



INQUIRY RESPECTING THE TREATMENT, EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF INNU IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

English Transcript

Volume 61

*Commissioners: Retired Judge James Igloliorte, Dr. Mike Devine and
Anastasia Qupee*

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COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much for your patience. We'll begin with a prayer.

Tshaukuesh, please.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you, Tshaukuesh. Thank you, Elizabeth.

This morning, we have the pleasure of inviting Mr. Andrew, Apetet, to present, and he's your witness. Counsel, please proceed.

Go ahead, Anne.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Sorry to interrupt, but we have interpreter for Sheshatshiu, but we will be adding the Mushuau dialect at a later time.

M. COLLINS: Good morning, Mr. Andrew.

Thank you for coming to share your knowledge and experience. Before you share your knowledge, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your experience and expertise. Could you begin by describing your childhood to me?

ELDER A. ANDREW: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

I don't know what you mean by childhood experiences, but what I can tell you with my experiences, I was born during the time when people were starting to come out from the country. They did stop spending time in the country, but they were more or less forced to stay in the community by schooling or by the church or whomever.

M. COLLINS: Can you tell me about your education?

ELDER A. ANDREW: My education, I went to the elementary school here in Sheshatshiu and the high school, I did three

years in Wabush and Lab City area – J.R. Smallwood Collegiate.

M. COLLINS: Can you tell me how you became interested in Innu history?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Well, at the time I was a young man, there were a lot of people that had come out from the country and who had most of their life experiences out in the country. And I had, during my teenage years, spent a lot of time with them and there were a lot more older people then, at that time, who had come from the country. And I was very lucky then to be able to talk to them and talk about their experiences in the country.

M. COLLINS: What did you learn from them?

ELDER A. ANDREW: One of the most important things that I learned from them is the cultural part of the Innu life, you know. It's all about life in the country and the belief systems that are in place in the country, like dreams and it's all the cultural beliefs.

M. COLLINS: What kind of reading or study have you done about Innu history?

ELDER A. ANDREW: I haven't done a lot of reading, you know, not specifically, I didn't go to any college or whatever to do any study. This is all on my own, so I've read a whole lot. I wouldn't be able to give you all the books that I read, but I know the information that they had. I can remember that, but I can't remember the titles of them.

The one that I was reading recently was The Jesuit Relations, which is a record of all the Innu from the 1600s to about 1700s and all the – which, it's the same, really, so it wasn't that hard for me to read it. From what the Innu told me and those beliefs from the 1600s, they're about the same. So it wasn't that difficult to read and to know.

Somebody asked me if I was an expert in that, you know, I would say I became an expert really because I had experience also in the country. And I had those same

experiences as those people that were in the country before.

M. COLLINS: Am I understanding right that your experiences in the country give you a different perspective on what you've read than other people would have?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Yes, I was listening to somebody who did a course on The Jesuit Relations. He was from Pessamit Innu and we were reading the same material but we have a different translation of it. Basically because he wasn't ever in the country, and he didn't have the experience, nor did he know much about the spiritual part of it. He only know about the history of where they were, or that kind of stuff, not the spiritual part. So that was quite a different interpretation on my part and his, even though he went to university to study it.

M. COLLINS: Could I ask you what work you've done on Innu genealogy?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Well, I haven't done a lot of work on itself, like, looking for the information that was already done. It's just a matter of getting the information into formats where people can have a look at it, read it and understand it.

It was already done. There are researchers from Montreal that done that. One of them was José Mailhot. He did quite a lot of work on that, and probably on all the Innu.

M. COLLINS: If this work was already done, have you studied and do you know the information that was gathered?

ELDER A. ANDREW: It's not hard to have a look at it and sort of see what's on there.

What you see on the genealogies that – they're they up on the wall?

But, anyway, one of the reasons I brought that up was the fact that, on that genealogy, almost every Innu is represented on that in all the Innu communities in Labrador and in Quebec. All nine communities, they're all represented on there. It was just a point,

you know, to just show that they're all the same people.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Just to interrupt and for the record, we are aware that there's a chart and during our break – it's a vertical chart showing exactly what Mr. Andrew is talking about – we'll put it up shortly; but we're aware of it.

M. COLLINS: Commissioners, I would like to ask you to qualify Mr. Andrew as an expert in the areas of Innu history and Innu genealogy.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much.

We've heard the opening remarks of our witness. He's an Innu man. He is an elderly gentleman and he has the life experience. He explains that the nature of the genealogy that he has seen, some thing that he has read. He explains that in his work and his interest, he has spoken to individual Elders over time going back in his experience from when Innu people moved out of the country into the community.

I'm satisfied that the witness should and can be qualified, however, I will allow the counsel for the parties to ask any additional questions that they wish. I'll begin over at the left. Mr. Brockwell and Ms. Ashini.

B. BROOKWELL: We don't have further questions at this time.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you.

For Canada?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We don't have further questions at this time.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you, and please, Mr. Warren, province.

P. WARREN: We have no questions.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: I, therefore, qualify Mr. Andrew as an expert witness in the area of questions that counsel will be asking him.

Please proceed.

