my argument to my people. We have to take the existing

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1 process and hope that with the new constitutional process
2 that's taking place and the new Royal Commission that
3 hopefully a new process will come forward as such the one
4 that we see emerging now with the third order of government.

5

6 I support the third order
7 of government because I think, as I've stated earlier,
8 we have to be the ones that decide on how we're going to
9 administer our lives and how we're going to administer
10 every program that affects our lives, the Innu themselves.

11 And I'm not talking about municipalities. I'm talking
12 about an absolute government with jurisdiction within
13 clear, defined territories. And that ranges from education
14 to economic development, everything that will affect our
15 lives.

16

17 In February, maybe I should
18 tell a personal story. Perhaps that will explain how I
19 see things. I remember as a child, this would have been,
20 I guess the sixties. And let's take my family, for
21 example. My father and my mother are the ones that made
22 the transition from the country into the community setting.

23 Both of them had to adopt to your way of life, to the
qallunaaqs' way of doing things, working, finding jobs,

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1 attending to house, making sure all the things are done
2 to keep a house.

3 My generation, and I'm 28
4 years old, my generation is the ones that were born into
5 the community and saw the chaos that was happening in our
6 lives. I remember the fighting. I remember the blood.

7 I remember the noise and I remember how frightened I was.

8 I remember all these things very clearly. And I've always
9 said that I will never be like my dad or mom and all the
10 people that drink. But as it turned out, a lot of this
11 chaos that was happening around me was much more powerful
12 than I ever thought as a child. It was so powerful that
13 I became what I didn't want to be, in every sense of the
14 word. I became an alcoholic. I fought my wife. I fought
15 my children. And everything around me was becoming
16 chaotic. And I think for most of us, for a lot of us in
17 this community, we experienced the same thing.

18 I will never experience or
19 be able to experience what my father experienced and my
20 mother as they made that transition from being independent
21 to being totally dependent on government. I will never
22 be able to experience that. The only thing that I can
23 experience and I can relate to is the chaos that came out

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1 of that because I grew up with it as a child. And people
2 say to us why do these Indians drink so much? Why do they
3 beat up their wives? Why is there so much sexual abuse?
4 Why is there so much chaos? I believe it all stems from
5 that. You take away people's integrity and dignity, and
6 you are left with nothing.

7 And I'll tell you how
8 powerful your system or the system of the Canadian
9 government has become. All of us are required by law to
10 come to this school and learn about the qallunaags'
11 culture, all of us. I remember my parents saying "You
12 have to go to school or otherwise I'm going to lose my
13 family allowance." And that's because the priest and the
14 people around that time were all saying that. "If you
15 don't send your kids to school, you'll lose your family
16 allowance." And that took a hold on the people themselves.
17 It was very powerful. The white men became very powerful
18 in our lives. And I guess, for me, in order to change
19 this 30 years of chaos, we have to do it ourselves. We
20 can't expect the federal government or the provincial
21 government to offer us policies and programs which they
22 develop in Ottawa or St. John's to work for us. We know
23 what a mess, a terrible job they've done, because we've

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1 experienced it. Now we're saying "Give us the resources
2 and we'll develop it on our own." It would be very nice
3 if Canada said "This is clearly your land. Use it as you
4 wish and you can get the resources from it." That would
5 be ideal. But I know Canada will not and Newfoundland
6 will not give up that right that easy. So we have to expect
7 the resources to come from the Canadian government. And
8 that's why I've been saying the federal government has
9 to take its responsibilities seriously to the aboriginal
10 people of Labrador.

11 One of the things that
12 really wanted to accomplish when I got elected as President
13 of the Innu Nation was that I wanted to accomplish the
14 freedom to hunt and trap and live off the land as our people
15 have always done. And I think we're close. Certainly the
16 Sparrow case has helped, and I was very glad to hear last
17 year and this year, which I experienced myself, because
18 I was out in the country with my grandfather and the rest
19 of the people that were there. It was very nice and it
20 felt really good to me to see that people can shoot ducks
21 and geese without any fear of charges. That's a little
22 step, but we have a long way to go. I spoke again this
23 morning to the provincial government because we had put

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1 forward and said all the other animals that we hunt, the
2 same right has to apply. And it's very difficult because
3 their position is that we're citizens of Newfoundland,
4 so if we do it for the Innu, then what does it mean for
5 the regular people in Goose Bay? How are we going to
6 justify it? Up to this point, to this day, they will be
7 putting forward their proposals next month on those issues,
8 so up to today when I spoke to them this morning, the issues
9 of hunting caribou, partridge and the other animals is
10 still illegal for us. And that's something that I find
11 very cruel, because what makes us Innu is not because of
12 blood. What makes us Innu is our nationality, our
13 language, our customs, our culture, our history. So we
14 have to be able to practice our culture. That's what makes
15 us different. It's not blood.

