

May 19, 1997
Alkali Lake, BC

ALKALI LAKE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL INQUIRY

Grand Chief Ed John
Doctor J. Coutoure
Judge C. Barnett

Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner.

INQUIRY

Brad Wicks

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Richard Rogers

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Joe Morrison

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1 --- MEETING COMMENCED AT 9:10 AM

2 (OPENING DRUM SONG)

3 CHARLENE BELLEAU: I would ask you to remain
4 standing, the drummers, we'll ask our Elder, Hazel Johnson to
5 say an opening prayer, Hazel.

6 (OPENING PRAYER)

7 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, we're finished with
8 the prayer part, thank you. David Zirnhelt, you want to come
9 and sit up here with Marilyn. Good morning, we'd like to thank
10 you for joining us in this important event for our community.
11 We would like to start with an opening address and a welcome
12 address by our Chief, Marilyn Belleau, Marilyn.

13 CHIEF MARILYN BELLEAU: Good morning, Elders,
14 Commissioners, observers and our people from our community,
15 welcome you today for this inquiry. I'd like to especially
16 welcome our Commissioners, Ed John and Judge Barnett and also
17 Joe Coutoure, who'll be here sitting as Commissioners today and
18 also the lawyers that are here, we welcome you, and all the
19 visitors that have come a long ways, we welcome you.

20 These next three days you'll be hearing from our
21 people, our people telling their stories, relating about the
22 events about some of the history of the residential school. A
23 lot of these experiences for our people were very traumatic and
24 they still with us today. Three generations of our people have
25 gone to the residential school just outside Williams Lake, like

1 my grandmother, my dad and myself have been there.

2 As the days unfold you will hear the stories, but
3 what we're seeking here is we want the public, the people from
4 the outside to understand, we want these stories recorded, we
5 want them understood and we want, we've had apologies in the
6 past, but that's not enough for our people because of a lot of
7 the hurts that they've gone through and they're still going
8 through today. We seek redress for these traumatic experiences
9 and hurts that people still carry with them today.

10 The residential school issue is one that's still
11 unresolved. I remember speaking to somebody in town and they
12 were telling me, Marilyn, when are they going to just let this
13 go, why don't you just get on with your lives and just let this
14 go. I said, no, it's not over yet, it's not, hasn't been
15 resolved. We see it every day, the way our people live, these
16 unresolved issues surface at some point and we know where some
17 of the root lies. A lot of us have done a lot of healing in the
18 last 15 years, but its still needs to, there needs a lot of
19 repair and it's just not remedial, it's something that's deeper
20 than that, I see.

21 Because I feel that we are just on the surface of
22 something, Alkali Lake has been known for taking the step
23 forward, like we did in the area of our battle with alcoholism
24 over 25 years ago, 24 years ago when Andy and Phyllis began this
25 route, this road of recovery. And I know even when taking this

1 step with this inquiry is a real big challenge for us, it's like
2 we're letting out ourselves out in the open again, taking that
3 risk, we don't know what's going to come of this but we're
4 willing to — because we've suffered long enough. And I know
5 there's other people in the Province of BC that have been making
6 steps, like the Nuu-chah-nulth have written a book called 'The
7 Nuu-chah-nulth Experience', recording their history of the
8 residential school in Port Alberni.

9 So, today I welcome all the people that are here
10 and for all of you I just want you to listen to our people, hear
11 them as they speak. Because what happens is our people speak
12 directly from the heart and that's where you need to hear them.
13 Thank you.

14 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Marilyn. Before we
15 have an address from David Zirnhelt, I would like to take time
16 to have the Commissioners and the lawyers introduce themselves.
17 We'll start with you, Ed John, your system should be on.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Yes, my name is Edward John,
19 I'm — thank you very much, I actually turned it down a little
20 bit so I could see past it. My name is Edward John, I'm a
21 Tl'azt'en member, Tl'azt'en Nation, I'm from the Carrier peoples
22 to the north of here. And it's my pleasure to be serving on
23 this Commission to, and to the events that many of your people
24 went through at the residential school here in Williams Lake.
25 I look forward to the next three days.

1 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: My name is Cunliffe
2 Barnett, I came to Williams Lake in the Fall of 1973 as a
3 Provincial Court Judge. I recall my first visit to Alkali back
4 in 1974 and I've seen some of the changes in the community since
5 then, it's a great privilege to be here today.

6 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: My name is Joe Coutoure,
7 I'm honoured by the invitation to be here. I'm from Fort
8 McMurray originally, I'm non-status, gypsy Indian, travel all
9 over, I've got a lot of enemies, you got to keep moving. I'm
10 here because, I guess of my background of who I am, I've been on
11 the traditional path since the Spring of 1971. At that time I
12 started that path I already had, oh four or five degrees,
13 especially a doctor's degree in psychology which has served me
14 well. And that combination of tradition and western is, in a
15 deepest personal way, extremely challenging and satisfying and
16 I guess, maybe it's that combination that brought me here. As
17 I said, I'm honoured by the invitation, thank you very much.

18 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Joe. We'll start
19 with Joe Morrison.

20 JOE MORRISON: My name is Joe Morrison, I'm one of
21 the lawyers, I'm certainly honoured to come all the way from St.
22 John's, Newfoundland, to be here today and to meet with the
23 people that I have met with. I'd like to thank Charlene
24 personally for her assistance in bringing us here and I'd like
25 to thank all the other people that I've met so far and I'm sure

1 the people that I'll meet as we continue to stay here over the
2 next three days. Thank you.

3 RICHARD ROGERS: Good morning, my name is Richard
4 Rogers, I am also a lawyer from St. John's, Newfoundland. I've
5 had a great deal of experience in dealing with similar issues in
6 our province, being involved in a length inquiry and subsequent
7 legal and civil litigation, which for the most part was quite
8 successful in its resolution. And I know that we have been
9 asked to appear here in our experience with our past to assist
10 in this inquiry, to help bring forth a greater understanding of
11 the amount of abuse and damages that were done to the local
12 people. And we're hoping that, through our experience, we will
13 be able to bring forth that insight so there be a greater
14 understanding.

15 BRAD WICKS: Good morning, my name is Brad Wicks,
16 I'm a partner of Richard and Joe's at the St. John's law firm of
17 Williams, Roebathan, McKay & Marshall. As Richard has said, we
18 are certainly very happy to be here and to bring whatever
19 experience to bear on this issue that we can and to assist the
20 people of Alkali Lake in their struggle with this issue. We are
21 very happy to have the opportunity to meet with many of the
22 people and the victims of the residential school at St.
23 Joseph's. And to do whatever we can to help them in telling
24 their story to the community and quite frankly to the world,
25 because we think that's a very important goal. Thank you.

1 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Brad. Before we
2 begin this morning's session, we wanted to introduce to you some
3 people, special people that we have with us in the audience. We
4 have counselors, they will be with us over the next three days
5 as our people return from the pow wows and where they are out
6 there, there will be more people as the day goes on and as the
7 next two days unfold. We want to make sure that as people are
8 telling their stories that they feel safe that as they go
9 through whatever feelings they may as witnesses that they feel
10 safe. We also want to make sure that yourself as support people
11 in the community feel that you have someone to speak to when you
12 feel emotional about what is being said and some of the pictures
13 you see and the information that will be presented to you.

14 So we wanted to make sure we introduce to you to
15 our counselors, Paul Davis, Edna Johnson, Barb Green, Gladys
16 Lepetrie (phonetic), Mercedes Finnigan and Sandra Hayes
17 Gardiner. So please feel free to approach any of these people
18 or they may come to see you, so you know, that they're available
19 throughout the next three days, thank you for being here.

20 Some of the information that you will hear that
21 is before the Commissioners, I want to just put on the record.
22 We have a table of contents that will provide the following
23 document to the Commissioners. The table of contents include
24 Tab 1, A History of the Development of the Indian Act, along
25 with Indian Act and amendments from 1868 to 1975, an index

1 collection by Sharon Helen Ven (phonetic).

2 In Tab 2, we have 'Education for Subordination',
3 the University of Saskatchewan, the Native Law Centre in 1981,
4 in Tab 3, we have 'Roman Catholic Indian Residential Schools in
5 British Columbia', that was written by the late Father Thomas
6 LaSalles (phonetic) with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1990.
7 Also attached in Tab 3 is an apology from the Oblates of Mary
8 Immaculate that was made in July 24 of 1991. In Tab 4 we have
9 a booklet titled 'Victims of Benevolence' that provides
10 information specifically on St. Joseph's Mission Residential
11 School that we attended here on Williams Lake. That book was
12 written by Doctor Elizabeth Furniss and she'll be joining us
13 over the day and that book was written in 1990.

14 In Tab 5 we have the 'Impact of Residential
15 School, Cariboo Tribal Council', Dr. Roland Chris John
16 (phonetic) along with various community members from the four
17 Cariboo Tribal, five Cariboo Tribal Council communities
18 conducted research, so that document is in Tab 5. In Tab 6 we
19 have Regina v. McIntee, the decision that was handed down on
20 June 1, 1989. In Tab 7 we have Regina v. Doughty, June 28,
21 1991, sentenced for abuses in St. Joseph's Mission, April 13,
22 1995, he was sentenced for additional charges at a residential
23 school in the Duncan area.

24 In Tab 8 we have Regina v. O'Connor, July 10,
25 1996 decision, also the Supreme Court of Canada decision that

1 was handed down in 1995 and the Court of Appeal for BC, the
2 decision on March 26, 1997, that eventually freed him from jail
3 pending appeal. In Tab 9 we have Regina v. Maczynski, handed
4 down on December 13, 1995, in Tab 10 we have Reginal v. Plint,
5 March 21, 1995, court proceedings, as well as Regina v. Clarke,
6 St. George's Residential School, May 19, 1989. We also have
7 attached in behind Tab 10, the 'Royal Commission's Report on
8 Aboriginal Peoples', specifically related to residential
9 schools, so that information is in tabs one through to 10 in the
10 binders before you.

11 Before we begin with the first witness this
12 morning, we wanted to take time to allow MLA David Zirnhelt from
13 the Cariboo-Chilcotin, address the inquiry and bring greetings
14 from the Province of British Columbia, David.

15 DAVID ZIRNHELT: Thank you, Chief, and all those
16 assembled here today. This inquiry has a bit of emotion for me
17 as well, I realize I'm here representing the Government of
18 British Columbia, but I'm also an elected representative. A
19 very vivid memory for me is seeing some of the escapees running
20 across the field at the 150, the long way around to try to get
21 home, running away from the residential school. And there was
22 no question at our kitchen table. We didn't need to know why
23 they were running away.

24 Later my mother had an opportunity to teach at
25 the school and she would come home with stories of what some of

1 the children would do and say to her. And there was a reaching
2 out for caring that somehow the institution couldn't provide.

3 What you're doing today at Alkali I think is
4 commendable, I think it had to be done and I commend you for
5 taking the leadership to initiate it. The Royal Commission
6 raised the concern around the need for a full inquiry and we
7 know that apologies aren't enough. I know our Premier, when
8 knowing of the finding of the Commission, immediately apologized
9 to the people, although the province has limited history with
10 residential schools. But we're all in this together because we,
11 as a society, I think ran into a clash with the First Nations
12 and when you get a clash with societies and one decides to
13 dominate, then there can be nothing but a lot of hurt.

14 So there has to be a long process of healing and
15 I know speaking out, the victims speaking out, is probably the
16 first part. And you will hear a lot of that over the next few
17 days. But I know that the criminal inquiry that's being
18 conducted now by the RCMP only goes so far, it perpetuates some
19 of the victimization, I know that's one of the problems of the
20 criminal system. I know there's concern about whether or not
21 there's adequate resources for healing and there isn't,
22 Charlene, I think when we spoke in my office in Victoria, I
23 recognized that there has to be resources freed up for the
24 healing. And to the extent that this is the beginning of the
25 healing, this kind of process has to be resourced, there's no

1 question.

2 I know there are questions around people when
3 they do disclose, what needs to be done with those disclosures
4 legally and there are better minds than mine in the room here
5 who know about that. But I know that former Chief Justice
6 Thomas Berger is wrapping his head and his legal mind around
7 that issue and for the province, trying to investigate what
8 options there are, legal options for further disclosure of
9 abuse.

10 So I would like to repeat the apology that came
11 from my Premier, our Premier, Glen Clark, several months ago and
12 report to you that I have had discussions with the Attorney
13 General and the people in our legal criminal services branches
14 and the Deputy, particular, and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.
15 And I know that you will have our support as a provincial
16 government in approaches to the federal government and to the
17 Catholic Church or any other churches that were involved in
18 residential schools, so that we can put the adequate resources
19 here to healing.

20 I know 20 years ago I was told by First Nations
21 leaders here in the Cariboo-Chilcotin that if we recognized
22 Aboriginal title, that that would be a big step toward treaty-
23 making and the settlement of outstanding land disputes. But I
24 have since in the 20 years ensuing, and since Aboriginal title
25 was recognized by the provincial government, that in fact that's

1 | only the beginning. The human hurt still needs all the caring
2 | and all the resources, financial and otherwise, that we can
3 | muster in order to be able to put the past behind and say we
4 | don't have to worry about the past, we've now caught up to the
5 | present and we're looking forward to a future.

6 | Thank you for the invitation to be here with you
7 | and I'll certainly be here in spirit over the next three days
8 | and I look forward to a report from you, Charlene, and others
9 | involved in the inquiry and thank all those who contributed much
10 | of their time and talent to this inquiry. I know it's a
11 | historic step in the Province of British Columbia and
12 | particularly in this area and I know it will be successful.

13 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, David. On behalf of
14 | the community we would just like to thank you for taking time to
15 | be with us today. We also invite you and the Premier and
16 | ministers to the First Nations Summit meeting on June 26,
17 | Thursday, where we will release the recommendations and the
18 | findings of this Commission and we encourage you to take that
19 | message back to the Premier and to the different ministers to
20 | attend with us there. So I'd like to advise you now that that's
21 | coming up in the next few weeks, thank you, David, for being
22 | here, thank you.

23 | Okay, we will move right into the first witness
24 | of the morning. We will have John Milloy from Trent University,
25 | John. We're asking Fred Johnson to swear the witness in, in our

1 sacred way, Fred.

2 JOHN MILLOY; sworn

3 FRED JOHNSON: We have here on the middle of the
4 floor the sacred objects of the pipe and sweet grass and sage
5 and the drums and for strength, for the evidence that's going to
6 be given here. I guess in the past few years we have returned
7 to looking at our traditional ways and one of the ways to help
8 us continue, to live through this experience. And I'm just glad
9 for our Elder to lead us in prayer and ask the Creator for
10 strength for all the people that's going to be standing here.

11 And I think we need strength for the people
12 that's not going to be presenting here. And we ask for strength
13 for the people that have died in vain and for strength to cope
14 with it, and we just wanted this day. I guess we started our
15 healing 20 years ago or more and today is continuing to go into
16 that deeper healing. And just to, you know, recognize and
17 recognize we went through a lot of pain. So, I'm just really
18 glad that, you know, we have the sacred bundle here to give us
19 strength to make it through the next three days.

20 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Fred.

21 EXAMINATION BY BRAD WICKS

22 Q Thank you, with the leave of the
23 Commissioners, I'll begin to examine Mr. Milloy, actually I
24 believe it is Dr. Milloy, is it not?

25 A Yes, it is.

1 Q I wonder if you can give the Commissioners
2 a brief academic history of your career?

3 A I teach history in the history department
4 and the Native study's department at Trent University. I earned
5 a Master's Degree in history from Carlton University and a
6 doctoral degree in history from Oxford University in England.

7 Q And what is your particular area of
8 interest?

9 A I spent my professional life studying and
10 writing about the development of British first, and then
11 Canadian policy for Aboriginal communities.

12 Q I understand, Doctor, that you had a role
13 to play in the recent Royal Commission Report, can you expand on
14 that perhaps?

15 A Yes, I was asked to, I was honoured to be
16 asked by the Commissioners to research and write for them a
17 history of the residential school system, which I completed for
18 them in 1955.

19 Q Can you explain what kind of resources you
20 had available to you in completing that history?

21 A Yes, if I could start answering that
22 question by trying to put my answer in some sort of context.
23 Historians do history, which is, of course, stories, they tell
24 stories, they do it in a particular way but they tell stories.
25 The evidence I give this morning, though it will be true, is a

1 story and I want to talk about this sort of story that I am able
2 to tell and the sort of stories that I'm not able to tell and
3 that may be a long way to answering your question but I feel I
4 must start that way.

5 I'm not an Aboriginal person, none of my family
6 were taken to residential schools, no children from my community
7 were taken to residential schools. I cannot then, this morning
8 obviously, nor could I in the work I did, talk of that story,
9 tell about that experience. So what I have researched and what
10 I have written about and what I will talk about this morning and
11 I want to thank so many people for giving me the honour of
12 coming, not only to speak but more importantly coming to listen
13 and to learn from those people who have that experience.

14 The story I can tell is the story of my people
15 and an institution that was built and operated by my people, by
16 the members of the Indian Affairs Department, by members of the
17 Canadian Government and by members of missionary societies that
18 ran those institutions. The story I tell then is non-
19 Aboriginal story and I apologize to everybody in the room if I
20 trespass on their stories while I tell mine.

21 Q So then in terms of the source
22 documentation to which you had access, can you perhaps briefly
23 summarize what that would have been?

24 A Yes, there are, for those of you who are
25 interested in following the historians path, three places,

1 generally speaking, to look in it's the documents that I used.
2 And note I said the word 'documents', the story I tell is based
3 upon church records which are housed in church archives, largely
4 in Toronto and Ottawa or, in deed, in some regional
5 repositories.

6 The Indian Affairs documents which are stored in
7 the National Archives in Ottawa and are open to all Canadians to
8 consult and a large file collection, five or six or seven
9 thousand files which are stored in the head office of the Indian
10 Affairs Department in Hull, Quebec, and are generally speaking,
11 not open to the public. Those files relate to the period
12 largely from 1950 to 1990, the files in the National Archives,
13 the residential school files in the National Archives relate to
14 the period prior to 1950 by and large. And those files are head
15 office files, regional files and files which chart the history
16 of each individual school in the system, so it's a very large
17 and very complex collection of documents.

18 Q So the Commissioners can have a sense of
19 the scope of your work, Doctor, I know that we do have before us
20 an excerpt from the Royal Commission Report, Chapter 10, which
21 relates to residential school which I understand that you wrote,
22 is that correct?

23 A I did, yes.

24 Q Okay, that comes from a larger report I
25 understand, how large a report was that?

1 A The large report is 500 pages, the small
2 one is a boiling down of that.

3 Q I wonder if you can perhaps begin by
4 telling us something about how residential schools began and how
5 they continued over time?