M. COLLINS: Commissioners, I'd also like to ask for permission to enter Exhibits P-433, P-434 and P-435.

These documents have arrived late, without the usual notice contemplated under the rules; however, Mr. Andrew has advised us this morning that he will be relying on these documents.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: I will ask the other counsel if they have any objections?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Canada has no objections.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: The Province?

P. WARREN: We have no objections, just ensure we get a copy in due course, that's all.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

P. WARREN: Okay, thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you.

IRT counsel.

B. BROOKWELL: The same, no objection, as long as we have a copy at the end. I do see it's excerpts, so perhaps we can just clarify what it is when it's entered.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Anne.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: Could we get those exhibit numbers again?

M. COLLINS: Exhibit P-434, P-433 and P-435.

Mr. Andrew, I understand you've prepared some remarks this morning.

ELDER A. ANDREW: Yes.

M. COLLINS: Would you like to share them with us?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Okay.

I was invited to talk to this Inquiry about Innu history, and I'm honoured to do that. I will talk about history based on Innu culture, my understandings of my culture. I'm one of only two original employees of the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association, and then the Innu Nation, where I'm still employed. The other is my older brother, Greg.

What I will say about Innu history and culture is not in any way a statement from my employer. My comments and opinions are very personal, although I always see myself as being part of the Innu collective.

This Inquiry asks us, as Innu, this question. How did we get to this place in our lives where the non-Innu government is asking us how, as Innu, we got to this place in our lives.

The place that I'm referring to is the place in our history, Innu history where our family lives and the decisions about us raising our children and grandchildren have become so out of control and impacted by the non-Innu government's child protection system. This is not a question that non-Innu government is asking akaneshau families; they are asking us.

Many Innu have already provided their own answers to this question and I, too, have answers for this question. The answers I have are found in our history and in my own experience of that history. I will say that as I look back on our history, even in my lifetime – especially in my lifetime – that, as a people, the place that we are at now is less healthy than when I was born. That's hard to say but I believe that to be true. It's what I've experienced and learned.

I need to say upfront what the biggest influences have been on my learning. First, what I know about Innu culture is what I have learned from Innu tshishennuat, the Elders that I had the privilege to know and spend time with. They are almost all gone now but I know they are here as spirits and their presence gives me both strength and comfort.

As a young man, I chose to go to places where the tshishennuat were drinking. I too would be drinking and present with them, and over time I sought out these experiences so I could keep hearing their stories. Their stories were told about their lives lived before non-government had so much control over our lives.

I cannot really explain how grateful I am that this is what I did. I'm not at all ashamed of this choice. In fact, I was very privileged to be a witness to the Innu tshishennuat that shared their wealth of experiences and knowledge. There is so few of my generation still alive who would have had opportunities to hear these stories that I feel like I hold a precious gift.

It was during these times that older Innu men as well as women would talk about their lived history. They had all been raised in Innu culture, immersed in Innu culture and only Innu culture from the time they were born until they themselves had raised up children and grandchildren. I have some of these tshishennuat on tapes from decades back, but those were formal interviews done specifically with an agenda, not like the experiences I had listening to tshishennuat simply tell their truth in their stories.

When tshishennuat shared their stories they were told away from non-Innu, where they felt safe. I think alcohol probably had the effect of making them less inhibited and it also meant that they revealed many feelings about their experiences and knowledge.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you.

In qualifying Mr. Andrew I omitted an important part of what he said. His language and lived experience gives him a unique perspective on how Innu people interpret their own life compared to persons who do not have his knowledge of Innu-aimun or the unique lifestyle. So he is indeed qualified in Innu language, Innu history and Innu culture.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you. Let's continue where we left off.

Go ahead, Mr. Collins.

M. COLLINS: Mr. Andrew, would you like to continue with your presentation?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Everyone knew the priest forbade these stories from being told. He used his power to outlaw tshishennuat playing the drum and sharing stories of their dreams. In some ways, they took personal risks to share these stories because they knew that there could be repercussions for not keeping this knowledge, especially spiritual knowledge, hidden. The truth is there were some Innu women who became very closely associated with the priest.

Everyone understood that the priest, Father Pirson, wanted to cut off the transmission of knowledge from the tshishennuat to the younger generation. Some women would sometimes go to the priest to tell on Innu who were drinking and sharing stories. The priest wasn't afraid to go after anyone and hit them with stick, for example, if he was mad; if they were telling these stories or if they challenged his authority. As we were growing up, we all witnessed this.

I don't blame Innu who went to the priest to tell on tshishennuat who were drinking and sharing stories. I know this began to create division among the Innu, but I know the Innu who went to the priest were also experiencing the same pain and sadness of village life as everyone else.

They, too, lived with loss and grief and saw what was happening to the adult children and grandchildren. Their lives also must have felt out of control living in the small,

year-round settlement, and I think they were trying to gain some advantage by going to the priest with this information. I think we now say they were trying to cope. Even though it had negative consequences for so many other Innu, this had, I think, profound implications in creating divisions amongst us about the value of our own cultural knowledge in contrast with the value of associating with the church.