16 Well, I think I've covered
17 all the items that I wanted to cover. There are many,
18 many issues that I've missed, but hopefully, all the other
19 people who have spoken and will be speaking later on will
20 cover the other issues. I'd like to thank you very much
21 for listening to my speech and I will also leave the written
22 paper, submission.

23 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

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1 Thank you very much. I would like to thank you for
2 presenting us with a very articulate brief, both oral and
3 written. I think it will be very useful to us. I think
4 the thrust of your speech turns around control of unknown
5 destiny and mastering the future. And it brings us to
6 the issue of self-government and I know that it's not
7 necessarily easy to design practically how it would work,
8 but I would like, maybe, to ask you, what do you think
9 self-government could be for the Innu of Labrador, how,
10 within the Canadian framework, how could it be designed?
11 Is there a particular model you see or could you expand
12 on the way it could be done?

13 **MR. PETER PENASHUE:** I was
14 very glad that the Assembly of First Nations has managed
15 to have the inherent right to self-government accepted
16 through the multilateral discussions as an item with no
17 definitions attached to it. Now we don't know what the
18 later process will bring. For self-government, I think
19 every nation, aboriginal nation, will treat that
20 differently. I wouldn't want what Mohawks get and vice
21 versa. I'm sure they wouldn't want what we get because
22 we certainly are a different people with different needs,
23 different culture and different background, certainly a

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1 different history. And I think it's also important to
2 note that every aboriginal group is at a different stage
3 of what I would call, I guess, assimilation. So in general
4 the needs and their preference in how they see
5 self-government is different. And that is why I think
6 it's important that it doesn't get defined but it be left
7 up to those nations and governments to work out an agreement
8 and to negotiate those details amongst themselves,
9 because, as I said, we may not want what they have on the
10 other side of the country because they may have different
11 needs. But clearly, I think I cannot say at this point
12 what self-government will look like. I have a vision of
13 what it would look like, but I don't know if that's what
14 the end product would be because clearly, there will be
15 a process of negotiation.

16

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

17 I just want to complete in mentioning that yesterday, for
18 example, one of the presenters was advocating the idea
19 of having a separate territory for Labrador. There are
20 many ideas around. We know that there are Inuit
21 communities. There are Metis communities on the southern
22 coast. We have the two Innu communities, and we have
23 non-aboriginal people living in Labrador, so I only hope

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1 that in the coming months, additional thinking will be
2 given to the practicalities of having self-government
3 working, whether it be at the community level, at the more
4 regional level, and I understand that there will be a
5 variety of ways of doing it, according to the needs for
6 each region of the country, but it would certainly be useful
7 if you could think about it. And we're going to come back
8 to Labrador and we would like to exchange further on the
9 practicality of it and get down from the idea. Because
10 once the Constitution, and we hope the Constitutional
11 reform will be passed. If it is passed, it will put a
12 lot of pressure for doing things. And that's one of the
13 reasons why this commission was created, it's to have a
14 hard look with aboriginal peoples on the ways of achieving
15 it and doing it. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA

16
17 **ROBINSON:** I really don't have any questions for you.
18 I think you've made yourself very clear with the work that
19 is going on here and your different positions and where
20 you are even today. So I don't have any questions. I
21 think if we get a copy of your presentation and most of
22 them here, but I think you've been very clear on your
23 points. So I thank you.

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1 **MR. PETER PENASHUE:** We've
2 met with Ovide Mercredi and I and others met with Max
3 Yelderman, the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission,
4 Elderman? Yalden, whoever. And we had put forward a
5 complaint and the complaint is that there's been
6 discrimination against the Innu for not accessing the same
7 programs as other aboriginal groups. And I would hope
8 that this Commission would be able to take a position on
9 that issue and possibly release an interim report
10 challenging the federal government to take its
11 responsibilities seriously. So I hope that will be the
12 case.