6 A Okay. If one wishes to pick a date, the
7 date they began was 1879 with the writing and submission of a
8 report by a man called Nicholas Floodavin (phonetic), who was a
9 journalist, politician, and had been given the job by Sir John
10 A. MacDonald to travel through the United States and investigate
11 the operation of what were called industrial schools for
12 Aboriginal people that were being run in the United States. And
13 to form an opinion as to whether these should be adopted in
14 Canada.

15 He traveled through the States, he met the senior
16 officials of the American Department of Indian Affairs, he came
17 up through Minnesota, he ended up Winnipeg and talked to Bishop
18 Tashay (phonetic) who was head of the Catholic Church and Father
19 LaCombe (phonetic) the famous Oblate Missionary to the
20 Blackfoot. That was a sort symbolic meaning — meeting, excuse
21 me, because as we all know the residential school system was a
22 partnership between the government and the churches and in a
23 sense that it began at that meeting.

24 Nicholas Floodavin went back to Ottawa and
25 recommended that the government adopt that policy. In fact he

1 was recommending what, in a sense, was already in existence,
2 because in 1879 we had two schools in Ontario, two residential
3 schools in Ontario, a number in Western Canada, either already
4 built and operating or in planning stages and similarly a number
5 in British Columbia which had already been opened up.

6 After 1879 though, there was a sort of official
7 partnership between the churches and the government and the
8 system began at that point.

9 Q Now you refer to the industrial school,
10 what do you mean by that?

11 A There were two, at the beginning, sorts of
12 schools in the government's view, one were called boarding
13 schools and they were small, planned to be small schools, maybe
14 50 children built close to a community, an Aboriginal community,
15 teaching reading, writing and arithmetic and maybe some
16 agriculture and some carpentry. The industrial schools were to
17 be large institutions, maybe 200 children in the institutions
18 with a much more complex and specialized curriculum, not only
19 reading, writing and arithmetic, but of course the skills, trade
20 skills, tin-smithing, carpentry, shoemaking, the skills of
21 dairying, all sorts of industrial skills.

22 The idea of those schools and all of these ideas
23 were ill-formed and ill-planned and that's the mark of the
24 system from beginning to end. The idea of those schools is that
25 children would come from their communities, they would be

1 | educated in these schools from the ages of six to 18 and then
2 | they would graduate and live in non-Aboriginal communities, that
3 | they would never go home again. That over the course of time as
4 | children went to the schools and joined white communities, the
5 | Aboriginal communities would disappear.

6 | In fact, quite consciously, the curriculum of
7 | both industrial and boarding schools was a curriculum designed
8 | to eradicate Aboriginal culture. One of the senior officials of
9 | the department in the early days said that the purpose of the
10 | schools was to kill the Indian in the child. And when they were
11 | finished they would in deed be no Indians left in any of the
12 | children.

13 | Q When was that said, Doctor?

14 | A That was 1891.

15 | Q What about the academic curriculum in those
16 | schools, did that differ from the white schools?

17 | A No, this was most curious in fact, the
18 | curriculum that the schools adopted, we must remember that these
19 | schools were at the centre piece of this policy of assimilation,
20 | the policy was announced as we know in the Indian Act, and then
21 | the mechanics of that policy were to be the schools. They were
22 | to take the children, they were to re-socialize the children,
23 | they were to destroy the culture, and they were to inspire in
24 | the children a desire and the ability to lead a non-Aboriginal
25 | life in Canada.

1 Curiously enough, the curriculum however that was
2 designed to this, and this was, even in the annals of European
3 education, a rather revolutionary idea. The curriculum that was
4 designed to do that was simply, or was used to do that, was
5 simply the provincial curriculum. You simply used the
6 curriculum in the province you were in, the department never
7 designed, until after the war, any special curriculum that would
8 allow Aboriginal children to learn, let alone that would allow
9 Aboriginal children to learn along the path that the department
10 and the missionaries wanted them to travel, which was a path, of
11 course, away from their culture.

12 Q Now, you indicate that perhaps the official
13 beginning of the residential school experience was in 19 — or
14 1879. Can you take us through the development of the
15 residential school system in Canada over the years?

16 A Sure. As I say in 1879, when it became
17 "official" there were already a number of schools in operation
18 in the British Imperial period which pre-dated Canada, two had
19 begun, excuse me, in Southern Ontario, those two were still
20 operating. There were then plans and some schools operating in
21 the West End in British Columbia, in essence, that pattern
22 continued.

23 The Minister, Charles Stewart, Minister of Indian
24 Affairs, Charles Stewart in 1927, reviewing the history of the
25 schools, said that what in a sense happened and I have to

1 | paraphrase him of course, was that the churches went out and
2 | built schools as rapidly and according to their own agendas and
3 | then they turned to the federal government and said would you
4 | please provide us the money to support these schools. Often
5 | times members of the Indian Affairs Department would say, no, we
6 | didn't want a school there, don't do that, et cetera. But the
7 | political power of the churches in those days was such that
8 | ministers did not, over long, refuse and before you knew it the
9 | schools became officially commissioned and funded.

10 | The growth then of the schools was helter
11 | skelter, they were built all over the place without any
12 | planning, and indeed the growth was very rapid. By, and I'll
13 | have to look at my notes, if there were four in 1879, if we say
14 | there were four at that point, by 1907 there were 77 schools
15 | already, by 1930 there was 80, which is the highest number. And
16 | that number was maintained with some fluxuation up and down,
17 | schools burnt down, schools were closed, schools were opened.
18 | The system, in 1930, moved into Quebec, and then one school in
19 | Nova Scotia, so the numbers bounced up and down.

20 | After 1948 it was a desire to close the schools,
21 | it took from 1948 to 1986 to do so, so the numbers very slowly
22 | sank. In 1969, for example, we still had 52 schools operating
23 | and then in 1979 it was down to 12, so there was a rise to 80
24 | and then a slow, very, very slow decline as the system was
25 | closed after 1948, down to the 12.

1 Over all, if I had to guess, and it has to be a
2 guess, there probably were about 120 schools run throughout the
3 history, because schools opened and closed. One of the problems
4 is that there were unofficial ones so it's hard to count, and as
5 you go around the room, all of these names of all of these
6 schools, of course, most of the schools had two or three
7 different names, so when you look in the records it's rather
8 confusing. And finally on numbers, after 1955, Northern
9 Affairs, not Indian Affairs, announced it was going to build a
10 residential school system in the Arctic for Inuit, Metis,
11 Indian, and indeed for non-Aboriginal children as well in the
12 Arctic.

13 So after 1955, up until 1969, they built eight
14 large industrial school size schools and 12 small hostils for,
15 you know, 10, 15, 25 children, to from 200 all the way down.

16 Q Has your research shown how many First
17 Nations children actually attended residential school?

18 A No. I'll answer with caution as I know the
19 Commissioner, Joe Coutoure, is an old statistician and he knows,
20 he knows about numbers. Numbers are, numbers of children who
21 went are, would seem to be easy enough to ascertain, right, I
22 should be able to give you a straightforward, automatic and
23 quick answer, but I would like to contextualize my answer. The
24 churches have given numbers of how many children are in
25 residential schools, were in residential schools, and other

1 historians have given numbers as well. The fact of the matter
2 is it's almost impossible to tell, the fact of the matter is I
3 think it is impossible to tell the number of children accurately
4 who were in the schools.

5 Every year the Department of Indian Affairs in
6 it's annual report published the number of children enrolled in
7 the school. So I can say, for example, in 1933, we had 9,100
8 children in the schools, so you can actually go along and tell
9 every year. But you don't know how many children who were in
10 the school in 1945, when there was like 10,000 children, you
11 don't know how many children are still in the system the year
12 after. So all you have is numbers as you go along, total
13 enrollment numbers, and there's no way to desegregate those
14 numbers, there's no way to break them down because when you go
15 into department files, as I did, the records are so broken. You
16 can't find the enrollment, the reg — you can't find the
17 enrollment registers for every year for every school with the
18 children's names, which would be way of counting them up.

19 You can't find the "registration" forms, the more
20 ironically titled application forms, for which there should be
21 one for every child who went to schools. Those are missing,
22 those are incomplete, so you can't add them up. What I can tell
23 you is that the highest number of children in the system was a
24 little over 11,000 in 1954, that on average if you go from 1879
25 to 1986, when the system is in a sense shut down, you probably

1 average 6,000 children in the schools every year.

2 The final thing I have to say about numbers is
3 that political part of the numbers. I remember reading, when I
4 was doing my research, an apology by the Catholic Church, it was
5 interesting because I opened the book and on the left hand side
6 was the apology and on the right hand side of the page was the
7 statement that, after all, or it should be remembered that only
8 so many children went to these schools, I can't remember what
9 number they chose, and this was a relatively small number of
10 children. So it was in a sense giving an apology with one hand
11 and taking it back with statistics, that not that many children
12 went.

13 But the little bit work I did and Charlene
14 referred to the work done by Roland Chris John, who's a
15 colleague of mine, suggests indeed that, and I'm not
16 exaggerating, I don't think, that everybody went to residential
17 school. That every community that had a child that went to
18 residential school somehow was in that school as well. Because
19 those children either didn't come home, they died in the school,
20 they ran away and died unknown, wherever they died, they came
21 back and were injured and they lived out that injury in their
22 community. But all of the communities were enrolled in the
23 system in a meaningful way, if one wants to talk about the
24 impact of the system. So the numbers are as many Indians as
25 there are in Canada at any given time, they are somehow or other

1 | poisoned by this system.

2 | Q You indicate, sir, that the official end of
3 | the system was in 1969, did residential schools actually
4 | continue past that date?

5 | A Yes, this is another one of the myths about
6 | residential schools, is that suddenly they disappeared in 1969.
7 | They, of course, didn't, the partnership with the churches ended
8 | in 1969, in that after 1969 the federal government took over and
9 | ran the schools, at that point they weren't even calling them
10 | schools, they were calling them residences officially, ran the
11 | schools without the churches, sort of without the churches.

12 | The churches, as I said yesterday to you, left by
13 | the front door and came in the back immediately after the
14 | churches gave up the administration to the schools, they signed
15 | an agreement with the federal government to advise the
16 | government on staffing and to provide chaplaincy services in the
17 | schools. So that if a school was a Catholic School, you know on
18 | the 30th of December, 1969, four days later when you went back
19 | to that school after your holiday it was still a Catholic
20 | School, the priest was still in the chapel, the principal, if it
21 | had been changed, was probably still going to be a Catholic and
22 | the school would be run along Catholic lines in terms of it's
23 | theology and it's discipline, et cetera.

24 | But after 1969 the churches are gone in an
25 | official sort of way, after 1969 whatever goes on in the schools

1 is the responsibility, clearly, of the management which is the
2 federal government.

3 Q And when did the federal government then
4 exit from --

5 A The federal government was, in a sense, out
6 of the schools in 1989, it managed to close schools as the
7 enrollment dropped off and as children were directed to other
8 forms of education. Finally, a small number of schools, six
9 schools in Saskatchewan were actually turned over to Bands and
10 they began to run the schools themselves after 1969. But,
11 officially by '86, the government was out of the business.

12 Q You referred earlier in your testimony to
13 the notion of the partnership between the church and the
14 government. I wonder if you can tell us how that partnership
15 worked?

16 A Well, I guess if you talk to the churches
17 badly. The partnership was there in the inception, churches
18 were in the business of, as they called it in 1830's and the
19 1840's, civilizing Indians, the government was not. The
20 government had other responsibilities, to say the least, other
21 interests. I have no doubt in my mind that the residential
22 school system is a response by the government to pressure from
23 the churches at a political level, so that the partnership was
24 founded in that sort of way.

25 The schools were built by churches, they would

1 then be financed by the government and there was constant
2 squabbling over who decided what about how they ran. In 1892
3 there was an Order-in-Council which was the first after the
4 Indian Act legislation as it were, official decision that there
5 would be these schools and that the federal government had
6 financial responsibility for the institutions.

7 There never was, however, until 1911, any legal
8 relationship between the government and the churches and in 1911
9 there was a contract signed, negotiated between the churches,
10 the Catholic Churches and the Protestant ones and the
11 government, Indian Affairs Department, the minister being the
12 negotiator and signatory for the government. And the contract
13 was set up on how the schools were to be run. If you read the
14 contract, anyway if you read the contract as a historian, it
15 would appear pretty clear that the senior partner in this
16 arrangement was the federal government.

17 The federal government had the last say in who
18 was hired, who was fired, how the school was to be operated,
19 what the standards of care were in the school, everything that
20 you could think of was the responsibility of the federal
21 government. The school was managed on a daily basis by the
22 church and the financing of the institutions was a joint
23 responsibility of the churches and of the government. I said
24 that the church's opinion of the management and of the
25 partnership was that it was badly managed and it was not a very

1 good partnership.

2 In fact, these contracts which were signed in
3 1911 were supposed to be renegotiated and resigned in 1916 and
4 they never were. So after the contracts lapsed in 1916, there
5 was no legal basis for the residential school arrangement
6 between the churches and the government, until 1961 when another
7 contract was signed between the churches and the federal
8 government and that contract lasted, obviously, until 1969 when
9 the churches left, the partnership and the government took over
10 the direct management of the schools in and of itself.

11 In the second contract, the 1961, again the
12 responsibility, the senior partnership was the federal
13 government, it had the final say in the management, the
14 teaching, the residences, everything.

15 Q Knowing that there was a contract which set
16 out the formal lines of responsibility that perhaps though it
17 might not have been renewed, perhaps was the understanding upon
18 which the partnership continued over time. How did it work in
19 practice?

20 A It was a confusing maze of irregularities
21 school by school. I do a fair bit of administrative history,
22 looking at how institutions are built, operated and run. I've
23 studied the Hudson's Bay Company and other big institutions,
24 this one gets probably about F minus on reaching standard,
25 acceptable standards of administration and certainly even much

1 less than an F minus for reaching standards of care for the
2 children who were in the institutions. By and large though the
3 federal government had on paper the responsibility for funding
4 and for managing the system and ensuring the care of the
5 children who it proclaimed all the time were it's wards, were in
6 a sense legally belonging to the department, on a day to day
7 basis the department left the running of the schools to the
8 churches. And indeed it's surveillance, it's oversight of the
9 operation of the individual schools was nearly non-existent.

10 It charged the Indian agents across the country
11 with inspecting the schools, enthusiastic agents did, most of
12 them did not, so that schools were never inspected on any
13 regular sort of basis. Though in the contract the schools were
14 to be kept open for the inspectors, that was clearly held and
15 there was a feeling by many agents who wanted to inspect the
16 schools, that they were not welcome in the schools and that the
17 teachers were not very forthcoming when they got into the
18 schools.

19 But there was no special inspectors, an Indian
20 agent was a man off the street, he had no special qualifications
21 for judging standards of care, except the standards of care he
22 may expect himself as a parent for his own children. So there
23 was no medical surveillance, there was no inspection of the diet
24 being provided to the children, not in the pre-war period, the
25 post Second World War period is slightly different. There were

1 inspections of the school and I was interested to hear the
2 member of parliament speak about that, about the minimal
3 provincial involvement with residential schools and I beg to
4 differ, if even politely.

5 From the early, from the late 19th Century, from
6 1880's and 1890's, contracts were signed by the department with
7 the individual provinces and the provinces on a regular basis,
8 annually, provided inspectors who went into the schools to
9 inspect them as schools. So the inspectors went in on an annual
10 basis, as school inspectors went in to non-Aboriginal schools
11 and, you know, sat in the back of the class and judged the
12 quality of the teachers and the quality of the instruction that
13 was going on.

14 But I would assume that if I had the time and the
15 energy to go look, although some of those inspection reports are
16 obviously in the federal files, to go and look in the provincial
17 education records, I would hazard a guess that school inspectors
18 were also noticing the lack of care of the children, the neglect
19 and probably the abuse as well. Children were, of course, later
20 on taken into provincial hospitals and children, of course, were
21 in the 1960's on, children were under agreements between the
22 federal government and the provinces across the country.
23 Children were, in terms of their welfare, the responsibility of
24 provincial child welfare services and they used the schools, the
25 provincial child welfare services did, to place children from

1 | Aboriginal communities that they considered to be neglected
2 | children.

3 | So, the province was in there, increasingly as
4 | the time went on and particularly after the Second World War, in
5 | terms of oversight for children's welfare and oversight for
6 | children's health. And increasingly after the Second World War,
7 | residential schools became part of that system of education,
8 | health and welfare for children, so I don't want to exaggerate
9 | it, but they became increasingly part of a provincial system,
10 | though they always were a federal education system.

11 | Q Now, you refer to standards in the 1911
12 | contract and perhaps thereafter, what kind of standards, formal
13 | standards were in place?

14 | A Almost none. The department said there
15 | would be standards of child care in terms of the provision of
16 | things like food and clothing and one would assume that one
17 | could make standards about food and clothing. But there were no
18 | standards made for food and clothing until the financial, the
19 | system, the way in which the schools were funded, was brought
20 | about after 1957. Then after 1957 there was an attempt to
21 | describe the sorts of clothes that the children were going to be
22 | wearing, there was even complicated charts which had to do with
23 | isotherms, people who are more scientific than I would know
24 | about that, it's some way of measuring temperature or something.
25 | Depending on the isothermic region you lived in, in Canada, you

1 needed, you know in your country, raincoats, in Northern
2 Ontario, fur coats and therefore there were to be differential
3 funding for places.

4 Similarly after the war, health and welfare
5 brings nutrition, or the Department of Indian Affairs has the
6 services of federal dieticians across the country, they come
7 into the schools, they check the food for it's nutritional value
8 and standards are ensured, theoretically, by the nutritional
9 standards of the four food groups and these sorts of things.
10 Prior to the Second World War there are no standards whatsoever,
11 except those which are the common sense standards of parenthood.
12 Agents would go into institutions and say these children are not
13 being fed adequately and when they described the type of meals
14 or the lack of meals that the children were being fed more
15 obviously, it was pretty obvious that the standards were
16 unacceptable, the same in clothing as well as the same in
17 shelter.

18 There was occasionally a report, an inspection by
19 the department on the conditions of the buildings, the big
20 inspection report by an accountant in the department, a Mr.
21 Pagent (phonetic) in 1909, surveyed most of the schools in
22 Western Canada and condemned about three quarters of them as
23 dangerous places, where no human being let alone children should
24 be housed. So, there never were standards against which the
25 department could be judged. With the exception, now that I

1 think of it, of health regulations about tuberculosis and who
2 could and could not be brought into the schools.