But I also know that the tshishennuat knew this about some of the people and so to try and protect themselves, or at least show they were not helpless, they would credit the story or information to a [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken]. If their stories came from (inaudible) it was less likely that the Innu would go to the priest or spread what it was, in essence, gossip because they would have been too embarrassed to explain to the priest that [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken] stories are the stories and phrases that come out of your body when you fart.

[Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

I remember the tshishennuat stories as clear in detail. They had no doubt or confusion about the truth of what they were sharing. I heard them tell stories about their experiences that I knew were very similar to stories that I read in the Bible and this was amazing to me.

I think they had a need to share their knowledge because as tshishennuat this has always been their role in our culture, to pass on the knowledge and the understanding to the next generation of Innu that have been passed to them from their tshishennuat. All this knowledge revealed to me a very integrated ways of living and the belief system on the opinion of all these ways of living and understanding the world.

Also, the tshishennuat shared when they were drinking because they had no other outlet for these stories, many of which were about their spiritual experiences. You need to understand that by the time in the '70s and later, we were living as if we had our legs cut off at the knees. I don't know how else to express it more clearly than this. Our

hearts and minds could still feel and think but they were filling up with sadness, grief and loss. Of course alcohol abuse was in every family, every adult was in pain and that pain was being passed down to the children. I never used the word trauma in those days but I certainly know that you described what we as a people were living as a collective trauma.

The normal Innu ways of passing down these teachings and sharing this knowledge were almost all gone. As I said, the formal transmission of this knowledge was forbidden by the priest. We were no longer being raised up immersed in Innu culture. We were immersed in some new and unknown culture of trauma. Our healthy Innu ways had been replaced by our powerful processes of the church and education. I continued to seek out Elders to listen to their stories because I had a need to understand why we're now living so differently than the way earlier generations had for centuries, lived in Nutshimit. Why were these differences so harmful, so widespread, effecting all the families, not just me and my family.

The tshishennuat I listened to were my professors who were Innu historians, our cultural experts; not the non-Innu who claimed to know our culture and history when they have no experience living our culture or history. I paid attention to those many stories from the tshishennuat. I kept thinking about them trying to make meaning from them and then one day I felt I woke up and everything was clear to me.

When I was a boy I had a similar experience about waking up and the meaning being clear. I was sent to Wabush for my last three years of high school.

By the way, Wabush is the Innu word for rabbit. That's where I went for centre school. People might not know this but the teachers out of high school in Wabush were recruited to support the very lucrative growing mining industry in Labrador West which needed to attract highly educated and qualified professionals. These highly educated professionals wanted their

children to have a high quality, secondary school education if their parents are going to relocate for work to a so-called land God gave to Cain.

So in high school I had teachers with their master's and some might have had their PhDs – extremely well qualified teachers. I know that in spite of what was probably really good classroom instruction, I know for sure that I was struggling in math, barely passing my course when I came home for Christmas; but when I went back to Wabush after Christmas, all the theorems and postulates simply fell into place in my mind and I began getting 99, 100 per cent on my exams. I can't explain this, I just know it happened.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Ben, let's give Anne a break.

Mark down where you are on your paper and then we'll have five minutes, please.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay, folks, we'll take our seats again and pick up where we left off.

Please continue.

Thank you.

M. COLLINS: Mr. Andrew, would you like to continue?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Before I read from this page again, we were talking about all the tshishennuat and their history-telling. I was going to tell a story. I had – one day, I had a phone call from my niece, and she was asked to call me by her cousin who her daughter just came in from the road. She had been playing outside. The daughter said: I saw an old man, came up to me on the road. And she said to me, he said you can come and visit us. We live just up by their place there. And that was the time they closed a building site because they found an old archeological site on there. There was no old man there on site, but he came

to this young girl and said come and visit us. But this was an old archeology site.

So what – when people talk about history, you know, it's almost alive – a live history of this old man coming to see her on the side of the road and saying come by and visit us; we're just over there. It's an old archeology site.

And there was another occasion in that same area where this young man saw an older woman standing outside the house, her sister's house. He went out and went to the place where he saw that old lady. There was no old lady there, but he found an old spear point right where the old lady was.

Anyway, that's my history course for today. By the way, these sites were 3,000 years old.

This was the very same experience I had as I became older, after continuing to listen to all the stories by the tshishennuat about our culture and history. I simply woke up one day and everything became clear and meaningful to me.

At the beginning of the Inquiry, Innu historical timelines were presented by Innu. I think this was the place to start. These timelines presented in detail much of what has been experienced by Innu since village life began. This is our lived experience. But in timelines also present our nomadic culture throughout the (inaudible) and for thousands of years before village life. How do we present information and how do we understand information about a timeline that is stretching over thousands of years? I think a lot more work needs to be done – focused on this. But we can't ignore the fact that we do know.

Innu were living throughout (inaudible) and before Christ was born. This weight of thousands of years of history as nomadic people can't be compared to the last 60 or so years of village living. Our experiences as Innu and our history as a people begins so far before any formal provincial child welfare system that it is almost

incomprehensible – almost impossible to see how that bears on where we are now.

I would argue that ours has been an oral culture. We must look at the written evidence – the concrete evidence we have about our lived culture and history. The history I was taught was written by Westerners and Europeans; we have no voice in this history. There is no place for our experiences or our telling of the facts of our history.

