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## Electronic Media Transcripts

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Client: Government of Nfld and Labrador  
Source: CBC Morning Show 8:11 A.M. 1116-811  
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Ann: Jim Brown

**Announcer:** In our news this morning, we've been telling you about a request from Innu leaders. They've asked the Province to remove a group of troubled children from their homes. The young people are sniffing gas. And it's a problem Sheshatshui has been dealing with for some time. Peter Penashue is the President of the Innu Nation, and he joins me on the line now.

Good morning Mr. Penashue.

**Peter Penashue:** Good morning sir.

**Announcer:** Can you tell us what prompted this request?

**Penashue:** Well I guess, one thing I guess there's a...the situation in Sheshatshui has been...has been you know escalating in terms of the amount of kids that have been sniffing gas. And we've seen it now on the increase since last three years. And right now it's quite alarming in terms of the amount of kids that are sniffing gas, and I guess it's more alarming to see that they're getting younger and younger.

**Announcer:** Do you have any idea how many children we're talking about?

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Penashue: In just estimation I guess we're talking maybe about 30 kids.

Announcer: Thirty kids?

Penashue: And some of them are very, very young you know.

Announcer: How young?

Penashue: You know five, six years old. And it's just, it's really just getting out of hand you know. And so I guess we...there's all the agencies in our community got together I guess now for a couple years now I guess trying to organize ourselves so you know to see what we can do. And we've been making efforts to encourage the parents to get help, and we've been encouraging the, trying to encourage the kids themselves to get...you know to go out for treatment you know because there are resources available for kids to go out for treatment.

Announcer: Now do you want the children taken out of their homes or actually taken out of the community?

Penashue: Well one thing that we said to, we would like to get done first of all and that is we'd like to get the kids to you know to safe environment first of all. And the only piece of legislation right now that's available...see gas sniffing is legal. You know it's not illegal to be sniffing gas and that's something that the police are telling us. So there's really nothing that can be done. The only piece of legislation that we can use right now is the legislation under the Child...Child and Welfare I think it's called. And so what now we're trying to do is we're trying to get the Department of Social Services to take all these children that are sniffing gas under their care before it becomes their legal responsibility and then to put them in a safe, safe home.

Now we'd like to see that obviously happen here you know in this community. But one thing that we know is that the families here are not taking in kid sniffing mainly because of the concern of their own families because you know they're saying look we can't take these kids in because you know I have children, young children and if the kids are sniffing gas, you know they may start fires.

Announcer: So you may have to be looking to outside the community?

Penashue: Right now we may be forced to be looking to outside.

Announcer: I'm wondering how you think the parents will react if the province does do what you're asking?

Penashue: Well I think we're also a little bit upset ourselves in terms of you know we've been making efforts to help the parents. We've been making efforts to help the parents, we've been making efforts to help young people but the parents don't seem to be taking that responsibility. You know they've almost given up. And I guess sometimes you can understand why.

Announcer: Yes.

Penashue: And so what we said look you know the situation is getting worse and the kids you know are probably going to hurt themselves you know in terms of brain damage and their health is in concern.

Announcer: Have you heard from the Province yet? Have they reacted at all?

Penashue: No, no. What we did yesterday was that we met, our group that gets together normally, met and we've made a recommendation to the Chief in Council and the Chief of course is Paul Riche.

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Announcer: Right.

Penashue: And we said to him look we've done what we can and we, at this point we feel that we got to take the kids under the care of the current legislation.

Announcer: If the Province doesn't go along with this request, what happens then?

Penashue: Well they don't have a choice. They don't have a choice. They have a legal responsibility to take these kids into care because their health and safety is in concern. And so it's not a matter of them deciding that they won't do it, they've got to do it. The problem they'll have is like you know what they're going to do with them. But, obviously you know we, that's probably going to be discussed today and we made a request for a meeting as soon as possible. And you know I can see that...But I understand there are homes available outside the, for example I understand there's a home in Pleasantville. There might be other places that they can hold them until such time we can figure out you know what we can do with them in terms of providing some counselling, health services on a long term basis. But, right now what's clear is that we've got to be looking at the health and safety of these young people. Otherwise, we're just going to get into situations where you know there's been accidents and some obviously have been fatal and I mean just yesterday or a couple of days ago I saw a kid walking down the road with gas in one hand, with a cigarette on the other doing, you know sniffing gas and having a cigarette. So it's been, you know it's obviously it's getting out of hand and kids almost don't realize how dangerous it is what they're doing.

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Announcer: Mr. Penashue, thank you very much for joining us.

Penashue: You're welcome sir.

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Announcer: Good bye now. Imm leader Peter Penashue.

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