13 The other thing that I
14 forgot to mention and that is the federal and provincial
15 and Inuit negotiations that have taken place have been
16 suspended, and they have been suspended on the grounds
17 that the federal and provincial governments have not been
18 able to come up with an agreement on the issue of
19 compensation for the Innu. They have not made this public.
20 I don't know if they had planned to, but they tell us they
21 are hoping that an agreement between them will soon be
22 made. And I think it's important that the Commission is
23 aware that for many years when we fought against low-level

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1 flying, fought against development, we were always told
2 that the Inuit don't want to negotiate. The Inuit just
3 want to disrupt development. Now we find ourselves that
4 the federal and provincial government doesn't want to
5 negotiate. They have suspended the negotiations because
6 they cannot get an agreement among themselves. I wanted
7 to point that out so it was clear that we are still willing
8 to negotiate, but they have to get their act together.
9 Thank you very much.

10

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

11 Thank you.

12

MR. BEN MICHEL: The next

13 person on the list of speakers to speak is Simeo Rich.
14 He's an Innu elder.

15

MR. SIMEO RICH

16 **[INTERPRETER]:** As far as I can remember, I want to talk
17 about the things that I know. As far as I can remember
18 in the early days, the Innu people, he said, as far as
19 I can remember, we, the Innu, have a control of our lives,
20 run and manage our own lives without the interruption of
21 the non-native people. She said the Innu has full control
22 of their hunting territories, of the killing of the wild
23 animals. She said as far as I know now that the wildlife

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1 officer is interrupting the lives of the Innu, and she
2 said there has been closing a lot of things that the Innu
3 lives. She said, he said, as far as he can remember, he
4 said, there used to be non-native people running their
5 own projects, making money from our own resources, from
6 our land. She said now, she said now that everything is
7 crossroads, he said that the non-native people are
8 controlling our lives, controlling our resources,
9 controlling the projects that we're presently living on.
10 She said of itself now, the non-native people are
11 controlling the forestry. He said it's now the white man
12 are cutting woods for us, teaching us how to hunt, how
13 to live. He says now that since the non-native people
14 existence here, he said, they're teaching our kids their
15 way of life. Now that unable to teach the things that
16 we have learned and personally passed. She said I heard
17 a lot of elders talking, asking the Innu how they lived
18 in the past. She said it's the white man is teaching our
19 kids of how they live. He said now that our younger
20 generation don't know anything about the way we lived,
21 about our customs and traditions and all those. She said
22 that the younger generation assumes that the non-native
23 we have teaching is vitally good to their education. He

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1 said that we're losing a culture. They're losing
2 everything that they have learned from us. He said as
3 far as since I worked, I heard a lot of kids being taught
4 by the non-native and there is no traditional skills that
5 we, the elders, should teach our younger generation.

6 I also see from ten years
7 being in Churchill Falls to be able to see how the hydro
8 works, be able to manage. We wouldn't be paid a high price
9 because these resources still comes from our land. And
10 we're never asked to say, he said, there is a lot of people
11 who feel that they shouldn't pay a high cost of electricity
12 because it's the resources that comes from the land. And
13 some people who are presently being cut off from the
14 electricity and they said if they had fought with hydro
15 Churchill Falls, it's on the Innu land, how to run it,
16 how to manage it without the non-native people interfering
17 with how the hydro is presently running. And losing a
18 lot of persons are being due to the damming of the hydro
19 Churchill Falls, losing a lot of persons of due to the
20 damming of the Churchill Falls hydro. Or even to say to
21 the government, can you compensate us for the things that
22 we have lost, for the building of the Churchill Falls hydro.
23 He said I also know a few things how it's run and how

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1 is the non-native government is running and how the Inuit
2 people are controlling to their own lives.

3 She said now that the Innu
4 people is unable to hunt or hunt close by, he said that
5 the non-native people have a capacity to hunt and roam
6 because they have a lot of new technology they use in a
7 way their lives are being run. He said there are so many
8 things that we can manage to control our own programs,
9 how we can self-government ourself, you know, how the
10 non-native people programs are trained and being run.
11 And she said except that, she said, the non-native--she
12 said that the Innu people are not given a chance to govern
13 themselves by such programs or training programs. We would
14 like to be given a chance to control our own lives, to
15 do things that are necessity to our way of life.

16 She said as as matter of
17 fact that the Innu kids are not taught by the elders how
18 to make a canoe, how to do traditional skills. He say
19 that the non-native people are teaching our kids how to
20 teach the traditional skills, the things that the elders
21 know.