3 Children were supposed to be checked by a doctor
4 before entry to the schools and the doctor was supposed to fill
5 out a form, which was part of the admission form, saying whether
6 or not the children had any evidence of tuberculosis. If they
7 had evidence of tuberculosis they weren't supposed to be let
8 into the schools, because they would infect healthy children,
9 obviously. So there was supposed to be a screen, a medical
10 screen which would guarantee the health of the children in the
11 schools. There was a great public debate in the department,
12 Duncan Campbell Scott, who's name I think we all know, who was
13 the Chief Executive of the Department from 1913 to 1930,
14 admitted and was frustrated by the fact that the medical system
15 didn't operate.

16 I remember when I was researching in Indian
17 Affairs, finding the form, admission form of a young woman, I
18 cannot remember her name, the doctor had written beside the
19 question, 'any signs of tuberculosis', had put down swelling of
20 her gland in the neck, which was a sign of tuberculosis and at
21 the bottom of the form was a signature of the local agent and
22 principal and she had been accepted into the school. So even
23 when there were standards and applications, there was need and
24 again, it has to do with the funding system, there was need for
25 children in the school and children were taken willy nilly.

1 The Bishop of, the Anglican Bishop of British
2 Columbia, in 1919, wrote to the department and said his
3 conscious was troubled badly because the agents and the
4 missionaries would take any child into the school, no matter how
5 ill, with tuberculosis or any other disease that was
6 communicable and therefore problematic.

7 Q Did any standards of discipline exist?

8 A Again, there were no standards of
9 discipline until after the Second World War, and then there was
10 a strapping regulation, which went into detail describing the
11 way in which children could be physically punished and the
12 strapping regulation was not really any different, I think in
13 fact, it was based upon the Ottawa Board of Education Strapping
14 Regulation, which said that children could be strapped on the
15 hand, with indeed a regulation strap. They told principals
16 where they could write to a store in Edmonton to buy this thing,
17 a regulation Department of Indian Affairs strap.

18 And the child could be strapped on the hand a
19 number of times, the child had to sign the register, there had
20 to be a witness, only the principal could strap the child, and
21 then, of course, there had to be a submission on a quarterly
22 basis to the department about the number of children who had
23 been strapped in the school, who had been strapped in the
24 school, excuse me, in that three month period. That's what you
25 were allowed to do by departmental regulations and you had to

1 | report in that way.

2 | I looked at the Shubenackity (phonetic) Strapping
3 | Register from, I think it was 1960 — 1952 to 1962, excuse me,
4 | and according to the Shubenackity Strapping Register, no child
5 | in the Shubenackity School was ever strapped in those 10 years.

6 | Q I see, how did that compare with your own
7 | experience in school?

8 | A Well, I know I was strapped more than that
9 | and so were my classmates. And if one reads Isabelle
10 | Knockwood's book, Isabelle Knockwood is a graduate of
11 | Shubenackity Residential School, there was a lot more than
12 | strapping going on in that school. Or ironically, actually
13 | nobody was being strapped according to the regulations, so the
14 | register was not being filled in and children were being
15 | punished in other ways. It was laughable, children were
16 | obviously being punished way beyond the regulations.

17 | Prior to the Second World War there were no
18 | regulations, there was, you know, occasional comments by senior
19 | managers in the department that children should not be punished
20 | in ways that would injure them. Children, for example, should
21 | not be hit on the head, but never any set of regulations laid
22 | down to govern discipline until after the Second World War.

23 | Q Now, you've talked to some degree about the
24 | standards or lack of them at various times over the residential
25 | school history. I wonder if you can tell us how a school be set

1 up from an administrative point of view within the school
2 itself?

3 A Certainly, I mean the organization differed
4 of course from school to school, but generally speaking, and
5 differed from Catholic to Protestant school, obviously. But,
6 generally speaking, the school, again until after the Second
7 World War when it got much more complex, the school was run, in
8 the Protestant case, by a principal and a matron. Often times
9 the principal and matron were husband and wife, and this was
10 problematic, the department often referred to these schools as
11 little monarchies, king and queen, husband and wife. The
12 principal had overall responsibility for the school, which meant
13 for the operations of the school in totality, but specifically
14 for the educational elements of the school and the economic
15 elements of the school, which included, of course, running a
16 farming operation in almost every case, schools were farms, with
17 a few exceptions.

18 The matron was a, in true to Victorian form, the
19 woman and therefore responsible for child care, so she'd be
20 responsible for the cleaning, the cooking, the laundry, the
21 clothes making, and these sorts of operations. And then the
22 other employees, again in the Protestant system of course, would
23 be hired employees, teachers who would do also child care and
24 then employees who supervised the children or who taught the
25 industrial side of the — so there would be farm instructors and

1 trades instructors and these men and women would also be
2 responsible for doing the farming with the children and these
3 sorts of things.

4 The Catholic schools were a mirror of that,
5 accept, of course, the principal was likely to be a priest and
6 the workers were likely to be nuns. Although in one or two
7 cases, the principal was a nun as well and the whole school was
8 run by women. But in a sense that's what the structure of it
9 looked like.

10 Q Now you've indicated that there was very
11 little oversight for many years over the schools. Do the
12 records indicate any notion of complaints by what was going on
13 in the schools over the years?

14 A Oh yes. From, right from the beginning,
15 right throughout the period and going on past 1969, when the
16 churches leave, the records, the church records and the
17 government documents are a discourse of conversation about
18 failure to meet standards, neglect of the children and abuse of
19 the children. When the Bishop O'Connor case broke in British
20 Columbia, you know in the 1980's or so, I think 1980's or so,
21 the department issued a statement here in British Columbia, I
22 found the statement in their file in Ottawa, saying how
23 surprised they were that there was abuse and neglect in the
24 schools. They, our employees, they said, had no memory of that
25 and I guess if their employees never read their files they would

1 have no memory of that.

2 But indeed when you go into the files it is
3 replete with constant reporting from people within the system as
4 well as from Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities, as
5 well as from non-Aboriginal people outside, after all some
6 children ran away and died, many children ran away and died.
7 And there were even coroner's inquests, Charlie Windjack, of
8 course, is one of the more famous cases in Ontario. So that the
9 critique came from within the system, from teachers, from Indian
10 agents, from local RCMP officers, from children, from parents
11 and then from ordinary non-Aboriginal people who came into
12 contact with the system and the department was not only
13 discussing this in it's letters constantly, but the department
14 was constantly defending itself on the outside.

15 I remember Duncan Campbell Scott being very
16 worried in the letter he wrote to a colleague of his that now
17 that the motor car has become possible, people can drive past
18 our schools and we better make sure that they look good, right,
19 that the lawn is clean and the windows are mended and the
20 buildings are painted. So there was, and I was raised a
21 Catholic, a sort of white insepticar (phonetic) image about
22 these schools, they looked nice on the outside, if the
23 Department could manage. But on the inside there was not only
24 abuse, abuse excuse me, and neglect, but there was knowledge of
25 abuse and neglect right throughout the system's history.

1 It was a surprise to the Indian people, or the
2 Indian agents, excuse me, in British Columbia in 1986, but it
3 certainly wasn't a surprise to anybody else.

4 Q What was the scope of the kinds of abuse
5 and neglect that was disclosed in the records?

6 A I divided it in my report to the
7 Commissioners in two sorts of ways, there was neglect and there
8 was abuse. And by neglect I meant that the system, well let me
9 start again. The system was based on the assumption that Indian
10 parents were inadequate and incapable and what was necessary was
11 that non-Aboriginal people, specifically missionaries and
12 members of the Indian Affairs Department through the residential
13 schools, should parent Aboriginal children. Because only these
14 non-Aboriginal people could teach Indian children how to live in
15 Canada, and although that sounds a bit silly that was, as you
16 boiled it down.

17 There was then this parenting presumption as I
18 called it, that the white people presumed that they could parent
19 these children. When one looks at the records, and indeed the
20 conversations in the records amongst the people who were
21 parenting, the teachers, the staff, the agents, the
22 missionaries, it's clear that they did not parent those
23 children, they did not provide care to those children up to the
24 level of standards of the time, in other words. If these were
25 white people in Williams Lake neglecting their white children in

1 Williams Lake and there was an enthusiastic legal system
2 operating in the town at that time, these people would have been
3 chargeable under provincial legislation.

4 It was clear when you read the history of the
5 schools, the records of the schools, that children were not
6 being provided with what children should be provided with. This
7 is setting aside the problem of cultural aggression and cultural
8 genocide, if you just looked at the expectations of care,
9 children were not provided with food, they were not provided
10 with clothing, they were not provided with the safe living
11 environment and they were not provided with a adequate
12 education. When the educational inspectors came in from the
13 provinces, from provincial departments of education, as a
14 general statement, they found two teachers who were not
15 qualified to teach.

16 We all know, for example, that one of the
17 important strategies of the schools was to eradicate Indian
18 languages, it was ironic for many provincial school inspectors
19 to come into schools, particularly the Catholic ones who were
20 staffed by Oblates, who came straight over from France and nuns
21 who came from France as well, to discover that the teachers
22 couldn't speak the English language either. So people without
23 teaching certificates, people, I remember one departmental agent
24 said, when will the churches stop sending us staff into the
25 school system who are people who have failed in every other area

1 of church endeavor. So there was the feeling in the department
2 anyway, that the churches dumped into the school system people
3 who were incapable.

4 There was neglect then, throughout the system and
5 that's not only, you know, an old thing that had to do with the
6 1920's and 1930's. The department itself did a survey of food
7 services for children in 1969 and found that the food being
8 given to children in the schools in 1969 was wholly inadequate
9 by dietary standards. So it was a persistent problem that the
10 children had not the food adequate. One of my, one of the most
11 telling stories, I think, was a complaint written by a woman in
12 a United Church school to the department and she said the
13 children in my school are not being fed properly and her example
14 was that the children were being given one spoon of porridge
15 every morning.

16 Now, as you know I'm from Scotland and this was
17 far from adequate even for Scottish people, one spoon of
18 porridge. And she said to the cook, why are the children only
19 getting one spoonful of porridge, and the cook said, and this in
20 a sense stood for me as a symbol of the way the whole system was
21 funded, the cook said, oh well, she says, the children don't
22 like porridge and the pot isn't any bigger. So that's what they
23 got and in a sense that's how it ran, the pot was never big
24 enough to provide for the needs of the children.

25 So not in food or in clothing, I look around at

1 the pictures and we all know the pictures of the children posed
2 in front of the schools in their neat and clean uniforms.
3 Inspector Hamilton in Manitoba wrote a line I'll never forget,
4 he was an Indian agent, an Indian inspector, a regional
5 inspector said, when they go downtown, he wrote, the children
6 have neat and clean clothes, and he didn't have to write the
7 rest of the sentence, when they were back in the schools, they
8 didn't.

9 They were provided clothes that were cast offs,
10 clothes that were collected in church basements, in Protestant
11 and Catholic church halls across the country and sent out to the
12 children and if they didn't fit, they didn't fit. And if they
13 weren't adequate, they weren't adequate either, and constantly
14 then when the sources, you get the comments about lack of
15 education, lack of food, lack of adequate clothing and lack of
16 safe shelter.

17 Q What about abuse?

18 A Then came abuse. And there were, again,
19 and being a Scott, one system ties is everything, there were in
20 a sense three sorts of abuse going on. There was a universal
21 abuse which was an emotional abuse, which was built into the
22 system by the very nature of the system. In other words there
23 was abuse that was unavoidable abuse, because the system was, as
24 an idea, abusive. Even if you hadn't ever built a school, to
25 contemplate a system that said, our purpose is to kill the

1 Indian in every child, the very thought was abusive. And that
2 thought was acted out unavoidably, we don't have to run around
3 looking for pedophiles to talk about this sort of universal
4 abuse, which was about taking children from their parents,
5 putting them in places that were frightening places because of
6 the size of them.

7 A colleague of mine wrote a wonderful article
8 where he pointed out that all the residential schools were
9 square and rectangle. This was about Prairie people who came
10 out of a round architecture, just by taking people from their
11 home and putting them in there, there was this type of systemic
12 abuse. I remember reading a letter by a young woman who was
13 brought down from Northern Manitoba and put in a Southern
14 residential school and she said, I couldn't learn a thing for
15 weeks, she said, I sat there staring at the light bulb in the
16 ceiling, wondering when it was going to burst and burn the
17 school down, she never seen a light bulb before. There was that
18 type of throbbing systemic abuse that was universal, that was
19 there, that was part of the idea that was unavoidable and
20 unescapable.

21 Then there was physical abuse, the fact is that
22 nobody was strapped, because everybody was beaten. Children
23 were, and I don't have to tell this story because so many of
24 these stories will be told, right. Children were beaten, were
25 chained, I remember reading a letter which was sent to R.F. Hoey

1 (phonetic), who was the head of the Indian Affairs Department in
2 the '40s and early '50s and the letter said, Dear Mr. Hoey, I am
3 sending you a present, this will let you know how Aboriginal
4 feel, people feel about or why Aboriginal people feel the way
5 they do about the residential schools.

6 And I was fascinated to find what present he
7 could have sent and I turned the letter over and discovered he'd
8 sent a pair of shackles to the man and he said, these shackles
9 had been used at St. George Lytton School, to shackle children
10 to the bed or to shackle them to the wagons if they'd run away.
11 And he said I can't send you the stocks which stand in the
12 schoolyard, you know those big stocks where people are tied to
13 them, manacled to the stocks, he says, I couldn't send that
14 through the mail, but you should believe it was there. So there
15 was that type of, always children being beaten by horse whips,
16 always that abuse which was part of the discipline of the
17 school.

18 And then finally, of course, there was sexual
19 abuse. And sexual abuse doesn't appear in the files, I've read
20 thousands upon thousands of government files and you find hardly
21 any cases of abuse at all, sexual abuse. Which, of course, to
22 any of us who study Victoria morality, the Victorian way of
23 writing and speaking, as I do as a 19th Century historian,
24 certainly not acceptable to a lawyer like you, means it was
25 there. There's the odd reference, there's the strange way of

1 speaking, there's the unfortunate incident, you know. Why would
2 a man write that there had been an unfortunate incident on page
3 two in the letter, when on page one in the letter he told you
4 about beating, about starvation, about locking children up,
5 unless the unfortunate incident related to sexual abuse

6 In a sense, the very silence about sexual abuse
7 tells you it's there, it was never any question about it.

8 Q I understand there was also, there were
9 studies done with respect to the rate of mortality or rate of
10 death in residential schools. Can you speak to that?

11 A Yes, that was, in a sense that's what
12 brought forward the 1911 agreement between the churches and the
13 government, which was, you know, the agreement was an attempt
14 to put the schools on some sort of sound management footing or
15 whatever it was. In 1907, Dr. Brice (phonetic), who, P.H. Brice
16 who was the Chief Medical Officer for the department, was
17 commissioned by the department to tour schools in Western
18 Canada, he didn't come to British Columbia, he went to schools
19 in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. He looked at,
20 interviewed the management of the schools, obviously, he looked
21 at the conditions of the schools and he looked at the enrollment
22 registers, the history of the students. And discovered that
23 death rates in the schools from tuberculosis were 24 per cent,
24 that 24 per cent of the students who had come into the schools
25 from 1884 to 1907, when his study was finished, 24 per cent of

1 the students, excuse me, had died in the school, almost all of
2 them from tuberculosis.

3 And then he stood back a bit and widened his
4 scope and said that if you follow the children out of the school
5 into their communities for three years and no more than three
6 years, that number doubled to over 40 per cent of the children
7 who went to the school died from tuberculosis. So there were
8 incredible, incredible death rates in the schools.

9 Q Looking collectively at all of the forms of
10 abuse and neglect that are documented in your research, I
11 presume that these incidents were at least in the possession of
12 the federal government authorities, would that be correct?

13 A Oh yes. Yes, the federal government, the
14 senior members of the Indian Affairs Department had cases of
15 abuse, be it physical abuse as I spoke about or the systemic
16 neglect, which is about food and clothing and education. These
17 had these things reported to them on a weekly basis.

18 Q What was their response to that?

19 A There was no response whatsoever, there was
20 a way of dealing with these reports, particularly, and I'll
21 speak specifically about the cases of physical abuse. They
22 would be reported to the department by school teachers, excuse
23 me, by Indian agents, by regional inspectors of the Indian
24 Affairs Department who were responsible for a whole bunch of
25 schools. Occasional by missionaries themselves, by RCMP agents

1 | who, for one reason or another came into the schools, often
2 | because they found run away children. And the cases would be
3 | reported to the department in considerable details, so that if
4 | you go into the files they'll be large descriptions of how the
5 | child was abused, when the child was abused, et cetera and so
6 | forth.

7 | These reports were then normally referred by the
8 | department to the churches for an explanation, you know, this is
9 | unacceptable behavior, why has the child been treated in the way
10 | the child has been treated. The church would provide an answer,
11 | sometimes quite ludicrous answers, and that would be the end of
12 | the case. Persistent complainers, people who were persistent in
13 | trying to bring the issue of abuse forward to the department
14 | would quickly be dealt with by the department in a very
15 | aggressive manner.

16 | Woman in the school system, school teachers would
17 | be put down as, oh well, they're just hysterical, senior members
18 | of the staff, departmental staff who complained about the
19 | treatment of children were told to shut up and I guess they
20 | understood what departmental authority was all about, it went no
21 | further than that. Members of communities were threatened, I
22 | guess is a good word, coerced into silence and lawyers are
23 | occasionally hired by Aboriginal communities were treated with
24 | equal sorts of aggression by the department. So the department
25 | knew they were there, internally it did nothing about them and

1 externally it defended the system, I mean, one of the — the
2 department, I guess what I'm trying to say, is the department is
3 not alone in this. When Dr. Brice's statistics were published,
4 they were put in front of parliament, Saturday Night, the
5 magazine, said they're shocking and scandalous but, of course,
6 nothing will be done about and nothing was done about it.

7 I remember an autopsy on a boy who ran away from
8 a school in Kenora and died of exposure and the autopsy report
9 has all sorts of evidence, witnesses had come forward to talk
10 about how frequent children ran away from this school. The
11 autopsy report suggested to the Indian Affairs Department that
12 since Indian children were likely to run away from residential
13 schools, it might be a wise idea for the department to give
14 children survival training. Rather than saying what you and I
15 might have would have said, perhaps we should investigate what's
16 going on inside the schools.

17 And the department did that, it actually wrote to
18 it's principals across the country and said since children may
19 run away, maybe you should tell them how to survive in the
20 woods, rather than you know, inquiring and inspecting. So they
21 knew about it and did nothing in summary.

22 Q You noted that some, I think Aboriginal
23 communities, hired lawyers with respect to this issue, did that
24 ever provide any form of redress.

25 A No, not that I know of, none of the lawyers

1 cases that I came across.

