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DATE/DATE: December 14, 2000

PRINCIPAL(S)/PRINCIPAUX: The Honourable Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development;

Chief Simeon Tshakapesh, Mushuau Innu, Davis

Inlet;

SUBJECT/SUJET: Meeting between the Honourable Robert Nault and Chief Simeon Tshakapesh

Hon. Robert Nault: I think the meeting – I don't want to speak for the chief, he can speak for himself – but I think it was a very productive meeting. We had an opportunity to talk about the long term planning obviously of the community's needs, not only the social side of the issues, health and safety as it relates to new infrastructure and then we also started talking, and we're going to continue this conversation the second week in January in the community itself which I think is good. I'm going to bring my boots, I understand it's pretty cold. We're going to talk a little bit more about economic development, about creating an economy and some of the issues that the young people are facing.

So I thought it was a pretty productive meeting overall. We made some commitments, commitments that we confirmed that we've already made in the past and we're working towards the Indian Act equivalency to – that we've committed ourselves, not only the prime minister but myself in previous correspondence. We're going to reconfirm of course to the chief and council the issue of making sure that the relocation and the housing costs will be met as the agreement base. That was a concern for Simeon so we're comfortable doing that.

And we're going to look at some recreational issues. The young people need more to do. Recreation is a big part of health and I've given him my commitment that I'll work with him on the recreational side of things as well.

So those are some of the issues and, you know, Simeon can speak to them for you in detail but I think it was a good start to our relationship. We're both relatively new. Ministers, of course, who are only around for a year or so need to work through these issues in our department first and the government of Canada takes a little while to go from A to B and I hope to go to cabinet with some of these issues early in the new year. Simeon?

Chief Simeon Tshakapesh: Yeah, it was a very productive meeting and I'm glad we had a meeting to get the chance to know each other and the minister has agreed to come to Davis which is really a plus for us and I think the minister has really stated that he's going to be very supportive in this problem that we're facing and especially the kids, that new recreational side of it that he said and he's an expert of it and I asked him during our meeting I said which – what part of you are expert and he laughed at me and so somehow he got a lot of his expertise and to us so which is really what I say the recreational side of things, a strong believer and I really have to say that I really respect

the minister and his commitments that he's coming to the community.

And I'd also like to – I also tabled the cultural renewal centre and he basically said he's going to have a strong support and he's going to talk to Allan Rock – Minister Rock about the cultural renewal centre in the new site and I'm very glad to hear that. And he had made strong commitments to us that he's going to be very supportive that we're trying to develop a new community and economic development as well that he spoke about. And the commitments are there and those commitments are one of the other programs that we requested, the outpost program, that will be involved with the kids. And he's very supportive of that and I just (inaudible) anymore and the housing of that, they are very supportive of that and he's a strong supporter of the issues that we tabled today.

Question: Is there any time frame for any of these commitments?

Chief Simeon Tshakapesh: Oh, the commitments he already made commitments to us verbally and I believe him that he will deliver the commitments and that's all I have to say.

Hon. Robert Nault: I just want to maybe re-emphasize that the whole issue of moving to the Indian Act is one that's going to take us a little bit of time because there's a lot of issues involved in that, it deals with environmental assessment, it deals with the whole land issue and obviously we have to work with the province on that but we'll move fairly quickly in the new year to get that through cabinet and to move in that direction. The real importance of our discussion is the children themselves and what the children are going through and the meetings I think that the chief and the community representatives have had with Minister Rock have been extremely good to give us the direction of on the health side. Now we need to deal with it from a holistic point of view which was what we were talking about. This is not just about one component, there are four or five different components to it and part of it is the responsibility of the minister of health but obviously a big part of the role that we need to play together in partnership is with the Department of Indian Affairs. And over this next few months we will confirm our commitments that we've made today. They're commitments that have already been made in the past but we want to make sure that they're done properly and that's part of the relocation, I think Simeon that's fair to say.

And then the other issue too is the one on recreation. Simeon was making light of the fact that I'm an expert in recreation as my background in university but I do believe strongly that to have strong, healthy communities and young people you have to have recreational facilities and I've committed to work with him to see if we can get that done. We don't have a program for that but there are many ways to arrive at the same result. And so I'm taking this opportunity to say to the appropriate sector out there if they can help us help the communities with recreation facilities that would be very helpful because it takes some time to develop that.

Now on the last issue, the one that we did commit ourselves to a two-year pilot and that is to test the whole issue of sending the kids out in appropriately cultural settings out on the land. We're going to try that for the next couple of years and see how that works because I think it's important for the kids to know where they come from and to be proud of the fact of their heritage and their tradition and to feel that that is a direction

that they can fit into both worlds because that's really what we're trying to accomplish here.

It was a good start. Simeon and I will see each other on – somewhere in the second week of January in the community in Davis and if you want to come ice-fishing you guys can bring your boots. It's going to be a little bit cold, 40 below or so. And we'll be ready to have a little bit of fun. We're going to stay overnight and get a firsthand look and discussion with community members on their needs.

Chief Simeon Tshakapesh: Yeah, I just want to emphasize more on the cultural renewal centre. I think somebody has to make the commitment and I've asked the minister to bring that commitment to the community, whoever can bring a commitment to us and I just want to strongly emphasize the cultural renewal centre commitment and that's the holistic approach of healing because without the cultural renewal centre it's not going to work because as I told the minister in our meeting we will be back here at the table again maybe 20 years down the road again if we don't follow up the healing ground and the healing plan. And I'm very pleased that the minister's very supportive and he's very understanding and he's been around the block for the aboriginal people and he basically told me as well that there's a gas-sniffing that he experienced with his own back yard and the suicides so which is really helpful to us and that's all I have to say. Thank you.

Hon. Robert Nault: Thanks a lot.