22 He said today, he said that
23 there is another rumour going around in Happy Valley that

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1 there is a program going to be run how to make snowshoes.
2 And he said non-native people are stepping us all over
3 our lives and we're unable to do such things, teach us
4 the younger generation with these things. And he said
5 we can really feel and see ourself that we're going to
6 be run by the non-native people. She said that half of
7 the elders are all gone and he said, you know, it could
8 have been the elders could have been teaching us
9 sufficiency skills that we could have learned from them.

10

11 She said that we're looking
12 at a non-native government because we're becoming like
13 a non-native people because we act like a non-native
14 people. And we turn to non-native people. And he said,
15 I can feel that we are like a non-native people in the
16 way the lives are run.

17 Another thing is what I'm
18 going to discuss here, some of the things are what I see,
19 how I see things that are running in our lives. He said
20 there are so being things that we are being lied at. These
21 are the things that we have seen.

22 He said last summer there
23 was a project that was on--there was a blasting water and

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1 he said that a dust ship that came over and blasted the
2 water at you because the ships were unable to come to the
3 harbour of Happy Valley. He said that there was one
4 resource, some water resource there, was dangerous to blast
5 or put an explosive in the water, he said, it would be
6 dangerous. And I think he assumes that some of these
7 people who are putting blast on this water, he said that
8 it could have been all lives. I guess there were 22
9 research under the water. He said so many years have I
10 lived or have I come across, he said, I have never seen,
11 he said, he has been taking about four years to complete
12 this project. He said, and I don't believe in it. He's
13 unable to find something in the water, he said, how come,
14 and he was blasting the water for the ships to come into
15 the water. He said how come he's blasting the water, you
16 know, enabling to find something. He said that the
17 government is always lying.

18 He said there are some
19 things that are not, there is no fish in spring. She said
20 there are people in Northwest Point who are finding
21 changes. He said that there has been a few changes in
22 that beach, he said, that is just recently that the people,
23 Innu, point out their feeling about these changes. And

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1 people are assuming that when they were blasting the water
2 between the Northwest Point that leads to Happy Valley
3 and they blame it on these people who were doing the
4 blasting due to because the Innu people who were camping
5 noticed some discoloration of the sand near the beach of
6 place where they were camping. He said if we're going
7 to ask the government what is the reason for these change,
8 he said, well, they will not give us any money for us to
9 do this kind of research, the purpose of that changes in
10 Northwest Point. She said some people are starting to
11 recognize this, especially in the elders, the changes,
12 he said, that also are that they will be losing their young
13 kids due to the change in the Northwest Point Beach. He
14 said that even though they were noticing some changes with
15 the Northwest River beach water, he said, the water is
16 like a boiling thing, he said, they are unable to go nearby
17 it because it has some kind of discoloration of the water
18 sample there. It's one of the reasons why I don't believe
19 in the things I hear, nor do I see as far as I live when
20 things being said, he said.

21 There is a lot of things
22 being given to us suddenly, or never being consulted the
23 things that needs to be done, you know. And we also right

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1 away manage to find the things that are needed to be known
2 or being consulted. So the elders need to be consulted.
3 We need to be consulted to allow these projects or do we
4 allow them to come? It is all right to use the elder in
5 the old days and is also as far as I can remember. But
6 he says, today he says that things are changing and we
7 don't listen to the elders as we used to. He said because
8 we're after the funding or we're after the money. And
9 I'm assuming that one of the reasons why we don't listen
10 to the elders or we also need to be strong to listen to
11 us, we also be very strong in wanting some things from
12 us. And when they are in something in return, we always
13 allow them to come in between and how are we going to run?
14 What are we going to do or how are we going to manage
15 the funding when we get the funding? He said it's the
16 elder that has a wise understanding of how we can run,
17 how we can manage, how we can run the lives that we should
18 run. He said as far as I know, when I was young, he said,
19 when we agree on something and then we later find out there
20 was a disagreement, he said, it's up to the elders that
21 we should consult with the Innu because they know from
22 experience of what it's like to be on and what it's like
23 in the past. As far as I know, the elders have an

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1 understanding, have a good understanding how to hunt, how
2 to support their kids, surviving, making survival for their
3 kids. She said there are few elders that we can talk when
4 there is other programs being talked about. I think it's
5 one of the reasons that we don't get along or we don't
6 have excess control of the programs, such as the projects
7 being introduced.