2 Q You had told me, when we met yesterday,
3 about a lawyer from Toronto who had been hired by, I believe,
4 the Anglican Church and had made some comments. I wonder if you
5 might expand on that?

6 A Oh yes. The lawyer was S.H. Brice, who was
7 Q.C, obviously senior lawyer who was a devout and active
8 Anglican and was involved in an internal Anglican inquiry into
9 their own mission activities and then eventually became involved
10 in the question of negotiating the 1911 contract. And therefore
11 was privy to the Pagent Report which talked about the deplorable
12 condition of schools and was privy to the Brice Report of course
13 which talked about the incredible death rates. And warned the
14 department in phrases that, are again, Hallmark phrases for the
15 nature of the system, that having looked at how Aboriginal
16 children were being treated in the schools and the record of
17 death in the schools. And this man, being a QC, obviously knew
18 what his law was all about, said that the department was within,
19 to quote him, "an uncomfortable nearness to the charge of
20 manslaughter". That the conditions that the department had
21 created, the way in which it was not caring for the children
22 were close to being manslaughter.

23 Q Was there ever any acknowledgment by senior
24 people in government that children were dying in these schools
25 because of neglect and abuse?

1 A Oh yes, yes. The department was, the
2 senior management of the department was quite aware of the
3 consequences of it's policy and of the school system. They
4 particularly focused in on running away, I remember a senior
5 member of the department explaining that hundreds of children
6 ran away from the schools every year and he said it's because of
7 how badly they're treated within the schools. So the impact of
8 the system was not a mystery, I've read letters from agents very
9 early on, as early as 1913, agents in Alberta. An interesting
10 agent who said, wrote to the department and said, I'm not going
11 to let anymore of my children, and by that he meant the
12 Aboriginal children from the communities he was responsible for
13 dealing with, I'm not going to let anymore of my children go to
14 residential schools, because when they come home they're ruined.
15 They have been so badly damaged by the schools, and this is
16 early on, right, we're not talking about the 1960's, this is
17 right at the beginning of the system, they are so badly damaged
18 by the schools that they can't live a productive life back in
19 their communities after they come home.

20 The children, he said, who don't go to school are
21 better able to deal with a world that is changing around them,
22 you know, he means the settlers and the ranches and everything,
23 than the children who go to school. So everybody knew about the
24 way in which the school experience disabled children and
25 everybody in the system knew the way in which, quite literally,

1 the school system killed children.

2 Q Given this experience, did your research
3 indicate why it was that Aboriginal children continued to be
4 sent to residential schools by governments and churches?

5 A That's a hard question to answer because
6 any of us who would have designed this system in 1880 to reach
7 certain goals, and those goals were to produce children who were
8 highly skilled children and able to get good jobs in the society
9 that was growing up around them and able to lead healthy lives
10 in those communities. Any of us who had set out to do that job,
11 and after all, well, any of us who had set out to do that job in
12 1880, knew that by 1906, 1907, when the department began to talk
13 about it, that it wasn't working, that they weren't achieving
14 those goals. In fact the goals they were achieving were just
15 the opposite, they were making it impossible for children to
16 lead productive lives and to contribute to their communities.

17 So why the department persisted in it, for
18 another 80 years after it knew it's own goals were failing, I
19 don't know, but it just did.

20 Q And from the point of view of parents to
21 the children, what choices if any did they have?

22 A Well this is the other side of the
23 question, why did children come, right. And children came
24 because it was the system, in the Indian Act legislation in
25 1920, '21, they introduced compulsory education, for the long

1 time the department resist doing that. Now, quite obviously
2 when I say, you know, and whatever I mentioned, there were 9,000
3 children in the school, there were heck of a lot more Aboriginal
4 people, children in the country who weren't going to residential
5 schools and one of the reasons was there weren't enough schools.
6 But the way in which, of course, children were moved into the
7 school is pretty clear to everybody in this room, the department
8 took coercive action, as did missionaries themselves.

9 After 1935, for example, when the family
10 allowance was brought in and the family allowance in all sorts
11 of communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, the
12 family allowance in your province of Newfoundland, was an
13 extremely important addition to a families income. Particularly
14 if you lived, you know a seasonal life as a Newfoundland
15 fisherman or an Aboriginal hunting and gathering community and
16 the department would simply threaten that this money would be
17 cut off unless children were volunteered. And the department
18 had the ability to lever all sorts of, cooperation by all sorts
19 of other, what the department called, privileges.

20 The agents were told that they could suspend
21 Indian's privileges if Indians were, Indian parents were not
22 being cooperative in sending their children to school, rations,
23 you're last on the housing list or whatever it would be,
24 children were being forced into the schools in that fashion.

25 Q Were children made wards of the state?

1 A Yes, officially after the war, in the
2 application forms that were signed by the parent or the
3 guardian, there was a line which said, that for the life of,
4 that for the term in which the child was in the school and that
5 term was to be decided by the Ministry of Indian Affairs, that
6 child was a child of the state.

7 Q I wanted to ask you of medical treatment as
8 well, what sort of medical treatment was offered to children in
9 these schools?

10 A No, I forgot, I should have mentioned it.
11 When one talked about food and clothes and the level of
12 educational, education offered to the children, the level of
13 health services was deplorable as well. It was, again, far
14 below the standards of care being offered to non-Aboriginal
15 communities at the time. Horrific stories of the level of
16 dental care provided to children, provided to children in
17 school. And the treatment of tuberculosis was not only
18 shocking, but the treatment of tuberculosis, that treatment,
19 excuse me, persisted long after other more modern forms of
20 treatment were introduced into non-Aboriginal communities.

21 In other words, after the war when non-Aboriginal
22 communities had access to antibiotics for the treatment of
23 tuberculosis and other sorts of diseases and sophisticated
24 treatment for tuberculosis, Aboriginal people were still,
25 Aboriginal children, excuse me, in the schools were still, in

1 the evidence I was able to find, receiving treatment that I
2 first found in the 1920's, which was that a doctor would come
3 into a school with a nurse and would operate on the children,
4 removing what were called by the doctors in those days, deceits
5 of infection, so that they would remove the tonsils, the
6 adenoids, any teeth that looked infected.

7 They would put the children up on the tables in
8 the diningroom and they would 20 or 30 operations a day, and
9 then they would leave and move onto the next school. This,
10 according to the files, this operation was not only efficacious,
11 it was, had the other benefit that the department said of being
12 cheap, this was a lot cheaper than doing it in the hospitals, et
13 cetera.

14 And when I asked my own doctor whether this was
15 a safe procedure, whether he could do 25 tonsilitis in a day, he
16 said, oh yes, you could easily do 25 tonsilitis in a day. It
17 was a simple operation, it was very simple to do, but he said
18 the trouble appears three days later when there is a high risk
19 of, even in hospital treatment supposedly, a high risk of
20 hemorrhaging and, of course, by then the doctor in these
21 residential schools was far away and the children were left to
22 the care of untrained staff who were teachers and nuns and
23 priests. And this persisted into the 1950's, this sort of
24 treatment.

25 Q Doctor, I know in the last hour we've been,

1 | really been able just to scratch the surface with respect to
2 | your research in this issue. What, I wonder can you tell us,
3 | what the recommendation was of the Royal Commission with respect
4 | to this issue and as to whether future work needed to be done to
5 | fully flush out the issue?

6 | A Oh yes, I should have preface my remarks
7 | earlier on when I was talking about the sort of story I could
8 | tell, that the sort of story I told to the Commissioners, what
9 | appears in their reports, is even if one is simply telling the
10 | non-Aboriginal story, the residential school system, the story
11 | I've told there and obviously this morning, is just the start of
12 | the story. There needs to be an awful lot more research done on
13 | how the system was built and how the system operated, answer the
14 | sorts of questions you asked me that I really can't answer.

15 | I think with 35 research assistants in 10 years
16 | I'd be able to tell you how many children were in the school,
17 | that we could probably track that down, but it's a massive job.
18 | And indeed to sort out the lines or responsibility which is a
19 | more important question. There needs to be a lot more research
20 | done. So when I discuss my report with the Commissioners and
21 | they decided what needed to happen, what they decided needed to
22 | happen was that Canada needed finally to be educated about the
23 | system. That there was this huge scar which ran through
24 | Canadian history called the residential school system and
25 | Canada's treatment of Aboriginal communities in general, that

1 they believed and I think they're right, most Canadians know
2 nothing about.

3 I still find it hard to believe that the
4 residential school experience was so tremendously tragic for
5 Aboriginal communities across the country, is still relatively
6 secret in non-Aboriginal communities. And that the best way to
7 go about this, you know, to have an education, to have an open
8 forum, to have a place for healing, where Aboriginal people
9 could tell their stories and non-Aboriginal people could listen
10 to them, in respect. To have a platform upon which lawyers
11 could move as to the next stage in that part of the process,
12 that what we should have is a residential school inquiry under
13 the Canada's Inquiry Act.

14 And that we would spend a good deal of time with
15 Commissioners like we have now, gathering evidence and trying to
16 put together the story of the residential school system and
17 trying to make that story useful both in terms of healing and in
18 terms of finally coming to some sense about what sort of
19 compensation there could be, what sort of legal avenues we need
20 to travel.

21 Q To your knowledge has the federal
22 government responded to that?

23 A When I went through the files in the
24 department files in the late 1990's and this was after the cases
25 of abuse began to be known in British Columbia, largely at the

1 beginning, I found letters from every senior Canadian politician
2 to the Department, to the Ministry of Indian Affairs, asking for
3 a national inquiry. Every national political leader, provincial
4 leaders across the country, provincial Premiers, writing to the
5 Minister saying we need to have an inquiry. And the Minister
6 always saying, no, in the polite ways that Ministers can say,
7 no.

8 And now we have a national, you know, now we have
9 the request by the Royal Commission for a public inquiry and the
10 Minister appears to have said no again, there does not appear to
11 be — although I must admit I was standing in the store next
12 store yesterday and there was a flyer from the liberal candidate
13 of the area and it said, it told, it purported to say why
14 Aboriginal people should vote for liberal government and it did
15 have a phrase in there saying that they were going to be very
16 serious about the recommendations of the Royal Commission once
17 they got back into power, and indeed we should believe that and
18 vote for them.

19 And I hope they're right, I hope that when the
20 government comes back into power they pay serious attention not
21 only to the residential school inquiry request by the
22 Commission, but to the couple of hundred other important
23 recommendations that the Commission has made. Remembering,
24 after all I think, that the Commission was based upon thousands
25 of hours of testimony from Aboriginal people themselves. What

1 the recommendations are and what the inquiry recommendation was,
2 was what was told to the Commissioners by community members
3 across the country. And hopefully those politicians will
4 finally begin to listen and then the story can be told.

5 Q Doctor, I've actually used up the time that
6 I have allocated, the Commissioners themselves may have some
7 questions. I'd like to thank you from my point of view for your
8 testimony.

9 A Thank you for the opportunity.

10 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Just, I would like to start on
11 the last point that you raised about the Royal Commission. In
12 the five years that it had, curious as to a couple of things.
13 One, given the time that it had and the resources that it had at
14 it's disposal, and I'm not certain of all of the background of
15 what resources it had at it's disposal, but certainly also
16 access to government records. Why it chose from, maybe you
17 know, maybe you don't, why it chose not to do a more in-depth
18 investigation into this issue?

19 A Into the residential school issue itself?

20 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Yes.

21 A I guess I can answer that question in part,
22 but I wouldn't want to pretend to speak for the Commission and
23 it's intentions. The residential school group was made up of
24 staff of the Commission and three researchers with research
25 assistants. I was the historian, there was a lawyer from the

1 University of Toronto, who was to look at, largely to look at
2 possible forms of compensation and legal redress that the
3 Commissioners might recommend, so she worked on that. And then
4 there was Roland Chris John, who's name was mentioned this
5 morning, who was asked to look at the impact of the schools on
6 communities, the residential school syndrome, as it was called.

7 That's all they did, I think they thought that
8 was a lot. We sat and talked, I remember in the early days
9 about my history and whether or not we should interview
10 Aboriginal people, for example, whether we should go across the
11 country and have a mini inquiry, just on residential schools, by
12 talking to the people who will come and talk today and over the
13 next few days. And it was decided not to do that because I was
14 very uncomfortable with that, because I felt it would be a form
15 of, just another form of exploitation. That we would come into
16 the communities and we would say to people, tell us your stories
17 and we would take their stories away and without the ability of,
18 without the ability to do what's being done here today, right,
19 which is to have the counselors and to provide the backup to
20 people.

21 So it was decided to, that in terms of the
22 history anyway, we would talk to the documents, we would see
23 what they told us about what non-Aboriginal people thought, did,
24 acted, et cetera.

25 COMMISSION JOHN: Yes, I agree with the

1 recommendation that you put forward in the report, the
2 Commission's recommendation, I agree with that and I note also
3 that it's under the Public Inquiries Act, federally. I would,
4 personally, I would like to see the government be able to move
5 on that particular recommendation, but not, having not done so,
6 I think that the community establishing their inquiry, own
7 inquiry into this, this matter is important.

8 But having listened to you for the last hour, I
9 went to residential school for many years, the one north of
10 here, LaJack (phonetic), and I couldn't help but feel and think
11 as the Chief had outlined, that three generations of her
12 community members had gone to that. And the deep sense of, I'm
13 not really sure, exploitation I guess is probably a good word to
14 use, but how our people or how Indian people were, I guess I
15 have to be a bit, kind of unbiased up here, I'm supposed to be
16 a Commissioner but I'm also an Indian and I'm also a residential
17 school product. And that deep sense of exploitation that seems
18 to be there and I have to say that because that's what I'm
19 feeling, having heard what you said over the last, here.

20 What I'm curious about is the role of the
21 province, why did Indian students or Indian children have to go
22 to residential schools, why could they not go to public schools?
23 In your research were you able to find anything?

24 A Yes, it was, the answer to that question,
25 why not day schools, right, either provincial day schools or day

1 schools in the community like the one we're sitting in, right.
2 Because the Indian education, well, the words are so dreadful,
3 right, Indian education is thousands of years old, so by Indian
4 education I mean for the moment, education offered Indian people
5 by non-Aboriginal people, right. That began as day schools,
6 mission schools, you know, beside the church in the community,
7 that's how it started and that was official government policy in
8 the 1830's, the 1840's and 1850's, would that there be day
9 schools.

10 When Nicholas Floodavin did his report, which was
11 on, you know, shall we have these industrial schools, these
12 boarding schools, these residential schools, the advice he got
13 and I remember it from his report, was that the influence of the
14 Wigwam, he wrote, was stronger than the influence of the school.
15 In other words, if children were allowed to stay in their homes
16 and go to day schools, then they would stay Indian. And
17 therefore the only way that they could be made non-Indian, which
18 after all was the strategy of assimilation, right, was to have
19 residential schools. It was as clear as crystal to these people
20 that was the their common sense, and that's why they decided on
21 residential schools.

22 At the end of the period, after 1948, when they
23 decided to close the residential schools, and you look at the
24 rhetoric, what the department is saying, right, they're saying
25 the only way for there to be healthy communities, the only way

1 for Indians to become, they don't use the word 'assimilated' any
2 longer, right, or civilized, they use the word, 'full Canadian
3 citizens. The only way for children to become full Canadian
4 citizens is for those communities to be healthy, for the
5 children to grow up with their parents and to be educated in
6 their communities and this is the sort of philosophic
7 justification for putting them in provincial schools.

8 When I say it's the philosophic justification, I
9 say that with a tinge of cynicism, because the Minister, at one
10 point, the Minister from, the Minister in the Liberal
11 Government, excuse me, who's name is floating around, I can't
12 think of it, said after the war, let's dump them, he said, on
13 the provincial balance book. In other words, let's move Indians
14 into the provincial budget, off of the federal budget, so after
15 the war, as you know, I don't have to tell you as Indian
16 politicians and people know better than I do, there is this
17 attempt by the federal government, you know, announce to the
18 white paper, begun a lot earlier than that, to move the
19 responsibility into the provinces and it starts in education, by
20 the '60s it's about health and welfare, policing, about all
21 these issues at that point.

22 But right at the very beginning there's a belief
23 that the Indian family has to be destroyed. If the Indian
24 family is not destroyed, then Indianness, as they called it all
25 the time, persist, and that's the justification for residential

1 | schools, even when it doesn't work, they cling to that.

2 | COMMISSION JOHN: The reason I ask that simple
3 | question is because I hear, I hear the province all the time
4 | saying that they have no responsibility for what happened in
5 | residential schools and I've always been under the impression
6 | that partly the reason for Indian children being in residential
7 | schools was that they could not be in a public school because of
8 | policy of government, at least in this province.

9 | And I'll tell you why I think that, I asked my
10 | dad, I said, why did you send me to residential school, he said,
11 | very simply he said, there was no other school we could send you
12 | to, the problem, the public schools wouldn't take Indian kids.
13 | And I'm not sure if that was a policy though that was in place
14 | and I'm just inquiring from your, from your own knowledge of
15 | this, how accurate that that statement is.

16 | A Well, the department said, when it began
17 | this integration policy after the Second World War of putting
18 | children in the provincial day schools, it said it was
19 | remarkably surprised by the lack of resistance by local school
20 | boards, to taking the children in. Now, what it didn't say
21 | quite so loudly was that one of the ways it got children into
22 | provincial school systems, remember this is after the war when
23 | the white population is beginning to climb and therefore there
24 | needs to expand the provincial school system to accommodate the
25 | non-Aboriginal children. One of the things the department would

1 do would go to the local school board and say, if you take our
2 Indian children into your school, then what we'll do is we'll
3 provide you with capital cost for school expansion.

4 Now remember the local politician hears, oh,
5 capital cost for school expansion without having to raise the
6 mill rates, this sounds like a particularly good deal. And that
7 was one of the ways that children were brought in, but it was
8 done on a school board by school board basis and there were
9 school boards, as in your experience, who would not have Indian
10 children.

11 There's no one in here from Manitoba, perhaps,
12 for me to insult, but the department always talked about the
13 Paw, the school board at the Paw which would not take Indian
14 children. It talked about a few communities in Southern British
15 Columbia which they said were extremely tolerant communities
16 because they were mixed, by that they meant there were white and
17 Chinese and other, Ukranian people and they were used to
18 accommodating, so it was spotty across the country.

19 And then in the 1960's they began to negotiate
20 official agreements with provinces, Minister of Education,
21 because of course, what the feds were doing by doing it school
22 board by school board by school board was moving the Indian kids
23 into the provincial system without the approval of the
24 provincial politicians, right, in Victoria or wherever, because
25 they were doing it on a school board basis, that way. And after

1 that there was resistance, because of course the province's had
2 to pay, and pay adequately.

