

**Chronology re: Children/Youth Gas Sniffing, Davis Inlet
January 9th, 2001**

November 23rd - 24th, 2000

- Media reports first aired children were sniffing gas in Davis Inlet and the band council was calling for support. Several attempts by the Province to contact Chief Tshakapesh were unsuccessful. A press release was issued followed by a fax to the band council office indicating the desire to initiate discussions. No return calls were forthcoming.
- Health Canada indicated similar unsuccessful attempts to contact the Chief.
- A meeting of senior provincial and federal political and government officials was scheduled with the Innu of Sheshatshiu and Davis Inlet in Goose Bay, Sunday November 26th.

November 25th - 26th, 2000

- It was learned the Chief of Davis Inlet would not be attending the above meeting and was instead on route to Shawinigan to meet with the Prime Minister.
- The Prime Minister met with the Davis Inlet delegation and offered support through his federal ministers.

Monday, November 27th, 2000

- Ongoing attempts to reach Chief Tshakapesh were unsuccessful. There was increasing concern regarding responsibilities under the Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS) Act and the potential risk of children in Davis Inlet.
- The Province and Health Canada continued to identify human resources and placement options in anticipation of a response to Davis Inlet and/or a requirement to intervene under the CYFS Act.

November 28th - 30th, 2000

- As Health Labrador was fully engaged in the Sheshatshiu crisis and no further capacity existed to respond to Davis Inlet, discussions were held with the Province and Health Canada regarding an alternate plan of action.
- A teleconference call with federal, provincial and Innu representatives was held November 29th during which the Innu demanded an Innu controlled, medically supervised, detox facility of their own. As this option was not available, the Innu requested the former Grace Hospital be reopened. A meeting was scheduled for the following day with federal and provincial officials and the Innu to commence joint planning.
- The Chief verified with the Minister of Health the former Grace Hospital was their placement of choice.

December 1st - 2nd, 2000

- Negotiations with the Innu continued throughout the weekend in St. John's. Provincial requirements with respect to the CYFS Act was a contentious issue specifically:
 - the Innu were unwilling to allow social workers into the community to seek consent from parents; and
 - fear of recrimination should children disclosure physical & sexual abuse.Additionally, the Innu wanted their own team of medical experts to be funded by Health Canada and brought to the Province to oversee treatment.
- Talks broke off December 2nd with the Innu stating these discussions were now at a political/jurisdictional level however they invited federal & provincial government officials to meet in Davis Inlet December 6th to observe their plight first hand.

December 5th - 12th, 2000

- While on route to Davis Inlet, provincial officials were notified that the Innu delegation would now meet in Goose Bay. A short meeting was held that evening with an angry

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- Chief reiterating the need for full Innu control.
- December 6th, negotiations continued with the Province outlining several options for a tripartite response [federal, provincial, Innu] and it appeared progress was being made. A protocol agreement was drafted involving both short & long term plans. This was vetted by the Province and federal government for approval with final sign off to occur later that evening.
 - At the last hour, the federal government announced quite suddenly that they were not prepared to negotiate beyond the immediate needs of the children and talks abruptly ended.
 - The federal government and the Innu aired their differences in the media. Eventually following several meetings in Ottawa, a deal was signed December 12th which included a medical/psychosocial assessment process, in cooperation with the Province.
 - During this time, the Province continued preparation of the former Grace Hospital as a detoxification and treatment center while awaiting the return of the Innu from Ottawa to recommence discussions.

December 14th, 2000

- The Province was finally able to reach one of the Innu staff and learned that approximately 85 children/youth were being identified as gas sniffers and the Innu did not want them to leave the community until after the holidays. The need for a safety plan was discussed to ensure those most at risk would be safe in the community.
- It was verified with the Innu that a team of social workers would be prepared to travel to Davis Inlet to begin assessments during the week of January 2nd, 2001.