8 He said there are some
9 things I don't like when there is no consultation with
10 the elders. He said as far, I would really like the elders
11 to be used when there is negotiation with the government,
12 the elders to be consulted, how the elders feel, how the
13 elders will live. He said this is one of the things that
14 I would love to see happen, he said. It's the elders that
15 would give a better teachings and education, educating
16 us, managing our lives. She said as far as he can remember
17 they don't understand of the non-native government. He
18 said we treated the government as the elders. He said
19 when I hear the elders talking about their grandparents,
20 they always agree on something. And this is one of the
21 reasons that the elders are saying you don't listen to
22 us. And this is for things that people are having
23 difficulty with their lives at the moment. He said if

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1 we come and negotiate with the government, he said it would
2 be up to the elders to come and sit and negotiate with
3 the government, how we're going to run, how we're going
4 to see, how many years are we going to self-government
5 ourselves and our lives, how are we going to be able to
6 consult on the way of life. He said it's the elders that
7 knows everything because he's wise, he said, and
8 understanding. This has been passed on from generation
9 to generation. He said as of now, he said that they don't
10 tell the younger generation any stories any more. There
11 has been a lot of changes.

12 He said I'm very happy to
13 come in and sit with you and share with you how I feel,
14 what I feel and I'm sure there is other people willing
15 to say other things. He said thank you.

16 **CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:**

17 I would like to thank you very much for your presentation.
18 Thank you.

19 **MR. BEN MICHEL:** The next
20 person who's on the list and I think there might be one
21 more after this person. I'm not sure. I'll have to check,
22 is Patrick Rich. Patrick Rich is the next individual who
23 will speak and he will be speaking on the adoption cases

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1 and that sort of thing or children who are just taken away
2 from their families and that sort of thing.

3 **MR. PATRICK RICH:** Hello,
4 my name is Patrick Rich. I'm mainly going to talk about
5 my family. In the Innu culture, when couples give up their
6 children, they give it up to members of their family.
7 They didn't give it up to some stranger they didn't know.

8 So as the child was growing up, the children knew about
9 their parents. He knew who his father was, who his mother
10 is.

In my case, it's a
11 different story. Back in 1970 we had a daughter named
12 Roxanne. She was taken away from the hospital. While she
13 was in the hospital, she was also baptized in the hospital,
14 which is unusual for the Catholic church to allow such
15 a thing.

Again in 1972, we had
16 another daughter named Mary Jane, so she was also taken
17 away by Social Services. She was taken away by Social
18 Services. Again, she was baptized in the hospital.

19 In 1973, again Frances, we
20 had another girl named Frances. Social Services tried
21 to persuade my wife Germaine to take the child away again.

22 This time her family put up a fight. They wouldn't allow
23 this to happen again. That was the third child taken away

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1 from Germaine.

2 Since 1974 we approached
3 the Social Services, the social worker who came by to our
4 town in Sheshatshiu, so we asked about Mary Jane, Roxanne,
5 since she was the oldest so we pursued her first. As we
6 were doing this, we had to go through--first we was told
7 our house where we were living was too crowded.

8 Again, we saw Social
9 Services again in 1974 in the winter. So we asked the
10 Social Services about Roxanne. We asked were we going
11 to get Mary Jane back. And they said the house that you're
12 living in is too poor. It's not properly heated.

13 So again in spring, we were
14 living at my father's at the time. So we asked the Social
15 Services, they came to our house and said about Roxanne.

16 We told the social worker we wanted Roxanne back. Social
17 Services told us we can't have her. So my father said,
18 he said, "Why can't they get Roxanne back? They're living
19 with me. I have a good house. If they can't fend for
20 themselves, I will feed them." Social Services said okay,
21 your house is acceptable, so we had to go to Family Court.

22 While we were in the Family Court, we asked Father Gibson
23 to represent us. I said we didn't do nothing, why are

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1 we in the court? Social worker said this is a case about
2 Roxanne and tell the magistrate that the foster parents
3 of Roxanne want to adopt Roxanne. And immediately the
4 magistrate said the foster parents doesn't care for the
5 children. They only care for the money. He said I order
6 this child back to his parents. That
7 summer in '75 we asked about Mary Jane. And social workers
8 told us Mary Jane been adopted and told us Germaine signed
9 the papers. And Germaine spoke to me in Innu and said,
10 "I never sign any papers for adoption." So he came back
11 two weeks later and show us the papers. First he showed
12 us Roxanne paper with Germaine's signature on it. Then
13 he came back with Mary Jane's papers which had Germaine's
14 name on it, but it wasn't her signature. Germaine spoke
15 to her in English and said, "That's not my signature."
16 Since 1975 we haven't heard
17 anything from Social Services. That same day we saw papers
18 and Germaine's name was forged. Germaine was pretty quiet
19 and was pretty hurt about it. Since this winter, late
20 February, we approached the Innu Nation. Germaine asked
21 me to approach the Innu Nation and ask the Innu Nation
22 to help us, ask the Innu Nation to help us find Mary Jane.
23 So we approached the Innu Nation. Since we approached

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1 the Innu Nation, they immediately did call the Social
2 Services director of child welfare in St. John's. They
3 wouldn't help us. All we wanted to do was make contact
4 with Mary Jane.