I would just like to talk a little bit about how the history is – how the Europeans had been so perverted, really. I mean you only have to look at that word “Newfoundland” that we have our province as; supposedly, it was discovered by Europeans. And people have to act, you know, and they make decisions based on this history, and then I think that has a profound effect on this Inquiry, and then in the way we make decisions on the false history that we’ve been taught.

Anyway – but we all know that the Innu just didn’t arrive in Sheshatshiu for the first time in the ’60s and ’70s.

[Dialogue between Elder A. Andrew and Interpreter Nuna in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

ELDER A. ANDREW: The history I was taught was written by Westerners and Europeans. We have no voice in this history. There is no place for our experiences, for our telling of the facts of our history, but we all know that Innu didn’t just arrive in Sheshatshiu for the first time in the ’60s and ’70s when we became described by white people as the Indian problem.

This is why we have to take a much longer view of history and not just talk about the child welfare system. Otherwise, it will be like saying you only need to take the top layer of onion skin off to get at the onion; but we all know that all the layers of skin have to be peeled back to reveal the onion. To get at how we got to the place we are today is deeply rooted in our history. My roots are in Innu history.

I am almost 71 years old. I was born before Sheshatshiu was a year-round village. My family, all Innu families, were still nomadic people still living in tents. I was born in ’54 in Nutshimit at Sheshatshiu, at the end of Grand Lake, Kakatshu-utshishtun. The Innu woman who helped at my birth was Maninush Jean-Pierre who was the wife of Pinip Michel, Sr.

My parents were Matiu Ben and Maniaten. My father was born in 1916, and my mother in ’32. They were also born in Nutshimit. My parents’ older siblings and grandparents, as well as other extended family, were all living in tents. Camp at Sheshatshiu.

I was the fifth of 16 siblings. I’m told I was born December 24. Apparently, there was a lot of snow by then and Kakatshu-utshishtun, Grand Lake, was frozen over. When I was a few days old, my parents took me and, walking on snowshoes, went to Sheshatshiu so that I could be baptized. It was an 80-mile round trip.

There was a priest at Sheshatshiu, but no settlement of Innu. We had no Ski-Doos or machines, radio, satellite phones, no calendars, no watches. We were living our lives in Nutshimit in small interdependent groups where the well-being of the group was the most important. Our lives were still based on knowledge of the land, and everything connected to the land and had been passed down by the – from all the previous generations of Innu.

I’m considered Sheshatshiu Innu because my parents were forced from their life on the land and into a settlement at Sheshatshiu, hence, Sheshatshiu Innu. That didn’t happen until the early 1960s. This makes me and my siblings the first generations of Innu ever to be raised into adulthood in a village, not to be raised up in our Innu nomadic way of life.

I think about the significance of that and I think you need to think about the significance of that, the implications of that abrupt end in just one generation from nomadic Innu culture that has been lived on

for thousands of years to sedentary village life.

Before I talk about my experiences with village life, I need to go back to our history to when we first had contact with non-Innu, the Europeans, who as explorers were trying to make our land accessible to more Europeans and the missionaries who came with them. In essence, this was the very beginning of the end for our nomadic culture but, obviously, we could not possibly have known that then.

It is really fortunate that there are some precious written records of that time, and I discovered them doing computer searches. These records have put together in volumes which are titled *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*.

It's almost 200 years of records. I certainly did appreciate what I had stumbled upon when I started to read through these records. I came to realize it was like discovering a gold mine.

These documents contained a number of volumes of notes and letters. I xeroxed most of these volumes because it's very expensive to buy a set of these records. All this material was written by a French, Latin and Italian – it was translated into English by Reuben Gold Thwaites and are, as I said, available on the internet.

In the records I will focus on Father Le Jeune, a Jesuit priest, writing letters back to his superiors in France. He writes in great detail about every aspect of his missionary work. From his writing, it is very clear that the Jesuits were very educated Europeans. You can see this throughout Le Jeune's writing where he's very thoughtful, reflective and shares opinions based on his direct experiences of contact with my ancestors.

Famous historic figures like Champlain and Brébeuf are alive at this point in time. Their focus was on the potential riches of this new world and how we could serve Europe, in particular the queens and the kings. The

focus of the Jesuits was ultimately to aid in the efforts of the explorers to serve European needs and desires but, first, they had to gain control over the first peoples they encountered to make us into Christians so more Europeans would safely be able to come from Europe to this part of the world and be guided and assisted in their work by the first peoples who, because of their thousands of years of occupancy, were the ones who knew how to survive on the land.

The earliest part of paragraph (inaudible) sort of describes the Trojan horse, these Jesuits, the priests, Christians.

[Dialogue between Elder A. Andrew and Interpreter Nuna in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

ELDER A. ANDREW: The records refer to place names we are familiar with today such as Tadoussac and the great rivers, the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay.

That word "Tadoussac," that's an Innu word. When people talk about butter, they say tutush-pimi, and that same word refers to breast. Tadoussac, there's two mountains there. Tadoussac, that's what it refers to, Tadoussac tutush.