December 15th - 19th, 2000

- Several phone calls and a teleconference occurred with the Innu in an effort to resurrect the protocol agreement and voluntary care agreements for parental consent. A number of drafts were exchanged and a face to face meeting was scheduled for St. John's, however, the Innu again changed the venue to Goose Bay for December 20th.

December 20th - 22nd, 2000

- After waiting until 4:30 p.m. to meet with the Innu, discussions began and a tentative protocol agreement including a modified voluntary care agreement form and an adult treatment consent form was finally agreed upon. Provincial officials traveled back to St. John's and awaited the final copy for signature. On December 22nd the agreement was received, signed by the Province and returned to the Chief for signature.
- The Province was assured a safety plan was in place for the children/youth in Davis Inlet during the Christmas holidays.

January 2nd - 5th, 2001

- Attempts to reach Innu leadership as per the protocol agreement, yet unsigned by the Chief, were unsuccessful as the band council remained closed for the holidays. Health Labrador also scheduled a meeting with a band council member who was in Goose Bay however he never showed.
- Departmental officials contacted a consultant in New Brunswick, working for the Innu, and was advised the Innu were anxious to move forward and a meeting would be sought with the Province for January 3rd to discuss a work plan and placement of the children.
- Although this information was given by the consultant, many attempts to reach Innu leadership remained unsuccessful and confirmation of the meeting was not received. Information from Health Canada indicated a delay as the Innu were unwilling to continue until additional federal funding was forthcoming to cover their ongoing costs.
- A tripartite conference call was organized for January 3rd however the Innu did not attend and their consultant advised he had no mandate to participate.
- On January 4th, a letter was faxed to the Chief and a copy hand delivered to Innu

representatives in Goose Bay. This letter identified, for Innu consideration, a list of provincial social workers willing to travel to Davis Inlet to begin the assessment process, as well as seeking the names of the Innu team to assist. No response was forthcoming.

- Media interest heightened and the Province responded indicating its readiness to proceed with the assessment and placement of the children at the Grace facility.

January 5th - 8th, 2001

- On Friday January 5th, the Province was contacted by legal counsel for the Innu stating the Innu had resolved their difficulties with the federal government and were again ready to proceed with planning, including a meeting for January 10th in St. John's to finalize details. It was also stated the Innu were preparing a list of children as well as an Innu action plan which would be forwarded by January 8th. No such correspondence was received.
- Later that same day, the Province following repeated attempts, was finally able to contact the Chief who indicated he had not yet signed the protocol agreement and no decision regarding placement of the children beyond detoxification had been reached.
- During the weekend, mixed messages were reported in the media with the Chief stating he could not understand why social workers were not yet in Davis Inlet and that his calls to them were unanswered.
- On Monday January 8th, provincial and federal officials teleconferenced with Innu leadership including the Chief. The Province outlined its plan to send a team of social workers to Davis Inlet Tuesday January 9th and asked for cooperation. A testy Chief stated he would be sending "plane loads out to the Grace tonight" and abruptly terminated the call.
- The Province decided to proceed with plans to send social workers into Davis Inlet as well as to prepare the Grace for the arrival of children that night.

January 9th, 2001

- In the early hours of the morning, 16 children/youth [9 females and 7 males ranging in ages of 10-18] arrived in St. John's along with 6 community monitors, a number of political Innu leaders as well as a CBC reporter.
- Transportation was provided to the Grace facility where media entrance was denied. This seemed to upset the Chief. The Province indicated its desire to focus on the needs of the children and getting them settled at such a late hour.
- Overnight the children seem to settle in and are reported to be doing well to this point in time.
- News reports this morning indicate the Chief was forced to act and remove children as the Province was not responding fast enough. To date, the Province has responded to numerous media requests.
- A team of four social workers are expected to be in Davis Inlet today to assess the remaining children/youth sniffing gas.
- A meeting with the Innu delegation, provincial and federal officials is scheduled for tomorrow morning to further discuss follow up activities.

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