3 COMMISSION JOHN: Just given your background in
4 understanding policy historically of governments, federally and
5 provincially, that's where I'm directing my questions is about
6 the historical policy development and I guess I don't want to
7 take up a lot of your time. I will have to reread that section
8 of the Royal Commission Report and I understand that we also
9 have a report from yourself, that's in the binder, information.
10 But, just given the amount of time that we have, I would like to
11 not ask anymore questions, even though I do have a lot of other
12 questions.

13 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Yes, I read the report the
14 few times, it was an interesting overview and I appreciate it
15 for that. There are broad questions I would like to raise as
16 well as specific ones, but I'll keep them for our meetings in
17 and around the report. Having said that, let me preface my
18 remarks, my quick remarks, by saying I was a school teacher in
19 the residential schools system in the Blackfoot Reserve from
20 1958 to 1963. And that would, and a footnote to that is that
21 there is the thing of residential schools across the nation,
22 residential schools in a region like BC, Southern BC, Northern
23 BC, and in Alberta and on the Prairies, there are these regions
24 and there are between group differences that one would, in the
25 name of good research, need to take into account.

1 1959 was the year that Indian Affairs promulgated
2 and started imposing it's integration policy. And I would agree
3 with the observation you made that there was a prior history of
4 school boards, school divisions refusing to take Indians and a
5 history of fighting with school divisions, trying to persuade
6 them to bring — to take in Indians because, you know, there was
7 a lack of facilities and resources in the reservation
8 communities, generally speaking. And it's funny how money
9 works, it just does things to people and as you put it, all of
10 a sudden a rural high school centres and junior high school
11 centres had gymnasium, or gymnasia built, it was funny.

12 Also, the per capita distribution, it was — I
13 don't remember the numbers but it was significantly different,
14 much less per capita if the child went to a residential school
15 and considerably more, to the point of being very attractive,
16 both for the school division and for parents on the reserves.
17 Because the era of my involvement in the reserves was sort of a
18 turning point phase, post-war of course, but 1959 into the early
19 '60s. So that's more of a bearing on structure and policies,
20 that's one question, or one comment.

21 Somehow and somehow as we were discussing
22 yesterday, the analysis has be taking a number of dimensions
23 into account and you're well aware of that as you indicated. To
24 what degree, in other words, do reservation schools run by
25 whomever and especially in '20s, '30s and into the post-war era,

1 reflect practice and attitude bearing on private schools just
2 generally and the dominant society. We don't really know, we
3 have impressions, I can remember vividly like it was yesterday
4 when I was Chairman of Native Studies at Trent University from
5 1975 to '79, when two bright white kids came in, can we talk to
6 you, and they were very nervous, well to shorten the story, you
7 know what we went through and these are bright kids from city
8 schools in public school system. You keep hammering away on all
9 the awful things that went on in Indian schools and talking
10 about things that should have happened and didn't and couldn't,
11 I want you to know it was just as bad for us, I never forgot
12 that.

13 Now I've never had the time since to do a study
14 of, you know, the dominant society schools and make a, do a
15 comparative analysis and I'm not sure that that has implications
16 for the work that you're involved in and as a follow up to this
17 inquiry, in the name of what are the variables, historically,
18 how were they shaped, how did they start, how did they evolve,
19 what's the relative weighting to be attributed to this, to that,
20 that is part of this mosaic.

21 It is clear in my view and I'm not here to defend
22 the system, the dominant system at all, I'm up to my eyeballs in
23 the grief and sorrow and hurting and recovery processes of those
24 who went through schools, whether on reserve or not. So I'm,
25 there's two edges to my biases I guess, and that's enough for

1 now.

2 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Dr. Milloy, I just have a
3 very brief question, there is as I'm sure you're well aware, a
4 contrary view broad in the country about the experiences of
5 children in residential schools. And it seems to me that many
6 persons will say, in response to views such as yours, well, look
7 at the Indian leaders in this country, they all went to
8 residential schools and they did okay and they would point to
9 persons like Chief John, they would point to persons like Basil
10 Johnson (phonetic), who wrote a book which I'm sure you've read.
11 And I wonder what response you would have to those views?

12 A I am, of course, familiar with those views,
13 I had Aboriginal people approach me when it was known I was
14 doing the research, to remind me that they were successful
15 people, quote, unquote. Again, one of those questions that
16 Joe's asking, what do you mean by success, right, that they were
17 successful people, in that they had responsible jobs outside of
18 their communities, in education, in public broadcasting, in
19 politics. That their experience had been, had been of that
20 success. And George Manuel who, as you know, was the leader of
21 the National Indian Brotherhood, right, and I read his work
22 because he was a residential school graduate, a silly word.
23 Said, we resisted you from the first day you got here, right,
24 when you first hit the beaches with your fur trading ideas, when
25 you built the schools, when you passed the Indian Act, we

1 resisted, in that we struggled to preserve our culture.

2 I guess what I'm trying to say to you is that we
3 would have had George Manual even without the residential
4 schools, right, that Aboriginal people were already persevering
5 in the face of an incredible attack on their culture. And that
6 on balance that's what the residential school was, right, it was
7 an incredible attack based in the presumptuousness of our
8 culture about our superiority, about our wisdom. You know, and
9 we can go around the world and find examples of people who,
10 because of their indigenous nature, because of their
11 Aboriginality, because their not white, Nelson Mandela and
12 thousands of others, right, who lead their communities and have
13 led their communities through incredible trials.

14 And I can't say anyway in which even though that
15 is a fact, the trial which is a white persecution is in anyway
16 excusable. Right, I mean, congratulations to those who are
17 leading the communities who were in residential schools, that
18 doesn't lessen, I think, the problem we have as non-Aboriginal
19 people that we built that system with a conscious goal of
20 destroying the culture of those people. That's how I always
21 respond to the question, probably not an accurate response, an
22 adequate response.

23 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: One other question, I think
24 we all know that the beginning of the Second World War, in
25 Canada there was a very deliberate effort to, in affect, destroy

1 the culture of Japanese people in this country. That was
2 somewhat over 50 years ago and there has been redress, at least
3 in part, to the Japanese people in Canada. The history that
4 you've told us about this morning is a much longer and it seems
5 to me, a much more determined destructive history.

6 Can you offer any insight into why you are still
7 able today to say that you're talking about issues that remain
8 almost secret in this country and little understood and the
9 government is more than merely slow to respond to requests that
10 there be a full scale inquiry and redress to follow.

11 A I wish I had the answer to that question,
12 because it's not only a question that, you know, you and I ask
13 about residential schools, why has there not been a recognition,
14 excuse me, of the nature of the system or recompense or even an
15 apology. We have to ask the question more widely about non-
16 Aboriginal society in this country, not only about all of the
17 policy which was directed at Aboriginal people, which was
18 hurtful and we persist in, in many ways. But we have to ask the
19 question I think, and I think therein lies the answer, you know,
20 and I don't have that answer. Why are non-Aboriginal people so
21 thoughtless about how they live in this country, plain and
22 simple, why can they never direct their attention to the real
23 serious problems even when those serious problems speak to their
24 own interests.

25 Why do we live in a country that persists on

1 building Hamilton bigger and bigger every day and chopping down
2 more trees and making more hydro electricity, in never coming to
3 terms with what I would argue, are the serious problems we have.
4 And in that batch is, you know, why don't we speak to the people
5 who lived here for thousands of years and did so successfully,
6 and why don't we deal with them fairly, justly, honestly. I
7 don't have the answers to those questions and I fear the answer
8 to those questions are not very complimentary about our culture
9 and our heritage.

10 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Just a point of
11 information, Duceppe (phonetic) was the only political leader to
12 indicate that the Province of Quebec officially responded to the
13 Quebec Indian Association and accepted all of their
14 recommendations and so why didn't the other parties not do
15 something similar because I'm quite sure they were approached
16 for an articulation or a policy position. A second thing, you
17 mentioned the origin of, likely origin of, that the residential
18 school system as of 1879. I mentioned to you about Dr. Dennis
19 Martel's (phonetic) unpublished research that it all started in
20 Sir John A's office who sent someone over to Scotland to see
21 what the Brit's were doing to the Tribal Scottish. And that
22 they were being tamed through use of residential schools and
23 they thought it was a great idea and brought it to Canada. I'm
24 over-simplifying but, that seemed to be factual according to
25 Martel at the time.

1 A Oh yes, I think that that, you know, that
2 the history of colonization is, if you look at Australia and New
3 Zealand, if you look at Ireland, I mean, England's first colony
4 is Ireland, most of it's policy that it, which is about language
5 destruction and attack upon their traditional religion, is then
6 just reproduced as the empire grows. And not only the English
7 Empire but the German Empire around the world, we have these
8 behaviors.

9 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: There seems to be
10 something missing in the general Canadian psyche, dominant
11 society psyche. Frontier School Division was set up in the
12 early '60s in Manitoba and about the same time the Northland
13 School Division was set up in Northern Alberta, to adapt and
14 invent, create, innovate, this was some of the rhetoric of the
15 day, and they've created nothing new over a 40 year period and
16 it was set up do that. I don't know what to do with that, but
17 that indicates something about the general attitude.

18 CHARLENE BELLEAU: I'm not the judge here but I'm
19 going to play judge. We want to wrap up with John Milloy's
20 evidence and thank you very much, John, for agreeing to be with
21 us and providing us with information. We will take a 15 minute
22 coffee break, 15 minutes only, then we're going to move into the
23 next witness, so we'll have 15 minutes, thank you very much.

24 --- MEETING RECESS AT 11:19 AM

25 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 11:40 AM

1 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Okay, our first victim witness
2 will be William Shadowhawk Peters, Fred.

3 WILLIAM SHADOWHAWK PETERS; Sworn

4 EXAMINATION BY RICHARD ROGERS

5 Q Thank you, Shadowhawk, the questions which
6 will come to you now will be from myself. You will be the first
7 of many witnesses that we will question at this inquiry who were
8 actual victims of the residential school process. And just to
9 start, we would like to ask you a few questions to have us
10 familiar with who you are and your background. As Charlene
11 indicated, you answer to the William Shadowhawk Peters?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Would you prefer to be called Shadowhawk
14 during the course of these questions and answers?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Shadowhawk, could you please tell us what
17 your date of birth was?

18 A August 25, 1952.

19 Q And where were you born?

20 A Cache Creek.

21 Q Can you tell us how many children were in
22 your family?

23 A Four, I'm the oldest of and I have three
24 younger sisters.

25 Q I understand that of your family members,

1 | there were some that had attended residential school, is that
2 | correct?

3 | A Yes, I have numerous uncles and aunts
4 | including my father, who have went to the residential school.

5 | Q Apart from yourself, did any of your other
6 | brothers or sisters attend to the residential school?

7 | A Pardon?

8 | Q Did any of your brothers or sisters attend
9 | to residential school?

10 | A Yes, two of them.

11 | Q I see, now Shadowhawk, can you recall
12 | approximately when or how old you may have been when you first
13 | attended to the residential school and which one?

14 | A I just turned nine in 19 — in '59 when I
15 | went there and I went to St. Joseph's Mission.

16 | Q Can you tell us how long you spent at the
17 | St. Joseph's Mission School?

18 | A I did 10 years there.

19 | Q And during that period of time can you tell
20 | us what grade you eventually obtained?

21 | A They only taught up to grade eight and then
22 | we were shipped to town, integrated into town.

23 | Q Okay, perhaps I might begin with my
24 | questions as to how you can remember your going to the
25 | residential school, your first memories.

1 A First memories was being taken from my
2 mother at Mt. Currie, that's where she was from, and put on a
3 day liner train and sent somewhere which, and we were picking up
4 a lot of other children, boys and girls along the way, and then
5 when we finally got to St. Joseph's Mission, I had my hair cut
6 off, deloused, given a number and gave same clothes as everybody
7 else, and we were made to start lining up right away.

8 Q I see, did you have any idea that you would
9 be attending the residential school before this day?

10 A No.

11 Q How was it made known to you that you would
12 be attending a residential school and being taken from your
13 family?

14 A I had no idea of anything that was going on
15 in my life at the time, because my mother and father drank a lot
16 during that time period because when my father was abused at
17 residential school and then he was quite violent toward my
18 mother and rest of the family members and he left us alone quite
19 a bit. And because he left us with other relatives, I was
20 abused at their place and then that being a traumatic experience
21 for me, I blacked out many of the years until I was 13, 14 years
22 old.

23 Q From what you can remember, when you
24 attended to the residential school known as St. Joseph's, what
25 was it like?

1 A There is bits and pieces that I do
2 remember, is always lining up, always going to church, and I was
3 always hungry.

4 Q And what was the food like?

5 A Mush and milk was usually bad, it was first
6 meal of the day and rest of the meals, like it was, seems like
7 there was never enough.

8 Q Of the food that you did receive, did you
9 find that it was adequate?

10 A For me, yes, at the time because it was
11 better than living at home, because we never had enough at home
12 because my mother and father drank a lot so, it was the lesser
13 of two evils.

14 Q Okay, what was the clothing that you
15 received at the residential school?

16 A There was, just about same for everybody,
17 sometimes we got clothes that were too big or too small, had to
18 roll up the sleeves a lot and the pant legs. Then every — all
19 our clothes were, because I had the number 52, all our clothes
20 had number 52 sewn into them.

21 Q Was that a number that you were to carry
22 with you throughout your stay at the school?

23 A Yes. That was during the junior,
24 intermediate and senior phase when we were issued different
25 numbers for each of the different phases.

1 Q Do you remember what the classroom was
2 like?

3 A There was strict, you couldn't do anything
4 without, if you didn't do anything that the teacher told you,
5 then you were either strapped, punished, sent to the principal
6 and a lot of times many of the students were hit on the hands
7 with that steel edge metal rulers or hit on the head or slapped.

8 Q This aggression that you described, was it
9 something that was very common?

10 A Yes.

11 Q If we were to look at in terms of a time
12 frame, if you were to take the average day at the school, how
13 much would you be witness to, to the violence?

14 A It would be everyday occurrence, but some
15 of the supervisors would be more lenient than the others. But
16 it would be that the priests or the Brothers would be the worst
17 offenders than the common labourers or whatever.

18 Q Perhaps you could describe for us what a
19 beating with a strap would really be.

20 A It would be, it usually be strapped by,
21 about what 18 to two feet long, about that wide and about
22 quarter inch, maybe little more, thick. And then for some
23 people they were strapped, we're only supposed to be strapped on
24 the hand, but many of us were strapped up to the arms. This
25 place here didn't hurt too much but here was the worst place

1 that stung and hurt, the pain lasted longer. And then some of
2 my uncles were strapped in front of everybody, they were made to
3 lean over the bed, pull down their pajamas and they were
4 strapped.

5 Q Shadowhawk, can you recall if there was any
6 reason why the children that you saw strapped were in fact
7 punished?

8 A My uncles and I, we were playing on the
9 floor and the floors in the dorms were brown linoleum and we
10 took good care of that because everyday we had to mop, sweep,
11 mop and polish that floor to a high gloss shine. And then
12 because that one night we had boxes, shoe boxes, we had them on
13 and we sliding all over the floor and because my uncles had them
14 on their feet, they were caught and that was why they were
15 strapped in front of everybody.

16 Q During your period at St. Joseph's
17 Residential School, would you be able to give us an idea of how
18 often you, yourself, were strapped or beaten?

19 A I'm not really sure about that, because it
20 only comes, like being a victim before I went I had a defense
21 mechanisms that helped me survive. Like I was invisible, I kept
22 behind other people, I never made myself known to the bigger
23 people, people in power.

24 Q So when you were in the residential school
25 how long would you stay there for during the course of the year.

1 A The earlier years I stayed there about 10,
2 11 months, 10 months, seems like it, because my father would
3 never come and pick us up. We were, all stayed there, we always
4 ended up staying in different places, foster homes.

5 Q During the time that you were at the school
6 did you have any contact with your own family?

7 A No.

8 Q Do you know if this was encouraged or
9 discouraged?

10 A Now that I know that my father did go and
11 then we did talk about it when we were drinking and then he told
12 me what happened to him there, I understood why he didn't want
13 to come and pick us up because he was also abused there and he
14 didn't want to have nothing to do with that place.

15 Q Do you know if your father had no other
16 opportunity but to let you go the residential school?

17 A It would be like what he has done to me was
18 for my own safety and benefit. Because he was a violent man
19 when he was drinking and it would show by a episode of a memory
20 of my mother trying to shoot him. And then what he has done, I
21 have also done to my children, I have become violent toward my
22 wife and children and I had a chance to give them up -- to keep
23 them, but I gave them up to become wards of the state in
24 Minneapolis.

25 Q Okay. Before I move to your latter years,

1 after the school, I understand that you can recall the first
2 night when you went to St. Joseph's, is that correct?

3 A Yes, there was change of food, change of
4 place, being in a new place, that night I had diarrhea and then
5 I woke, I changed, I took the sheets and put it underneath my
6 bed. And then in the morning, after breakfast, it was clean up
7 time for everybody, had jobs to do, and when they were sweeping
8 underneath my bed they found my sheets. And then it was my bed
9 so, assigned to me, and I was called forward, then I was
10 strapped because of that. Then I was forced to go through the
11 intermediate dorm with the sheets in front of me, covered my
12 face, to wash it in the bathroom. And that was my first memory
13 and after that there was all, mostly black for a long time.

14 Q Do you recall having any problems in the
15 school, apart from a physical abuse nature. By that I mean do
16 you recall having problems of sexual abuse nature?

17 A I don't really recall anything because I
18 was abused before I went there and being in that blacked out
19 state of defense that I have kept for myself, the darkness. It
20 was like amnesia, that was a form of self-defense to keep the
21 big people away from me.

22 Q I understand that at one point, while you
23 were in St. Joseph's Orphanage, you did experience abuse at the
24 hands of some particular teachers, is that correct?

25 A Twice, two different ones.

1 Q Do you know if these people are still
2 alive?

3 A One is alive, one is dead.

4 Q Of the particular teacher that has passed
5 away, can you recall what kind of abuse you received at his
6 hands?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Would you be willing to share that with us?

9 A Because he is dead there will be nothing
10 done to him, or?

11 Q Do you feel uncomfortable answering that
12 question?

13 A No, it's just, okay, when I was a teenager,
14 I was going to school in town, Williams Lake, we were shipped
15 off to Columneecha (phonetic), a friend and I, Jerry. And we
16 had to do some manual labour, picking rocks in the field for a
17 white rancher. At the end of the day we were paid, second day,
18 and then he dropped us off at town and because I had money and
19 it was town, you know, got, bought alcohol and got drunk. And
20 then I came to I was back at the Mission and apparently I had
21 tried to run away, barefooted, and they caught me up the road,
22 up the hillside, took me back, my feet was full of cactus, and
23 that victimizer was abusing me.