Anyway, the names and the words used in the records are from that time period. We're not called Innu in these records. Sometimes the French name Montagnais is used but most of our ancestors are called savages. Obviously, the origin of this label, savages, come from how Europeans saw us as being like wild animals, uncontrollable, uncivilized and preliterate. I don't take offence at this label because it comes from the perceptions of Europeans who used this label. However, this is where reading the descriptions of my ancestors shows me how inaccurate this label was. I hope you will see that also, even in the very brief excerpts that I will share.

I'm going to read some quotes directly from Volume VI. These records were written between 1633 and 1634 when Father Le was in Quebec, likely along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River.

Volume VI has many chapters; Chapter III is titled: On the Means of Converting the Savages. In this chapter, I see Le Jeune clearly laying out the blueprint which sets the stage, actually, for everything that has followed in terms of the history of Innu, and non-Innu, and not just for (inaudible), but for all the rest of Canada actually. I know that's a sweeping statement but I think it's historically accurate.

Le Jeune writes in quotes. "... if I can draw any conclusion from the things I see, it seems to me that not much ought to be hoped for from the Savages as long as they are wanderers; you will instruct them today, tomorrow hunger snatches your hearers away, forcing them to go seek their food in the rivers and the woods.... they are so occupied in seeking livelihood in these woods, that they have not time, so to speak, to save themselves."

"I tried to live among them last Autumn; I was not there a week before I was attacked by a violent fever, which caused me to return to our little house to recover my health. Being cured, I tried to follow them during the Winter, and I was very ill the greater part of the time. These reasons, and many others I might give ... make me think that we shall work a great deal and advance very little, if we do not make these Barbarians stationary.... For they live only from one day to another"

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Apetet, we'll let you finish off where you're comfortable and then we'll take a break for lunch. But you can go until you're ready to finish.

ELDER A. ANDREW: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You good there?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Hmm?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You good to finish for lunch or do want to –

ELDER A. ANDREW: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You're good?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Good.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: All right.

An hour and a half, please. We'll see you back at 1:30.

Thank you.

Recess

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Welcome back and good afternoon, everyone.

We are ready to continue from this morning. We'd like to advise the participants in the community of the availability of health services. I'll ask Commissioner Devine to review that before we begin.

Please, Anne.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Can somebody turn off the fan first, please?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Can you turn off the fan? Brian will do it.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Thank you, Brian. Thank you.

Yes, just to remind people that we do have healing support services in the room at all times, or in the area. I'm looking for Sean Allen as clinical support person, and Edward Nuna, he's the healing services liaison person. So both of them are always around.

If anybody is affected by the testimony at any time, those folks are already there. If you're triggered and you need someone to talk with, then they or one of their alter egos will be there. If not Edward and Sean, then somebody else will be here. So just check with staff if you're unsure.

Thank you.

INTERPRETER NUNA: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You okay to start, Ben?

All right. Go ahead, counsel.

M. COLLINS: Mr. Andrew, would you like to continue your presentation?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Yes.

[Dialogue between Elder A. Andrew and Interpreter Nuna in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

ELDER A. ANDREW: Although the savages are nomadic, the good seed of the gospel will not fail to take root, although more slowly, as they can only be instructed at intervals. The savages will follow the example of our French and will settle down to cultivate the land. But I believe now, if they are not helped, they will lose heart, especially the savages at Tadoussac.

And the third means of making ourselves welcome would be to erect here a seminary for little boys, and in time, one for girls, under the direction of some brave mistress.

The reason why I would not like to take the children of one locality and teach them in that locality itself, but rather in some other place, it is because Barbarians cannot bear to have their children punished, or even scolded, not being able to refuse anything to a crying child. They carry this to such an extent that upon the slightest pretext they would take them away before they were educated.

In these few paragraphs, written almost 400 years ago, I see Father Le Jeune laying out a plan of how to take control of a people, a plan to fundamentally change the people. The three steps he outlines: make them stay in one place; make them learn to cultivate crops and farm; take the children away to educate them in the European ways. This was the start of the residential schools. This is in the early 1600s, when the Jesuits started.

Le Jeune was talking about my people, about Innu, and he believed and planned that there would be no more nomadic culture, no more living from the land and no more raising up our children in our ways. These steps he outlined also contained the recipe for residential schools, which the Catholics did start to establish in the 1600s.

Canada began funding these schools in 1883, authorizing formal support for the residential school system. I am reminded that the last federally funded residential school closed in 1996.

In this same chapter, Father Le Jeune writes briefly about what we today might call the shaman. He calls him the sorcerer. He writes: Men who have eaten little and hunted long, at the first cry of the sorcerer, waken and promptly take themselves to this witches' Sabbath, and what will seem beyond belief, I have never seen a single complaint rise among them, neither among the women nor the men nor even the children, each one showing himself prompt and glad to obey the voice of the sorcerer or juggler.

Le Jeune had no way to understand the importance of our spiritual leadership which has been passed down many generations. Le Jeune's devotion was to his belief in God and he asked, in his letter: Why is the sorcerer ardently loved, more promptly obeyed and more devotedly adored than the God which Le Jeune worshipped?

