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PRIME

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Electronic Media Transcripts

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Client: Government of Nfld and Labrador
(Standing Order: Children in Sheshatshui)
Source: NTV Evening News 6:00 P.M. 1116128
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Art: Fred Hutton

Announcer: A crisis is ongoing in Sheshatshui that has not been seen before, Innu children sniffing gas to such an extent that now Community Leaders have asked Provincial Authorities to rescue them. Many of them come from families afflicted by other addictions, and the request is that the children be taken into protective custody. A report tonight from NTV's Jim Thoms.

Roger Grimes: And the Community Leaders' call is that the children actually be taken from the care of their parents and caregivers and put into safe custody at this point in time because they have come to believe that they are not particularly in a safe environment as we speak...

Jim Thoms: And as they speak at a News Conference in St. John's meetings were going on in Labrador to access what had happened in Sheshatshui and the danger to the children involved. As the Minister explained, you just can't go into a community and take children from their parents without good cause even though it may be suspected the parents can no longer offer a safe and secure family environment.

Grimes: And they think the longer term answer clearly is to make sure that

while the children are removed from the community if need be, from the care of the current caregivers, placed elsewhere in the community if that's part of the solution, that the parents that have been found lacking must be given some help, assistance and instruction in parenting skills before the children can then be returned to a safe environment..

Thoms: As many as thirty-five to forty children may be involved. Some of them as young as seven and eight sniffing gas in plain view in the daytime. There may be more.

Ernie McLean: Well there could very well be more. I guess there's a large number of children in the Community of Sheshatshui, and I don't know if they've indicated that this thirty to forty is all of the kids that's been in the situation of gas sniffing. I wouldn't be able to tell you that off hand. Quite possibly there could be more there. And this could be the whole number. And they want to get these out of the community so that the younger ones won't get into the act of gas sniffing as these ones are.

Grimes: We do understand that today the Community Leaders in the meetings occurring are willing to actually name and identify somewhere close to forty children that they feel are at risk....

Thoms: In Sheshatshui Innu Chief Paul Riche declared his Band Council could no longer tolerate the ongoing neglect of the children by their legal caregivers and action is past due. They contacted Roger Grimes at his home last night.

Grimes: ...Accelerated the whole motion. And they're making a plea with us really to take these children to a safer place and to give the

community the time to work with the parents in the children's absence so that hopefully upon return at some point in the future they'll be going back into a much safer environment because the parents and adult caregivers themselves would have gone through an education learning process so that we don't have children removed to a safe environment, go back into the community and fall back into the same situation that caused this request to happen last night.

Thoms:

It's believed to be the first time Community Leaders ever came forward with this kind of request. Jim Thoms, NTV News, St. John's.

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