24 Q Of a sexual nature?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Can you tell us how something of this
2 nature occurred, how often?

3 A That was the second occurrence that
4 happened to me, the first one was during Easter time, this one
5 must have been in the spring time so it was the following year.

6 Q After you were sexually abused by teachers
7 within the institution, did you have an opportunity to tell
8 anyone what had happened?

9 A Who could I tell, because they were the
10 ones that were in charge of us.

11 Q Can you tell us if they were religious
12 Brothers?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Apart from the physical and sexual abuse
15 that you know to have occurred to yourself, did you witness any
16 sexual abuse of any of the other children.

17 A Yes, during the first offense that happened
18 to me, the second night he, the Brother, showed up and I held
19 onto my blanket so tight that he couldn't crawl into bed with
20 me, but then he proceeded to go to the next three beds, next to
21 me.

22 Q Is it your understanding then that because
23 he was not successful in his abuse of you that he moved onto
24 other victims?

25 A Yes. I wouldn't have been a victim but

1 then because it was Easter time, everybody went home, people
2 that had homes went home and because I didn't have any place to
3 go I was, I stayed there I had no place to go.

4 Q How did this affect you afterwards?

5 A I was ashamed of who I was because nobody
6 had that right to do me -- do that to me.

7 Q Had you at any time had the opportunity to
8 tell anybody what had happened to you?

9 A In 1989, there was an inquiry into the St.
10 Joseph's Mission, sexual abuse, I was approached on the subject
11 and because I thought the one that abused me was dead, I didn't
12 come forward and I didn't want to deal with the problem because
13 it was too painful at that time and space of my life, because I
14 was suicidal.

15 Q How old were you when you left St.
16 Joseph's?

17 A 17.

18 Q Were you prepared to leave the school, did
19 you have any training, any tools?

20 A About the only thing I was good for is just
21 manual labour, because I worked in the hay fields about three,
22 two, three years during the time I was staying there.

23 Q So after you left school what did you do?

24 A I worked in the hay fields, planted trees,
25 fought fires, and every payday got drunk.

1 Q And how old were you at this point in your
2 life?

3 A 17, 18.

4 Q What happened next in your life?

5 A From the time the abuse happened I became
6 self-destructive. I shot myself, got stabbed in the back, I got
7 in knife fights, I got into physical violence with other people,
8 my own people, family, the other Tribes that were around and the
9 other Nations, the Chilcotin's, because we were traditional
10 enemies in the past. And I had nothing to prove, I didn't have
11 a will to live and I was being in multiple car accidents and
12 within that one year time frame. And from that time on I drank
13 to forget what happened, then I forgot why I drank, and I drank
14 just to get drunk.

15 Q I understand that you moved from Canada to
16 the States at some point in your life?

17 A It was just before I was 18 that I ended up
18 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

19 Q Why did you move?

20 A Because I got tired of seeing my friends
21 dying, the people around me dying, the whole community dying.
22 I was ashamed to be a Native, to go into town to see my father
23 and my uncles and my friends getting drunk, getting kicked out
24 of the bars all the time.

25 Q So what happened while you were living in,

1 | you say, Minneapolis?

2 | A When I was down there I got a Grade 12
3 | education, I learned a welding trade, then I got married, had
4 | two children. Because I didn't have no parenting skills, all I
5 | had to do was fall back onto my father's way of his parenting
6 | skills, which was violence and total control over his wife and
7 | I was the same way toward my wife and children.

8 | Q What about the skills you had learned while
9 | you were in St. Joseph's, did they help you out at all?

10 | A All it gave me was aggression and
11 | frustration toward myself and my family and I directed it mostly
12 | toward myself and my family. I kept it to myself and to my
13 | family, I didn't bring it outside there unless I was drinking.

14 | Q When did you come back to Canada?

15 | A I came back to die?

16 | Q What do you mean you came back to die?

17 | A During the time frame when I was in
18 | Minneapolis, I had a good job, I worked in different jobs as a
19 | welder. But the jobs got shorter and shorter because my alcohol
20 | abuse and then I was fired from my job, kicked out of the place
21 | where I lived and left my wife and kids. I started living
22 | alone, soon as I got out of that relationship I already had a
23 | girlfriend on the side, because I was running out on her all the
24 | time, every weekend.

25 | Q But you say you came back to Canada to die,

1 did you actually mean to die?

2 A Yes, suicide, because I was almost killed
3 a few times living on the streets of Minneapolis, I lived on the
4 streets for four years, eight months and the last year I ended
5 up selling myself on the streets just to get that alcohol, to
6 keep me alive.

7 Q Prostitution?

8 A Yes.

9 Q What happened when you came back to Canada?

10 A When I came back to Canada, to my family,
11 things were different, Alkali has began things that where people
12 wouldn't drink no more. Where they were going traditional, as
13 I would call it, the pow wow's, sweats, vision quests, and
14 helping each other out.

15 Q Is that what saved you?

16 A What really saved me was my art, what you
17 see here behind me.

18 Q Now I understand that all of this artwork
19 which is behind you was made by you during the course of a
20 number of years, is that correct?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Would you be able to take us briefly
23 through the history of your artwork?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Before you begin, could you please tell us

1 | how you acquired your skills as an artist?

2 | A Pardon?

3 | Q How did you acquire your skills as an
4 | artist?

5 | A When I was living on the streets in
6 | Minneapolis, my daughter was in a car accident and I went to
7 | visit her in the hospital and she had some drawing paper beside
8 | her and pencils. So I picked it up and drew her two pictures
9 | and left them with her and that was the last time I ever seen
10 | her. But when I left I went to the drugstore and I bought my
11 | own drawing paper and water colour papers and I've been drawing
12 | ever since.

13 | Okay, this section here I broke it down into
14 | sections here, like this section here honours the past, the way
15 | that things were. That we had respect for everything out there,
16 | we had coyote to help us, keep us in our path. And there was
17 | total respect for everything that was out there and it was in
18 | this particular time that our stories came to us through the
19 | coyote, our grandmothers and grandfathers went around winter
20 | time when they told us stories which was passed on. There was
21 | no fear of the animals that were out there, there was only
22 | respect, we did not go out there and kill them because they were
23 | wild.

24 | And we always thought about the future, we only
25 | took what we needed, because every place that is out there has

1 it's own sacred place for each and every one of us. Life and
2 death was respected by everybody that was out there and we all
3 had our own spiritual helpers. But then that all changed with
4 the discovery of Canada, North America. And it was changed by
5 the doctrine of discovery, because we weren't Christians, they
6 could take our land and exploit it and so they said that, as was
7 mentioned before, kill the Indian and save the man.

8 And so we became Indians within the Indian Act
9 and this picture here represents death and cult — loss of our
10 culture, our traditional ways, our language, my language, that,
11 I speak mostly for myself because I can't hardly speak my own
12 language. And with the doctrine of discovery, the church has
13 and governments have power over us. And these here are the
14 different phases in my life, from here to here when I was 13 to
15 14, that's my dark, the dark stage that I was talking about.
16 This one here represents the loss of my mother because I don't
17 have a memory of her, except that the one clear memory I have
18 was during winter time, it was, we were living in a log cabin
19 and could hear the water under the ice that was outside and the
20 wolf pack that was out there.

21 And this one here represents the first time I got
22 drunk, when I was 13, 14 years old and that it brought me out of
23 that darkness. And that is represented by the new day, the
24 morning coming up and the bear coming out of hibernation, that's
25 when I started to live again. And these are the different

1 phases of life that I went through. But then it mostly comes
2 down to this, the residential school, when I was brought there
3 and when everybody else was brought here. We were separated
4 into the boy's side, then the girl's side.

5 Q Were you allowed to have contact with one
6 another?

7 A No, no sir, there was a boundary that we
8 couldn't cross, we couldn't cross that line, that road, that was
9 there. The girls had to stay there, boys on this side and if
10 there was, if you were caught then you were strapped, punished.
11 And this here represents the past, the traditional way that we
12 all had, that our animal helpers, which is gone from this side,
13 that many of our people have no knowledge of this part here.
14 They don't know how to go about it, but most of the ways are
15 coming back. And in our way everything is balanced, male,
16 female, night, day, moon, sun, that's my son there, the one I
17 gave up.

18 Q Now you say you were not allowed to have
19 contact with the female students, was your sister in the school
20 at the time that you were?

21 A Yes, two of them.

22 Q Were you allowed to have contact with your
23 own sisters?

24 A No. There's no contact, the only contact
25 we had was when we went home.

1 Q And if you attempted to have any contact
2 with them what would happen?

3 A Then we were strapped, punished, made to
4 miss meals.

5 And this, my version, this is in the old days
6 when we were warriors, and 15, it's a cultural relativity, we
7 adapt things very quickly. And this side represents the
8 violence that we have toward our women, what I had toward my
9 wife and the girlfriends, the many relationships I had
10 throughout my lifetime. Because we weren't given control
11 through the church and government, that the men were the boss
12 and then we were violent to the women.

13 And this down here represents many of our, my
14 friends, my family who've committed suicide. And by suicide I
15 mean pills, hanging, and the gun and there's many other ways
16 too, the car accidents, the drownings, the fires and freezing to
17 death and moving away and there was the violence. And back of
18 the graves is the loss, the rape of the land, Mother Earth
19 through the clear cuts, the exploitation of the resource
20 extraction, as they call it. Because he who controls the land
21 controls the money.

22 And then I will go to this one here, this is when
23 I was abused, Easter time, and when I was in school I always
24 wanted to do a picture of me, to symbolize what happened to me
25 when I was at residential school and then I was watching TV when

1 I was at NVRT, at Merrit. It was Charlene who was taking the
2 people through the Mission before they tore it down and they
3 went into the shower rooms and this was the colours of the tile,
4 green, black and white. And that's where I went after I was
5 abused, I stood under the hot shower, crying. Because we
6 weren't supposed to cry in them days when we were at school, you
7 had to take it.

8 And this blue represents the tears and the water,
9 giver of life, the healer of us and here it says, yes, I've been
10 abused, but I've not beaten. I went through a lot, we have gone
11 through a lot and with what's going on, which is finally coming
12 true, is the victims of residential school abuse refuse to be
13 forgotten, because there are too many here, their stories, we'll
14 never know their stories. But it'll be only through the stories
15 that what we'll be talking about now and for more of the people
16 come forward and talk about it before the government and the
17 church to accept what they have done to us.

18 The picture I have here is when I was living on
19 the streets, because I never did have long hair, I was a welder
20 and I always kept my hair short. And about the end of the first
21 year I had to let my hair grow long because it cost money to get
22 a haircut and it interfered with buying the bottle. And I
23 started having long hair and I kept it long because I was doing
24 Wounded Knee, it was happening at the time when I ended up down
25 in Minneapolis. And I never did question why were they doing

1 all this, you know, that's their problem, this is United States,
2 this is Sioux people. But then this problem is a problem in
3 Canada, United States, Central America, North America, where the
4 dominance over traditional people to exploit the resources of
5 the land.

6 And this one here is during the time frame before
7 I was sexually abused, this picture here is the one that goes
8 here. When I was painting this picture, I could never get my
9 face right on there, so I just put it like that and that's the
10 self-destructive period of my life, when it began. And this was
11 a girlfriend that I had at the Mission, after abuse that
12 happened she was wiped from my mind. I became fearful of
13 authority figures, self-destructive, and if you follow me around
14 during the day you'd notice I don't have no men friends, most of
15 my friends are women, because they can't do nothing to me, and
16 I'm not very sports minded too.

17 And this is like the self-destructive phase of
18 where I made my own hell and I lived in it because of the shame
19 that I went through and I thought it only happened to me, didn't
20 happen to anybody else, I kept it. And they said that I was
21 going to hell anyway, no matter how many times I went to church,
22 went to confession, did their rosaries, because I was born to go
23 to their hell anyway. And that's what this phase is about, the
24 self-destructiveness that I went through. Like I shot myself
25 right here, the bullet went in here and came out here, winter

1 time it's very painful. Other times I got shot, I mean stabbed
2 in the back, all these are knife wounds.

3 Also took marital arts when I was down there,
4 when I first moved to Minneapolis I took martial arts. Didn't
5 do a bit of good, as you can see, because I could defend myself
6 when I was sober, but when I was violently drunk I had no
7 control over my emotions, I had a rage, a killing rage that was
8 there, but I always almost stop from killing people. I had to
9 physically stop myself and walk away.

10 And this, my hands are bloody because of my rage
11 and jealousy and frustration at myself as a man. I had two, I
12 have two children, I would have had two more but because of my
13 jealousy and anger I caused her to miscarriage twice. Because
14 I never really talked about this and I figured if I could talk
15 about it to the other men out there, to show what I went
16 through, that jealousy that controls us because of what we lost,
17 our respect to the women. And for the non-Native society, the
18 only time they seen Natives is when there's a problem, the
19 deaths in our community were stats to them, numbers. Any time
20 a problem comes up, we're a number to them, but other times
21 we're invisible, like you could see right through us, what this
22 represents.

23 And the black cross represents the sexual abuse
24 that I went through, the loss of my sexuality, my identity, to
25 who I was before. And this one here is my sister who did went

1 to residential school, Ilene. She was abused too, also, seems
2 like every place where you sent, we're always abused. And she
3 died a few years ago alone in her apartment, just like a couple
4 of her other uncles who died alone due to alcohol abuse.

5 And this is another one who committed suicide
6 down at the other end, because there was, I did it because the
7 person involved talked to me when he was drinking and he told me
8 what was bothering him because he had never really talked about
9 it to anybody in the group involved has never really talked to
10 anybody and we always keep it to ourselves, we never talk about
11 it, but only when we're drinking. When we are drinking we start
12 off happy, then after that drinking stage is over, that happy
13 stage, there's remorse of what happened and I remember that
14 shame and rage that I feel, then the frustration, aggression,
15 then I want to fight and kill.

16 But for some strange reason it always comes back
17 to myself, I have always inflicted pain upon myself, I burn
18 myself with cigarettes, I slash myself with knives, razors.
19 Because many of the — I heal pretty good so, the scars you see
20 now are the worst ones. But then with what he told me, I did
21 this picture for him to help him on his journey, and it has done
22 some help, he is slowly starting to change. Because all we have
23 to do is just talk about it, we have to talk about it, let the
24 world know and that's the most -- first step but that's the
25 hardest step is coming forward.

1 And I started that in 1989, is when I went to
2 school, I went to art school for one thing was just to do art,
3 then I found out I had to take English and algebra. I said, why
4 did I have to take English, because you have to talk about your
5 art, damn. But it was good, I fought the English teachers, I
6 fought them, then I got a D. Then during the summer time
7 somebody told me something, I didn't like my English teacher and
8 I don't like English, he said, you're going to have use that to
9 write about what I have here, my history, my story, to let other
10 people know, because who knows, because I get suicidal
11 sometimes. So if I die this would be left for people to know,
12 but then the people, the person told me that, you are not there
13 to like the teacher, I was not there to like the teacher, I was
14 there to learn. And once I accepted that I went back, same
15 teacher and I got an A plus. And I wrote about what I'm talking
16 about here, this here is a condensed version, because there's so
17 many in the time frame.

18 And this one here represents for most Native
19 people is when we get to a certain point, the lowest point in
20 our life when you are ready die, we're ready to go, then that's
21 when our lifestyle starts changing, we have been given a second
22 chance. And this represents the hell that I made, that I walked
23 in. The blue is because we were called boys and boys are not
24 supposed to cry, they're supposed to go out there and work and
25 support, bring home the bacon. And this is rough underneath

1 here, is that's dirt from Black Dome Mountain (phonetic) that I
2 used, that's very spiritual place for people. And this, wings,
3 represents my spirit helper, my growth that I have started to
4 experience when I started to become more aware of the Mother
5 Earth and the power that the women have.

6 And inside here represents the life forces of our
7 world, now, everybody that is here and the star Nations and
8 other Nations that are out there in the other dimensions, this
9 represents all of us, because we all live together not apart.
10 And this part here is, section here, is finding myself to who I
11 am, as a Native human being, and with my spirit helpers. But
12 this one here is the most important one, this here represents,
13 for most Native males, the first time they ever have contact
14 with their traditional past, the stories. The first time they
15 fight it is in jails, prisons, treatment centres, it's the first
16 time they ever have any connection with their past, the identity
17 of who they are. And for many of them, they have to become
18 close to death, the lowest point of their life, a member of
19 their community, friend dies. And then they find out, hey, I
20 have a past, I'm somebody, I'm proud to be who I am, of our way
21 of life.

22 But meanwhile, the women they are waiting for the
23 men to catch up, they are waiting, when are we going to step
24 forward and accept the abuse that we have afflicted upon the
25 women, with the control that we have, there are many stories.

1 And I know when I was married and the girlfriend said I had, the
2 pain and the suffering that I put them through. And I would
3 call the women the true warriors and the men the lost warriors,
4 where we must find ourselves, become who we are, we have to go
5 out to our past, learn our history, to make that circle again.
6 Because we now know who the enemy is, or was, or going to be.
7 Thank you very much.

8 Q Shadowhawk, just to conclude, do you feel
9 that men, such as yourself, could benefit from counseling?

10 A Yes, very much. Like I said, I have become
11 suicidal a few times, but it's not as bad as what a few years
12 ago. It has mostly the problem of dealing with the residential
13 schools, the issues that I have never dealt with, there's a lot
14 of issues that I have and I want to deal with. But the people
15 or the help isn't there because we had a worker out here one --
16 a few years back and I said I needed help and the first words
17 out of her mouth was, that anything I say or do will be used
18 against me. And I only went to her once and I never went again
19 after that, because I know things that I have done because being
20 a victim, I have become a victimizer myself and that's my
21 biggest fear.

22 Because being an offender, you look at the
23 priests and Brothers, what did they get, a few years, the number
24 of victims. But if one Native male is a offender, what's he
25 going to do, he's going to get a long time, get cast out of the

1 community. There's no help for him, if he seeks help, the money
2 isn't there, the support isn't there, only accept to a few
3 members and depending on the status of his family too, on the
4 reserve. If it's a big family there's support for him, if it's
5 a small family, like me, a wanderer, then there's no help.

6 Q Mr. Commissioners, due to the constraints
7 of our time and the waiting witnesses, I would invite questions
8 of a short nature if you have them.

9 COMMISSION JOHN: I have a comment to make. I'd
10 like to commend you for the powerful story that you're able to
11 tell us through your artwork, but also the story that you're
12 able to tell before you explained the art. There's really only
13 one question I have and it's this. Having gone through the
14 experience that you've took us through, and in your story and in
15 your art, it troubled me when you said, you said that you're
16 suicidal still or at times maybe. And that what you have behind
17 you will, at least, will be some of your artwork and that
18 troubles me very much.