Chapter V is titled: On the Good Things Which are Found Among the Savages. For the very first time, when I read this, I saw how an educated European man, one of the earliest to have contact with my ancestors, actually described my ancestors.

I know how I imagined my ancestors to be. In the timeline presented to the Inquiry, we described them as being like giants and Annie drew a picture of a giant on that timeline. Our understanding of our ancestor comes from what we know about how they lived and cared for one another, but it's still hard to explain how reading these words from almost 400 years ago impacted me;

how it confirmed what we knew as Innu but had never seen written down.

To begin with physical advantages, I would say that they possess these in abundance. They are tall, erect, strong, well-proportioned and agile. He wrote that, in comparison, European men are only caricatures of men compare with our savages. I see here upon the shoulders of these people the heads of Julius Caesar, of Pompey, of Augustus, and of others I have seen in France, drawn upon paper or in relief on medallions.

Then he goes further to say: As to the mind of the savage, it is of good quality. I believe that all souls are all made from the same stock, and that they do not materially differ; hence, these barbarians having well formed bodies, and organs well regulated and well arranged, their minds ought to work with ease. Education and instruction are lacking.

I naturally compare our savages with certain villagers, because both are usually without education, though our peasants, back in France, are superior in this regard; and yet I have not seen any one thus far who have come to this country, who does not confess and frankly admit that the savages are more intelligent than our ordinary peasants.

Then he describes what I think we would all see as virtues of good character – our savages are happy; for the two tyrants who provide hell and torture for many of our Europeans, do not reign in their great forest. I mean ambition and avarice. As they have neither political organizations, nor offices, nor dignitaries, nor any authority, for they only obey their Chief through good will toward him. Therefore they never kill each other to acquire these honours. Also, as they are contented with mere living, not one of them gives himself to the devil to acquire wealth.

They make a pretense of never getting angry, not because of the beauty of this virtue, for which they have not even a name, but for their contentment and happiness, I mean, to avoid the bitterness caused by anger.

He acknowledged that at that time in our culture we didn't even have a word in our language for anger. This absolutely causes me to pause because we are now at that point in time as a people when anger seems to be one of the most common and often expressed emotion.

Reading on, he says, "Whoever professes not to get angry, ought also to make a profession of patience; the savages surpass us to such an extent, in this respect, that we ought to be ashamed. I saw them, in their hardships and in their labors, suffer with cheerfulness.... they said to me, 'We shall sometimes two days, sometimes three, without eating, for lack of food... let they soul be strong to endure suffering and hardship; keep thyself from being sad, otherwise thou wilt be sick.'"

Maybe my ancestors were among the first to coin the phrase laughter is the best medicine.

Le Jeune described how he saw my ancestors in relationship to one another. "They are very much attached to each other, and agree admirably. You do not see any disputes, quarrels, enmities, or reproaches among them. Men leave the arrangement of the household to the women, without interfering with them; they cut, and decide, and give away as they please, without making the husband angry. I have never seen my host ask a giddy young woman that he had with him what became of the provisions, although they were disappearing very fast. I have never heard a woman complain because they were not invited to the feasts, because the men ate the good pieces, or because they had to work continually – going in search of the wood for the fire, making the Houses, dressing the skins, and busying themselves in other very laborious work."

"Tell a Savage that another Savage has slandered him, and he will bow the head and not say a word; if they meet each other afterward, they will pretend not to know anything about it, acting as if nothing had been said. They treat each other as

brothers; they harbour no spite against those of their own nation.

“They are very generous among themselves and even make a show of not loving anything, of not being attached to the riches of the earth, so that they may not grieve if they lose them. Not long ago a dog tore a beautiful Beaver robe belonging to one of the Savages, and he was the first one to laugh about it. One of the greatest insults that can be offered to them, is to say, ‘That man likes everything, he is stingy.’”

“You will see them take care of their kindred, the children of their friends, widows, orphans.... they are treated the same as the children of the father of the family, or at least almost the same.”

“This is truly the sign of a good heart and of a generous soul.”

Le Jeune ends this chapter on good things by saying: All I have in this chapter is very true; and yet I would not dare to assert that I have seen one act of real moral virtue in the savage.

From these brief descriptions, I see a picture being created that describes my ancestors living in such a good way, the way of taking care of one another, of sharing with one another, of remaining calm and positive, of laughing to avoid becoming stressed, almost what I call a perfect society, the healthy culture.

I know there’s no such thing as perfection but the behaviours Le Jeune described, integrated with the spiritual beliefs that we know guided our ancestors, proved to overall well-being of our people and contrasted remarkably with our society today.

The last quotes I want to read from the Relations come from Chapter 6: On Their Vices and Their Imperfections. Le Jeune described the savages as haughty and proud, and they – in quotes there – render no homage to anyone whatsoever, except when they like.

There is nothing serious about them, except when they make a pretence amongst us of being grave and dignified. I never could place any reliance upon all their answers; because if I questioned them about one thing, they told me about something else, only to get something to laugh and jest about; and consequently I could not know when they were speaking seriously or when they were jesting.

I’ll end these quotes from The Jesuit Relations from this final quote from this same chapter: “I do not believe there is a nation under heaven more given to sneering and bantering than that of the Montagnais. Their life is passed in eating, laughing, and making sport of each other, and of all the people they know.”