5 Since we hadn't get
6 anywhere, so I decided to call the media. I asked Peter
7 Penashue, do you know any lawyers or reporters? He gave
8 me two names so he contacted them, so the lawyer and the
9 reporter contacted us. The reporter did an article in
10 the papers. Somebody in Newfoundland come, read it,
11 contacted us and give us the name. The name she gave us
12 was the wrong name, so we decided, I thought we were getting
13 back to another dead end. So I called Bell Telephone in
14 Ontario and asked for the book from Ontario, name of
15 Georgetown. Instead they gave us the Toronto phone
16 directory. While I'm doing that, I would be calling
17 Toronto, we called Georgetown through my friends to try
18 and find out [Muskets?]. The only Muskets that existed
19 were from England. So I asked my friend try to call Bell
20 Telephone in Ontario and try to find the name Musket in
21 Georgetown back in 1972. Since we've been doing that,
22 we haven't gotten anywhere. The only names where that
23 existed was under the name of Muskett. So we try all the

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1 Muskets in Toronto and so we never got anywhere.
2 So I called up the
3 Georgetown phone directory and asked for the Musket family
4 and they gave me a name. When I called Georgetown, a girl
5 answered the phone. I told her who I was, where I was
6 calling from, and then I finally ask her did they have
7 any adopted children in their family would be 19 years
8 old, who would be a native child. He said not in our
9 family, but he told me his uncle had such a child. What
10 we are asking for from Social Services, we don't want to
11 speak to social workers. I want to hear from the Director
12 of Child Welfare. I want to hear from the provincial
13 government to explain why they allow this thing to happen
14 for so long. I want to get some answers. I want to see
15 the people involved to bring charge with criminal offence.
16 And that's it.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

18 Well, I would like to tell you that we are certainly
19 concerned by what you told us. My suggestion would be
20 that Roger Farley, who is sitting at this table and is
21 acting as a case officer for us when there are individual
22 cases that he will speak to you after the meeting and get
23 your phone numbers and we will like to have as much

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1 information as possible and we'll see what we could do
2 to try to be useful to you. Of course, there might be
3 a situation where, through a good channel we could find
4 some ways of helping you. We don't know, of course, at
5 this point, but we are certainly available to try to be
6 of some help. So Roger will be in touch with you or you
7 be in touch with him straight after this meeting. Thank
8 you very much.

9

COMMISSIONER VIOLA

10 **ROBINSON:** I want to thank you for coming forward and for
11 your courage to come and speak to us about such a touching
12 emotional experience of your life. It must be very
13 difficult, and as our co-chair has said, we want to follow
14 up on your issue and give the information over here. Thank
15 you.

16

MR. BEN MICHEL: I guess

17 this is the end of the day and that the closing remarks
18 will be made by Mr. Dussault and the closing prayers by
19 Mary Ann Michel after he makes the closing remarks.

20

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT:

21 Yes, I will be very brief as we will resume the hearings
22 tomorrow morning in this gymnasium. I would just like
23 to thank everybody who has presented views and concerns

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1 to the Commission today. Also, everybody who have
2 assisted the presenters, that have been sitting and hearing
3 what was said, I would like to thank all of our staff who
4 have been making this possible, our facilitator, our
5 Commissioner of the day, of course, the translator, the
6 two translators who, I think, everybody would agree they
7 did a tremendous job, very good job. Also, we are grateful
8 to the various media who have attended this day of hearings
9 and we hope that we will be able tomorrow to have as fruitful
10 a day as today. These hearings where obviously we hear
11 a large spectrum of concerns and areas of concerns are
12 of a great importance for the Commission. So I hope that
13 everybody will have a good evening and we will be back
14 tomorrow at nine o'clock.

15 (Closing Prayer)

16 --- Whereupon the Commission adjourned

17

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