19 How do you feel that you can get, do you ever
20 feel that you can get beyond the feeling of being a victim, can
21 you ever feel that you can get beyond that? And that, I'm not
22 a psychologist, I'm not someone who understands this, but I know
23 that troubling spirit and I'm trying to understand that. How
24 can your experience help another man, another woman, to get them
25 to help, to get the help that they need, to feel strong?

1 Because I see that very powerful image of that Indian culture,
2 that Indian identity that's right throughout your art and I see
3 that strength in that and I'm trying to make some connection
4 here, maybe you can help me.

5 A With the suicidal part, it mostly has to do
6 with myself as a victim, because I, as an abuser myself, because
7 I know what people will go through and what is expected, you
8 know, that's my biggest fear and that's what holds me back. And
9 as for these, I have given these talks to other small groups, at
10 least by, by helping other people I help myself. Because we all
11 have our own gifts and I didn't start painting until I was,
12 until about 1984, and that's just a short time ago to get where
13 I am today through the education system and through the art.

14 And I know it does make affect on people, mostly
15 the men, it helps them to deal, when I talk about what I went
16 through, then they know that they're not the only ones. And if
17 I could come forward then they can come forward too. But it's
18 a long process, it's not going to happen overnight, it took me
19 a long time to get here. Because I lived on the streets four
20 years, eight months in Minneapolis, the last years I was down
21 there, I was a street person living day to day.

22 And I thought I could never get out of that,
23 there was no future for me, I didn't know my own past. I had
24 skills but I didn't want to use them, because I was too busy
25 drinking. But then once I came back here things were changing,

1 changed, just through the community here, that starting helping,
2 working with each other, then things are starting to change.
3 And then too, there is also, because I was abused before I went,
4 during the residential school and then after on a different
5 reserve, I was abused by my best friend and his uncle. So it
6 just doesn't start here, it's only beginning, you have to deal
7 with that. And it's very painful sometimes, when I listen to
8 other people's stories and it gives me strength, because they
9 bring back the pain that I forgot, when I lost when I was that
10 14, 13 year old, the darkness that I lived in, it comes back and
11 they help me when they tell their stories.

12 COMMISSION JOHN: Thank you, continue to tell your
13 stories because I think there's a real strength in that, because
14 myself, at least, I feel that I know that there's a strength in
15 a human being that gives me strength to know that, to have gone
16 through something as deep as this and as painful as that and yet
17 to come out at the end a stronger person and I commend you for
18 that.

19 A Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: I want to express a little
21 bit of my own gratitude to, in a sense, meet you again, we have
22 -- we've never met before, you and I. What I mean, is I spend
23 a week to two weeks of every month in jail, I'm improving, I was
24 in minimum security last week and this is my first unescorted
25 temporary absence. I'm trying to establish my credibility doing

1 work towards full parole. I met him before many times, and this
2 is, I'm impressed by not just simply the nature of the struggle,
3 an extraordinary life long struggle with abuse and all the
4 consequences of abuse, but with the upbeat side. And ending in
5 that very practical thing that he was pointing to about the need
6 for counseling, I hope anyone and everyone will tell me more
7 about that.

8 I have my views on that and it's not just simply
9 a question of money, I mean that is very practical immediate
10 reason, and there's also a question of the kinds of counseling,
11 who with, family, community counseling, a lot of those answers
12 are being discovered right here, I'm aware of that also. So
13 I'll just finish with that and thanks again, William.

14 A Thank you.

15 BRAD WICKS: Do you have anything further of this
16 witness? Shadowhawk, I think you can step down now.

17 A Okay, thank you very much.

18 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Shadowhawk. We will
19 take time and break for lunch right now. So if we could have
20 some assistance with the tables, just to set up for lunch and we
21 will return at 1:30.

22 --- MEETING RECESSED AT 12:44 PM

23 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 1:45 PM

24 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Before we begin with our first
25 victim witness of the afternoon, we wanted to take time to

1 introduce to you, Mary Woo Simms (phonetic), who is the BC Human
2 Rights Commissioner. She's here to support and assist us in any
3 way that she can, but also if you want to be visiting and
4 talking with her about what the BC Human Rights Commission is,
5 does, how they could be helpful and supportive of our cause, she
6 will be here all day today and all day tomorrow as well, so
7 thank you, Mary, for being here with us, thank you.

8 We'll introduce our next witness, Wilfred
9 Robbins, Fred.

10 WILFRED ROBBINS; Sworn

11 EXAMINATION BY BRAD WICKS

12 Q Mr. Robbins, I wonder if you can just state
13 your name, please, your full name?

14 A Wilfred Robbins.

15 Q And when were you born?

16 A October 1, '49.

17 Q How old are you today?

18 A 47.

19 Q Did you attend at the St. Joseph's Mission
20 School?

21 A Yes.

22 Q During what years would that have been?

23 A '56 to '68, '67.

24 Q And did you go continuously to the school
25 through that whole period of time?

1 A No.

2 Q What happened during that time?

3 A About — the school was over-populated and
4 in about 1963, I was moved from the residential school to the
5 day school in here, in the Alkali Lake.

6 Q How long did you stay at the day school at
7 Alkali Lake.

8 A Two years.

9 Q And where did you go after that?

10 A Back to the residential school.

11 Q And you left the residential school then in
12 1968?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Did you have any brothers and sisters who
15 went to the residential school?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And who were they?

18 A My older brother and two younger brothers,
19 younger than I am and I believe one sister.

20 Q Now I'd like you to tell us something about
21 perhaps a day in your life at the school, can you give us a
22 sense as to what would happen from the time you got up in the
23 morning, until you went to bed at night?

24 A Well, the first thing we done when we got
25 up was say our morning prayer, and then we'd go wash, wash up

1 and then we'd all go down to the play hall, where when the time
2 came, we all circled around the building, like the way students,
3 on the parameter of the play hall. And we were marched in
4 through the dining room there where we ate our breakfast.

5 Q Yes.

6 A But before each movement we made, we say a
7 prayer or something.

8 Q Yes.

9 A And after meals we'd say our prayers again
10 and then before we were to go up to the classrooms we were again
11 stand in the parameter of that play hall again, and again we
12 were marched up to the school in a two line fashion.

13 Q Yes, what would happen then?

14 A When we entered the school we were assigned
15 our seats and we were to always maintain those seats throughout
16 the year, or whenever they suggested we change seats. But we
17 were always to sit in the same seats and there's no talking.

18 Q How much time during the day would be spent
19 in the classroom?

20 A It's about the same as now, because in the
21 morning, then we had a little, I think we had a little break for
22 recess and back to classroom again, then lunch break and then
23 classroom again in the afternoon.

24 Q I understand that a whistle played a part
25 in telling you when to do things, is that correct?

1 A Yes.

2 Q How did that work?

3 A When we're out in the play fields, when,
4 like a certain time for, like snack, maybe at 4:00 o'clock after
5 school we'd each get a snack, they'd blow the whistle and we'd
6 all run to the play hall. And again circle the parameter, and
7 then in a two line fashion again, like you're always in a two
8 lines, we line and receive our snack, whether it was a apple or
9 sometimes a sandwich.

10 Q What kind of rules did you have to obey in
11 the school?

12 A Like when lights are out there's no
13 talking, if you were caught you were punished.

14 Q Were there rules about praying?

15 A Not that I know, but I know that praying
16 was a big part of the residential school.

17 Q And what about standing in line, were there
18 rules about how you had to stand in line?

19 A Yes, with your hands to your sides and
20 looking straight ahead, no movement.

21 Q Were there any rules about speaking your
22 native language, Shuswap?

23 A Well, no one was to speak our native
24 language, but for me, I think I have already lost it.

25 Q So if — I'm sorry go ahead.

1 A So it really didn't affect me for the
2 punishments in that the others received.

3 Q Okay. What I'm leading up to, sir, is
4 punishment, I'm wondering what kind of punishments were used if
5 you broke the rules?

6 A Strap, kneel on the floor, standing in the
7 corner, sometimes we were sent to bed early or we'd miss meals.

8 Q When you refer to the strap, how was the
9 strap used?

10 A Strapped on the palm of your hand, or on
11 your buttocks.

12 Q Okay, when an individual was strapped on
13 the buttocks, would it be clothed or unclothed?

14 A It happened to me once, I was told to, I
15 was told to strip, I was brought in and this punishment was for
16 crossing an imaginary line that Billy talked about this morning.
17 I was told to strip all my clothes off, lie on the bed, and I
18 was strapped, and I was strapped with no clothes on.

19 Q Who strapped you?

20 A One of the Brothers.

21 Q How many times did he strap you?

22 A I don't know, I couldn't count, I didn't
23 want to count. But like always, they strapped you until you
24 cried.

25 Q How often was the strap used on you while

1 | you were there?

2 | A I was strapped maybe once, twice a week.

3 | Q And what about the other children in the
4 | school with you?

5 | A Probably the same, some more.

6 | Q And for what kinds of things would people
7 | get strapped?

8 | A Fighting, stealing, some of the younger,
9 | the younger kids that came from, like from the Chilcotin area,
10 | they never speak the English and when they came I witnessed them
11 | taking beatings because they couldn't speak English.

12 | Q When you refer to beatings, do you mean
13 | strapping on the hand?

14 | A Yes.

15 | Q Okay.

16 | A And some of the supervisors had sticks,
17 | yardsticks, sort of a yardstick that they used.

18 | Q And what would they use the yardsticks for?

19 | A On the behind, mostly on the behinds, but
20 | they used the strap on the palm of the hands there.

21 | Q Did you ever know anybody to become injured
22 | in any way by the use of the strap?

23 | A Pardon?

24 | Q Did you ever know that anybody was injured
25 | by use of the strap?

1 A I never heard but it was probably done.

2 Q In addition to the use of the strap, I
3 understand that you saw people hit on the head with fists?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Did that happen to you?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And who would do that?

8 A One of the supervisors.

9 Q What for?

10 A A little like it was just a little
11 punishment for some little things there like, like if you were
12 caught doing something wrong like picking on some little kid or
13 something like that, he sneaks up behind you and bangs you on
14 the head.

15 Q I also understand that sometimes children
16 in your school would be forced to do something called running
17 the gauntlet. Can you tell the Commissioners about that?

18 A It was not a form of punishment where I
19 witnessed it in the intermediate dormitory, where all the boys
20 lined up in the hallway and leave a little space where a person
21 was told to run through and the people standing on the sides
22 either slapped or punched. But I never really knew of anybody
23 kicked or anything, but I know there was a lot of slapping and
24 punching until that person was to run right through to the other
25 end.

1 Q How serious were the boys as they slapped
2 or punched the person running the gauntlet?

3 A Some serious punches, but if, I guess if it
4 was a friend of yours or something, you probably faked it or
5 something, but I know some of them was severe.

6 Q For what kinds of things would somebody
7 have to run the gauntlet?

8 A I guess it's, one that punched me said,
9 came along that happened in the dormitory areas.

10 Q Who organized the youths of the gauntlet?

11 A Supervisor.

12 Q How often did that happen?

13 A It might have been based on the severity of
14 the punishment.

15 Q Was there ever any other kind of physical
16 force used on the students by the supervisors or teachers?

17 A Extra work, like when you're doing your
18 little job duties they gave you and like you were given extra
19 work or you were given the harder part of the job.

20 Q On one occasion, I understand that you saw
21 a teacher throw something at a student, can you elaborate on
22 that?

23 A A chalk brush.

24 Q Yes.

25 A I was in, I think Grade 8, we had a teacher

1 from Vancouver and from his desk, if you weren't, if you were
2 caught playing around or you were talking when you weren't
3 suppose to, he'd throw these chalk brushes at you.

4 Q Did you see anybody get hurt in that way?

5 A I've seen one person got a split forehead
6 from one of the brushes hit, that that teacher throw at him.

7 Q Did that person bleed?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Did that person get any medial attention?

10 A No, not that I, no.

11 Q Now, I understand that you were a victim of
12 other kinds of abuse as well, I wonder if you can tell the
13 Commissioners about other abuse you suffered?

14 A In 1964, '65, I was abused by Father
15 McIntee.

16 Q Okay, now where had you first met Father
17 McIntee?

18 A St. Joseph's Mission.

19 Q And when were you abus — when you were
20 abused by Father McIntee, where did that happen?

21 A Over at the log house that used to be
22 behind the church.

23 Q Where, in what community?

24 A Alkali.

25 Q Can you tell the Commissioners how that

1 | came to happen?

2 | A My mom, my mom and dad had gone to, that
3 | weekend, to do some fishing for the winter, I stayed behind with
4 | my aunt and my uncle. But when I was out with my friends, I
5 | came back, my aunt and uncle weren't home, the door was locked.
6 | So I went over to the priest was to do mass ceremonies out at,
7 | out here at Alkali Lake that weekend, so he stayed at the little
8 | log house there for the weekend. And I don't remember if I
9 | asked him or he asked me if I could stay with him that night
10 | because my aunt and uncle and my parents weren't home. But he
11 | said that I could sleep on his couch that he had there at the
12 | house, he gave me some blankets. And I think I'm sure that he
13 | gave me one of his pajamas there, where it was Fall, Fall time
14 | and it was cold.

15 | Sometime during the night Father asked me to move
16 | onto his bed if I was cold, so I did, it was somebody you
17 | trusted eh. Sometime that night I felt his hand stretching over
18 | at my private area and I pushed it away and he grabbed my hand
19 | and tried to make me hold his penis too. But I rejected and
20 | each time he tried I kept rejecting, and during the ordeal he
21 | got frustrated, told me to go back and sleep on the couch again,
22 | which I did.

23 | When he got up the next morning, he went, at the
24 | time he had breakfast with people on the reserve, when he went
25 | for his breakfast I went over to my aunt and uncle's place, I

1 | guess they came home during the night. I never went to mass
2 | that morning.

3 | Q Were you supposed to go to mass that
4 | morning?

5 | A Well I, yes, because I attended the school
6 | here and the teacher we had here at the time made sure that
7 | every student goes to mass, and if we didn't we had to have a
8 | good excuse why we missed mass.

9 | Q Were you an altar boy at the church?

10 | A At the time, yes.

11 | Q Did you tell anybody about this incident?

12 | A No.

13 | Q Why was that?

14 | A Shame, fear, and like I said I lost trust
15 | of anybody.

16 | Q Did you see Father McIntee again after this
17 | incident?

18 | A I don't think so.

19 | Q Sometime after this incident, I believe you
20 | returned to the residential school at St. Joseph's, did anything
21 | else happen to you of a similar nature after your return to the
22 | school?

23 | A Yes.

24 | Q Can you tell the Commissioners about that
25 | please?

1 A About '66, '67, a similar thing, incident
2 happened but with a different, different person.

3 Q Who was that different person?

4 A Brother Doughty.

5 Q And what happened with Brother Doughty?

6 A Well it started off I guess, he used to
7 have these make shift sweats in his, in the washrooms at the
8 dormitory, where he locked the door with a blanket and he ran
9 all the showers with straight hot water which created steam and
10 in that fashion we had our steam baths. And he picked certain
11 people I guess, and I was one of the students there that was
12 picked.

13 I guess this went on about, for me, it went on
14 about, these little sweat sessions went on about three times,
15 for me. The third time he came to me, I was alone, he said that
16 the other students didn't want to come in, they were sleeping,
17 this was after the lights were out. And I don't recall him
18 doing anything different at the time, but later that night when
19 I went to my bed, everybody else, I guess probably sleeping at
20 the time.

21 Q Just before you go on, what time of the
22 night would these make shift steam baths or sweats take place?

23 A About, maybe like lights are out, maybe
24 about 9:30 maybe it start, maybe 10:30, or 10:00, 10:30,
25 somewhere in there.

1 Q And would the boys and Brother Doughty be
2 wearing any clothes or would they not be wearing clothes.

3 A No, all naked.

4 Q And how long would they last?

5 A 20 to half an hour, 20 minutes to maybe
6 half an hour.

7 Q Was there any physical contact between
8 Brother Doughty and any of the boys in the shower or in the
9 steam baths?

10 A Sometimes he's scratch our backs.

11 Q Did Brother Doughty actually live near the
12 dormitory or was he in the dormitory?

13 A He had a room, separate room right in the
14 dorm.

15 Q Was he in charge of the dormitory?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Now you mentioned on the third occasion,
18 after the steam bath was over he came to you, can you tell the
19 Commissioners about that, please?

20 A I was in my bed, I don't remember if I was
21 sleeping or I was almost asleep, but he crawled in my bed and
22 done the same thing that Father McIntee had done, tried to
23 touch, but I wouldn't, I kept rejecting him.

24 Q How long did he stay in your bed?

25 A Maybe five, six minutes, seven minutes, I

1 | don't know.

2 | Q And how did he come to leave?

3 | A Pardon?

4 | Q How did he come to leave your bed?

5 | A I kept rejecting and I guess he got mad and

6 | just left, he came to my bed about three times.

7 | Q And on each occasion how would you react to

8 | that?

9 | A The same manner, kept rejecting.

10 | Q Was anybody ever around when Father — or

11 | Brother Doughty came to your bed?

12 | A Pardon?

13 | Q Was any other person around when Brother

14 | Doughty came to your bed?

15 | A Yes, everybody else in the dorm but they

16 | were all sleeping.

17 | Q Did anybody ever walk by while he was in

18 | your bed?

19 | A Yes.

20 | Q Who was that?

21 | A The night watchman, Tony Stoop (phonetic).

22 | Q Did he see what was happening?

23 | A No.

24 | Q And what happened after he walked by?

25 | A Brother Doughty got out of my bed and went

1 to, I don't know if he went to his room or not, I never watched.

2 Q Did you ever tell anybody about these
3 incidents with Brother Doughty?

4 A No.

5 Q Now you're aware that both Father McIntee
6 and Brother Doughty, I believe, were criminally charged, were
7 you aware that that was happening during the investigation of
8 charges against them?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Why did you not come forward at that time?

11 A I still had that guilt, shame, fear, and
12 like Billy said, I thought maybe I was the only one.

13 Q When did you first come forward with these
14 allegations?

15 A Last week, last week I think it was.

16 Q And why was that?

17 A I guess it's, I got tired of it, I guess,
18 being on my mind.

19 Q Did it have anything to do with this
20 process that we're here for today?

21 A Like, what --

22 Q Did you come -- did the fact that you came
23 forward have anything to do with the fact that this inquiry was
24 going to take place?

25 A I see it as a time for me, yes, to come

1 forward.

2 Q Now you described forms of, what I would
3 describe as both physical and sexual abuse of you over the
4 years, what effect did this have on you in your later life?