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: That’s funny; Anastasia is a lot like that, too.

Please continue.

ELDER A. ANDREW: I take many valuable learnings about Innu history and Innu culture from Le Jeune’s writing. It has likely opened a window on so much valuable information and observation based on his lived experience that I’ve never read anywhere else. There is so much information about our culture when it was still intact, when our ancestors were still immersed in our culture with limited contact with Europeans.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: I’m going to interrupt you, Ben. That sounds like you’re pretty well close to the end of quoting from the Le Jeune papers and we try not to push Anne too long. An hour, almost an hour is a long time to be interrupting, so we’ll have a short break, 10 minutes, please.

Thank you.

Recess

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay, we’re all set again now.

Ruth, you can get the fan. Thank you.

Counsel. Go ahead, Mr. Collins.

M. COLLINS: Mr. Andrew, would you like to continue your presentation?

ELDER A. ANDREW: Yes

There is so much in these records that describe the colonial process as it was first being introduced to my ancestors. I read how Le Jeune describes the colonial process of trying to take control of us, to change us to ensure settlers would be able to safely come to our territory to exploit the riches of our land for economic gain.

Le Jeune's goal was clear; he came with the belief that the most godly calling way was to make us into Christians. He saw his European culture as superior to my culture. I know he saw my ancestors as having shared ways of living, of having a culture – a culture – but he could only see our culture as inferior to his.

In order to further his goal to convert us, make us Christians, he gained a working knowledge of our language, because he needed to communicate the catechisms in the bible. He needed to change the beliefs that underpinned our culture and replace them with Christian beliefs. He knew this was necessary in order to bring about fundamental change in how we lived.

He then described how to bring about these profound and fundamental changes. I think in his writings he laid out the remarkably clear and straightforward plan: Make them stay in one place. Make them learn how to cultivate crops and farms. Take their children away to educate them in European ways.

The success of this colonial plan, which I would argue was brought to bear across North America, depended on these three elements working together. We know for a historical fact that this plan was more successful from the colonizer's perspective much earlier in many other areas across the continent. I won't talk about this because there are better sources than me to share these facts. I want to talk about lived

experience with how successful that colonizing plan was here.

When I was born, in many respects, Innu culture was still nomadic. This seems hard to believe given where we are now, but I think there was a lot of factors that protected my people from the impact of full-on colonialism being felt many generations sooner as it was further west.

The biggest factor from the Innu perspective was that our ancestors continued to live on the land, going onto the interior of this huge geographical area known as the Ungava Peninsula in the fall, and only coming out to coastal settlements in the summer.

Sheshatshiu was the summering place for many generations before it became a settlement. Innu would gather together in tents along the shore and make preparations for returning to the country in the fall.

Hunters like my father would occasionally make trips to the Hudson Bay post with some furs to sell and pick up some basic supplies, but then they would return to our camps in the interior. I only know of one story of the family staying in the interior during the summer. I was told that Pien-Joseph didn't have enough furs by the summer to return to Sheshatshiu to get supplies for his family. I imagine his family probably endured hardship, but he probably felt he was making the best decision for his family to wait until he could get more furs before coming to Sheshatshiu, and he did later on.

As a small boy, I remember there were no year-round houses for our families at Sheshatshiu. Father Pirson was living here year-round in a house and going to Davis Inlet also. There was no school. We lived in tents. We got our fresh water from the old wharf down below the church. The current was so strong then because Churchill Falls hasn't been flooded yet. The water in the river was still fresh, not salty. That has since changed because of the damming of the Mishta-shipu and the salt water has actually gone up towards Grand Lake.

I didn't know as a child but I do now, that our parents and grandparents couldn't hold off the colonial process being brought down on us in the '50s and the '60s. There were so many factors out of their control, including the fact that they didn't have any way to know what the experience was or what was happening to other first peoples across Canada.

The fur trade itself had a huge impact on nomadic culture, and later resource development and exploration associated with development also brought about significant impacts to the laws of our nomadic life. I can't emphasize enough the significance of our way of living, of how different in every respect that my nomadic culture was from Western European culture.

So when the colonial process began to be more formal and my parents had to deal with government and church authorities, the impacts came much more rapidly and, for the most part, those impacts were very negative.

[Dialogue between Elder A. Andrew and Interpreter Nuna in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

ELDER A. ANDREW: The most direct colonial impacts on my family and generation came with the early efforts of the colony of Newfoundland, hand-in-hand with the reach into Labrador of the British-based International Grenfell Mission.

The Inquiry asked Michaela Doucette to prepare some archival research and this was shared with me. Her research highlights documents from the Newfoundland records which are dated between the early 1900s up until the 1990s.

The earlier records dated 1907 are all from St. Anthony Children's Home; the register of girls and register of boys refer in many to medical records and some brief background about the family. All the references and names seem to be of Inuit children referred to in these records as Eskimo or half-Eskimo in appearance and some are called quadrans. I'm only guessing, but I think that

term might be used to describe the idea of having one-quarter of the certain blood.

It's hard to read a lot of this information because it was about children. Even if these children weren't Innu, there are no references I recognize to Innu children and families or Indians, as we were referred to in these historic records until 1927 when Father O'Brien receives a letter about the Indians.

The first 20 years of these records, until 1927, suggest to me the absence of the names of Innu children. This is because, for the most part, families were still nomadic and still maintaining as much control as possible over their family lives. They were now coming to the direct attention of the health authorities. However, the comments about the children named illustrate who had power over the decisions about children's lives. In the records, there are multiple references to both Dr. Paddon and Dr. Grenfell and the various ministers and priests.

The following are some of the early entries, on page 8 about a girl, age 16, who was at an orphanage from five years of age who wanted to go back to Labrador at 16. "Dr. Paddon wanted her to return to the Labrador last fall by [sic] Dr. Grenfell wants her to remain in the Orphanage until she's 18" – because – "She is most dependable with the little children, in the kitchen or in the sewing room so she is invaluable help."

On page 9, the girl who came to St. Anthony in 1910 at the age of 15, "being sentenced here by Dr. Grenfell for telling lies about herself in connection with the minister."

"Under the present policy of the St. Anthony Orphanage, it is neither an orphanage, nor a school, but an institution which cares for children of various groups as indicated in this report.... we have a large nursery here, and the care and training of these children is one of the most important phases of our work."

"... it is necessary for us to continue caring for the orphaned and homeless children we

have in this home whether they are bright or not.... Some of the children who are brought here by Dr. Grenfell because they are not getting good care at home.”

These references don't mention any Innu children but we can certainly say this at this time. The International Grenfell Association appeared to take responsibility for what might have been deemed essential child welfare services. The first mention of Innu is in the letter dated August 1927 from Harry Andrews at Hebron to Father O'Brien. The reference is not specifically to Innu children but to Innu collectively.

“I am sorry for the state of our Indian friends at North West River it seems too bad to let these folks down so – isn't it possible I wonder to find something for these people to do during the summer time so that they may be able to leave for their hunting grounds better equipped with provisions.”

“Our Indian, equipped for hunting as he is today, will not in an average year find sufficient furs to keep him alive.”

Deer and game have greatly decreased during the past few years, and this means that the Indian required more of the white man's food to maintain his family.

“These poor old Indians do not receive many blessings though being under the 'protective care' of our legislature.... as they are in no way a bother or drag to the Govt. I cannot see any just reasons why they would not at least lent them back the credit part of what's taken from them....”

This is really the first evidence in these records that the Hudson Bay Company and the Colonial Government of Newfoundland had awareness of an Indian problem. Father O'Brien seems to be the go-between for the non-Innu in positions of authority to talk to other non-Innu in positions about this Indian problem.

Dr. Paddon told me that he sent a report to the colonial secretary. I think his plan is to centralize the residents who are scattered along the coast in hopes of interesting them

in farming. I think Dr. Paddon claims that after the third year the people will be, more or less, independent. Douglas told me that Dr. Paddon also had hopes of being appointed Commissioner for the Coast.

“... but in practice both you and I know that it will be a failure before it is begun in the meantime, the people will become so demoralized that their future would appear to be hopeless. You know their natural occupation is hunting and if you take them away from their present locations and trapping grounds, where they can at least obtain a few foxes in ordinary years, and assemble them in villages, where it is impossible to find work of a productive nature for them to do, the result I fear will be disastrous....”

Seems to me that these comments appear to show that the non-Innu who had some authority over Innu lives didn't always agree on what should happen and perhaps were looking to Father O'Brien to be an advocate for the Innu.

There's no mention of any one Innu speaking for the Innu and I assumed this is because we were still practising nomadic ways and didn't have English as a language to be able to speak to non-Innu.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay, mark your spot there again, Ben. We're going to give Anne another break.

Before we do, the Inquiry would like to welcome and recognize Judge Bill English. He's been contracted to do some work for the Inquiry and if you could step up to the microphone there right besides Anne and just introduce yourself to us, please, Sir.

W. ENGLISH: Thank you very much.

It's wonderful to be here. I've enjoyed seeing the process today and listening to Ben and seeing how everybody is really paying amazing attention and it's – I've been watching some of the video that's available, that's one thing, but to be here and to see it has been a real privilege and

I'm looking forward to seeing some more and following the proceedings.

So thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good to have you here.

Thank you, Sir.

Okay, 10 minutes.

Recess

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Okay, folks, if we could, we'll get back to the table now.

Come on up, Anne. Back to your spot.

Yeah, Commissioner Devine will be back in just one second. Nashtash – Anastasia has asked whether we should find out from Tshaukuesh, and also from you, Anne, if you'd like to take a break now. It's been a long day for both of you, so we just need to ask you that question. So you can ask Tshaukuesh, too.

Time for a break?

INTERPRETER NUNA: Yes.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah.

Okay, so in consideration of how difficult it is to interpret for the full day and recognizing that we have an Elder we asked to stay with us, we should consider their health as well.

So, Ben, I'll ask you to be back here again tomorrow. We usually start around 9:30. Is that okay with you?

All right, then. We'll ask Elizabeth to close our day, please.

ELDER PENASHUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]