5 A I guess I lost trust in people, I lost, one
6 of the biggest things, that I hated to be an Indian, after this
7 happened to me. I didn't like to be Indian, I didn't want to be
8 an Indian.

9 Q And how did you think about or get along
10 with people who weren't Indians after this?

11 A I didn't trust them, I didn't trust white
12 people after. I didn't trust priests or Brothers or anything
13 that had to do with the church.

14 Q Did you begin to drink alcohol after these
15 incidents?

16 A I guess it could be a major factor in my
17 drinking and at times trying different drugs.

18 Q When did you start to drink?

19 A Age 13.

20 Q And did you stop drinking at some point?

21 A 1981.

22 Q Did you have any particular ambition or
23 goal as to what you wanted to do with your life?

24 A At some time, yes.

25 Q And what was that?

1 A When I attended Williams Lake Junior
2 Highschool, at the time I was good with woodworking, class there
3 we got, at that year I had won an award there. And after that
4 my dream was to be a carpenter or an architect, because there I
5 was good in carpentry and drafting.

6 Q Were you able to go on and do one of those
7 things?

8 A No.

9 Q Why was that?

10 A Alcohol got in my way.

11 Q And you told me, I believe, on an earlier
12 occasion that you had turned to alcohol to mask the pain and
13 suffering, what kind of pain and suffering were you
14 experiencing?

15 A The remembering of what happened at the
16 times I was at the Mission, witnessing not only my abuse but
17 abuse on the other individuals that were there at the
18 residential school.

19 Q Did the abuse that you suffered have,
20 caused you any problem with your spirituality?

21 A At the time I, I don't think I had culture
22 or tradition, but I think it caused my spirituality through the
23 church to decrease.

24 Q You have taken the step of coming forward
25 after many years to talk about your story and the things that

1 | happened to you in the residential school and outside the
2 | residential school, would you be prepared to help others come
3 | forward should they wish to do so?

4 | A I hope that my coming forward will help
5 | other people come forward, because if it could, if some good
6 | comes out of this for me, I hope other people will see it and
7 | come forward.

8 | Q Have you received any counseling or
9 | assistance of any kind to help you with your issues?

10 | A The counseling that I've gone to were like
11 | drug and alcohol counseling, I went to a treatment centre to
12 | cope with my alcohol.

13 | Q Do you think that you might benefit from
14 | other kinds of counseling to help you with the issues arising
15 | out of the abuse which you suffered?

16 | A I've gone to other trainings that have
17 | helped me along the way, like the Life Spring Training and New
18 | Direction Training that we were holding around here at one time.

19 | Q Yes.

20 | A These were a big factor for me, it helped
21 | me dealing with my trust, where I can start trusting the white
22 | people again, like it has really helped me along now, because a
23 | lot of my best friends now are white.

24 | Q Those are all the questions that I have,
25 | Commissioners, and certainly I invite you to ask any questions

1 | you may have of the witness. Thank you very much, Mr. Robbins.

2 | COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: First of all, a very
3 | personal word of thanks for being allowed to hear your story.
4 | I have only one specific kind of comment, is just to underscore
5 | something that was said this morning at some point about this
6 | issue of counseling and the need for counseling and the range of
7 | kinds of counseling, one on one through to group and traditional
8 | and western and combinations. I think a number of good workers
9 | around have opinions about that but I don't know yet if, out of
10 | this inquiry, that a recommendation bearing on that should be
11 | developed. And I just leave that at that.

12 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thanks, Wilfred, thank you for
13 | sharing with us. Our next witness is somebody that's special to
14 | us, I'd like to congratulate her on her doctorate degree, Dr.
15 | Elizabeth Furniss from Vancouver, Elizabeth.

16 | DR. ELIZABETH FURNISS: Sworn

17 | EXAMINATION BY RICHARD ROGERS

18 | Q Dr. Furniss, we met earlier and we've had
19 | numerous discussions on the phone and I'd like to thank you for
20 | attending here today. Earlier this morning we heard some
21 | evidence from Dr. John Milloy with Trent University, who gave us
22 | a very in-depth and striking view of the historical perspectives
23 | surrounding the residential schools in Canada. And I'm hoping
24 | that our discussions with you today will provide for the
25 | Commissioners, a more detailed account of the St. Joseph's

1 Mission School, in particular.

2 Perhaps if we might be able to have just a little
3 bit of background about yourself and if you may indicate to us
4 what your academic credentials would be.

5 A I've just finished a PHD in anthropology at
6 the University of British Columbia, my area of expertise in
7 anthropology has to do with Indian/White relations in Canada and
8 I've also been doing ethnographic research in Shuswap
9 communities since about 1985. So I've done a number of studies
10 on the history of the Shuswap communities in this region as
11 well.

12 Q Great. In particular, Dr. Furniss, I have
13 before me a book which I understand you were the author of, it's
14 entitled "The Victims of Benevolence" and the subtitle is called
15 "The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School". So,
16 sounds to me you're the right person to have here today to talk
17 about the St. Joseph's. Now there was an opening memoire that
18 you placed in your book, I'm going to read it out for the
19 Commission and then I would like to ask your opinion and reason
20 as to why you put it in there.

21 It's a memoire by a Father Francois Marie Thomas
22 (phonetic), I'm not sure of the date of when it was written,
23 however, I'll read it out and I'll ask you to explain. He says,

24 "The Indians, being nomadic by nature, wish to be
25 free to come and go as they please, it is not

1 surprising therefore that their children found
2 the confinement and discipline of school life
3 hard to bear, and that consequently several of
4 them ran away. One of these, a young boy, was
5 found dead in the woods, to pacify his parents
6 and the other Indians was no easy task. It was
7 difficult also to persuade the Indians to send
8 their children to school and to keep them there
9 all during the school term. This took a great
10 deal of diplomacy on the part of the principals
11 and the sisters. As for the missionary, he
12 spent hours and hours on the various
13 reservations trying to persuade the Indians to
14 send their children to school and to return to
15 the school those who had run away."

16 I found that to be quite a very powerful opening memoire to put
17 in your book, perhaps that may be a good place for us to start.
18 Why did you choose that?

19 A I chose that because the issues that I was
20 exploring in that book had to do with the care being provided to
21 the students at the Mission, at St. Joseph's Residential School.
22 And one of the key issues in the debates that were going on in
23 the first three decades of that school's operation was, what
24 kind of care was being provided to the students, why the
25 students were running away and how problems that the students

1 | were experiencing were being addressed by church officials and
2 | by the federal government.

3 | I thought that would be a fitting opening
4 | statement because it's both an acknowledgment that the children
5 | were unhappy at the school and it's also an acknowledgment on
6 | the part of the church representatives that they had to
7 | basically coerce Native parents into letting their children go.
8 | Yet, it's also a statement on the part of Father Thomas that he
9 | interpreted the problems being faced by the students not as
10 | problems of poor care or any kind of abuse, but of, and this was
11 | the standard kind of explanation for Native resistance to the
12 | residential school, it was understood as being in the nature of
13 | Native people to resist discipline.

14 | So in capsulated in that opening statement is the
15 | assumption that of racial superiority of white society and that
16 | any kind of resistance that Native people put to the residential
17 | school issue or the system was a product of their own racial
18 | inferiority, their unwillingness to submit to discipline.

19 | Q Thank you for that. Perhaps if you can
20 | give us now a little bit of historical background of how St.
21 | Joseph's Mission School came to be?

22 | A The school itself was opened in 1891, but
23 | I think it's important also to look a bit farther back into the
24 | history of relations between Native people and the newcomers to
25 | the Cariboo in that, in those times. Up until about the 1860's,

1 the major contact that Shuswap people had with newcomers was
2 through the fur trade and generally speaking, there was no
3 competition over the land or resources in that time. The major
4 change in Shuswap life and culture happened in the 1860's, when
5 the small pox epidemic came through and basically reduced the
6 population to about a third it's level.

7 At that time the Cariboo Gold Rush also arose and
8 brought thousands of newcomers into the territory. And with
9 that arrival of newcomers came people taking up the farms and
10 ranches, putting up fences, colonial authorities arrived to
11 mitigate the conflicts that were happening between the settlers
12 and the Aboriginal populations. So after the 1860's, there was
13 a sudden loss of Shuswap people's control over their territory
14 and over their communities. Part of the wave of colonization in
15 that time came with the arrival of the Catholic missionaries in
16 the 1860's.

17 By the 1890's, when the school was opened,
18 Shuswap people had, for the most part, lost control of their
19 lands, they were struggling to remain in control of their
20 communities. But by that time non-Native authority had been
21 imposed to an extent that they had very little recourse to
22 resist what was happening. So, that was the general historical
23 context of the opening of St. Joseph's Mission and why Shuswap
24 people started attending there.

25 The school itself, as I think Dr. Milloy

1 | discussed this morning, was part of the federal government's
2 | assimilation policy. It was a joint venture between the church
3 | and the state to bring about the assimilation of Native people
4 | into Canadian society, that was an explicit goal. And that was
5 | the logic of the residential school system.

6 | Q Can you tell us which groups were involved,
7 | apart from the federal government, I mean the religious order
8 | instrumental in the creation of St. Joseph school?

9 | A Yes, it was the Oblates of Mary Immaculate,
10 | who opened St. Joseph's Mission in 1867, at the South End of
11 | Williams Lake. That was the major denomination that was active
12 | in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region and it was the Oblates who
13 | opened St. Joseph's Residential School and the Oblates ran the
14 | school with the assistance, at least by 1896, of Sisters of the
15 | Child Jesus, which was a French order of nuns.

16 | Q Is there any reason why we see the
17 | inclusion of an order of nuns into the school system here?

18 | A They were actually present in the region
19 | even before 1891, they were involved in operating a kind of make
20 | shift schools for non-Native children in the district. And by
21 | 1891, they agreed to take on the responsibility of educating the
22 | girls who came to the residential school. So there was a
23 | division of labour between male instructors and female
24 | instructors, and that was the role that the sisters took.

25 | Q From your research, which eventually led to

1 the production of this book, were you able to determine what
2 kind of environment the children were subjected to in the early
3 days of the residential school?

4 A Yes, maybe I'll backtrack a little bit and
5 talk about the reason why I was doing that research, was
6 basically to pull together some general information on exactly
7 that point, the conditions of life at St. Joseph's in the early
8 decades of the school's operation. What I found in the federal
9 government records was a wealth of information discussing
10 exactly that problem. So, in terms of how we reconstruct the
11 conditions of life at St. Joseph's Mission in those years, if we
12 look at documentary sources of information there's a debate
13 within those sources as to how the students were cared for. And
14 those were the issues that I was discussing in that book.

15 For example, in 1902, there was a death of a
16 young boy, Duncan Sticks, who ran away from the school and was
17 found dead a day later. An inquest was struck to ask the
18 question of how Duncan had died and from the testimony that was
19 given at the inquest at that time, there were a number of people
20 who were interviewed and asked to provide affidavits as to
21 exactly what was going on at the mission. Included in the
22 people who testified and who's evidence is now part of the
23 documentary record were a number of students and ex-students,
24 Native parents of children who had been at the school, the
25 teachers, the Oblate principal and the sisters at the school.

1 Among those people they all, there's evidence that they
2 provided.

3 They provided completely contradictory accounts
4 of that question of what was going on at the school. The Native
5 children who provided testimony claimed that they were extremely
6 unhappy at the school, they were being forced to eat rotten
7 food, they were being excessively whipped. Some of the students
8 talked about, as a form of punishment, one student talked about
9 having her hands tied together, being blindfolded, others talked
10 about being locked into closets or into empty rooms and being
11 denied food or water. A couple of students talked about having
12 their clothes stripped off them and being whipped for as various
13 forms of punishment. But generally of all the students that
14 spoke there was consistent testimony that they were being
15 excessively whipped and beaten and they were being under fed or
16 forced to eat rotten food.

17 Q So this inquiry you're describing was a
18 response to the death of a young child in 1902, is correct?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And some 95 years later, we're here again
21 still talking about the same problems. Dr. Furniss, the
22 investigation that you described which took place in 1902, can
23 you tell us who would have been involved in that process?

24 A The investigation, the inquest was called
25 because there were concerns among the non-Native settlers of the

1 Cariboo region that something was wrong at the Mission. The
2 inquest was called by the Attorney General of BC, under pressure
3 by two local non-Natives, who may have had their own personal
4 reasons for wanting to see the end of the Mission. One was a
5 businessman who felt that his business was being undercut by the
6 products being sold through the Mission, another was an ex-
7 teacher at the Mission. But the inquest itself was struck by
8 the province, there was a six man jury, I believe, called to
9 hear evidence, there was a coroner called to examine the body of
10 Duncan Sticks, who had died.

11 The other players involved in that inquest were
12 the local Indian agent, at one point the Superintendent, General
13 of Indian Affairs was involved and the Indian Commissioner for
14 BC, A.W. Vowel (phonetic) was involved. So there are various
15 people in the Department of Indian Affairs' Hierarchy, who were
16 involved and there were also various church officials who had
17 something to say about the issue.

18 Q And again what was the result of this
19 inquest?

20 A The result of the inquest which, it was
21 originally called to find out how Duncan had died, because there
22 were allegations arising that he may have been excessively
23 beaten, his death may have been a result of abuse at the school.
24 There had been no coroner's examination of the body, so no one
25 really knew how he died. The result of the inquest, there were

1 two results, one was that the body was exhumed and examined,
2 evidence was taken from people who had witnessed the incident
3 and it was concluded that he had died of exposure when he ran
4 away, this was in February.

5 But another conclusion was reached by the jury
6 which found that there was so much contradictory evidence being
7 presented on the one hand by the students, and on the other hand
8 by the teachers and staff at the Mission, as to the care being
9 provided to the students, that the inquest jury concluded that
10 there needed to be an independent government examination of what
11 was going on at the Mission.

12 Q Did that ever happen?

13 A Yes it did.

14 Q Can you tell us a little bit about that
15 then?

16 A Yes. This is also, this so-called
17 independent government examination, came pretty much at the tail
18 end of a lot of local controversy and attention to the issue.
19 There was intense pressure on the Department of Indian Affairs
20 to deal in some way with the allegations that came up. The
21 church was under tremendous pressure to account for itself, I
22 think. The government investigation that did take place, took
23 place, I think about a month and a half to two months after
24 Duncan's death. It involved the Indian Commission of BC, A.W.
25 Vowel making, what he called, an unannounced visit to St.

1 Joseph's to question the students who had provided testimony at
2 the original inquest.

3 In his nine page report, Vowel, basically
4 repudiated every allegation that had been made at the inquest as
5 to the care being provided to the students. He re-interviewed
6 the students who had provided testimony, who he said recanted
7 some of their testimony. They claimed that they hadn't really
8 been hurt by the beatings, they claimed that they had been
9 denied, or been poorly fed in the past, but that wasn't a
10 problem any longer. Two of the students who refused to recant
11 their testimony, they were discredited by having it pointed out
12 that they had been dismissed from the school for bad conduct.

13 The Indian Commissioner later traveled to Alkali
14 Lake and interviewed some of the Native parents who had
15 expressed concerns over the school and he later reported that
16 they were sincerely regretful for any trouble that they had
17 caused the church and that they would attempt to encourage their
18 children to not run away from the institution. So, basically
19 the government investigation was a complete affirmation of the
20 federal government's residential school policy and it was an
21 affirmation of the care that the Oblates were claiming to
22 provide to the students.

23 It was basically, I think, a public relations
24 document and in the end the problems still lingered as to why
25 students were running away from the school. And in that final

1 government investigation it was concluded that the problem was,
2 lay with the children themselves, that on the one hand if they
3 wanted to get more food, they should ask for it and it was their
4 fault for not asking for it. And the problem was also
5 constructed that it was simply in the nature of Native children
6 to resist discipline. Therefore, they're running away from the
7 residential school was an affirmation of this racist assumption
8 that Native people were inherently inferior and that they needed
9 the civilizing mandate of the residential school in order to
10 bring them up to the level of civilization of white society.

11 Q Now, Dr. Furniss, I understand, again from
12 your research, that young Duncan Sticks was not the only
13 fatality at this institution, is that correct?

14 A Yes.

15 Q What else did you discover through your
16 research?

17 A There was another death in 1920, that of
18 which there is a lot of documentary evidence and I think also
19 that I wanted to point out that the documentary evidence of what
20 was going on at the Mission is quite strong up until 1920.
21 After which time it peters out and so that's why my research
22 ended at that point because I was limiting myself to federal
23 government records.

24 In 1920 there was another death at the Mission,
25 a young boy named Augustine Allan (phonetic) committed suicide

1 there. Apparently he and, I think eight or nine other children,
2 got together as a suicide pact and ate some poisonous roots and
3 while Augustine died, the others survived.

4 Q Was there any response by government or
5 church through this catastrophe?

6 A There was a response. On the one hand the
7 response of the coroner was, again, not to investigate because
8 he found that there was nothing unusual in boys eating poisonous
9 roots. At that time, two of the parents of the children wrote
10 letters to the Indian agent protesting the care being provided
11 to the students, they felt that the suicide was a result of the
12 fact that the boys were being excessively beaten and whipped.
13 They requested that there, the remaining children be released
14 from the residential school because they were afraid that they
15 would also try to commit suicide.

16 At that time, the local Indian agent was very
17 adverse to the idea of investigating this issue because as he
18 put it, he believed that there was a great tendency to lying on
19 the part of Native people, especially when it came to their
20 children in the school. But on the other hand he also felt that
21 there was a tendency on the part of the religious staff at the
22 school to cover up any problems that may have existed. And it
23 was the Indian agent's recommendation at the time that a medical
24 officer be immediately sent to the residential school on a
25 unannounced visit to inspect the children and to see what, if

1 they in fact were suffering from abuse.

2 The response to that, that recommendation went to
3 the Indian Affairs Secretary in Ottawa who, instead of sending
4 a medical officer to look into the problem, he then wrote a
5 letter to the principal of St. Joseph's Mission to ask the
6 principal what was going on. And not surprisingly, the
7 principal said that the children were receiving proper care and
8 that the allegations were completely false. At that time, the
9 letters from the parents of the children had also arrived back
10 in Ottawa, so there was, the issue hadn't died down yet, there
11 was still a lot of concern about what was happening at the
12 Mission.

13 After receiving the principal's response, the
14 Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa then
15 realized that the issue wasn't going to die and the next step
16 for him was to ask the Inspector of Indian schools in the
17 province to go to St. Joseph's Mission and to find out what was
18 happening with the children, to do interviews. By this time,
19 several months had passed and the inspector did send a final
20 report into Ottawa, he had not gone to St. Joseph's Mission, he
21 had been there several months previous and he didn't feel there
22 was any need to interview the students or inspect the conditions
23 there, as he had been there several months previous. He did
24 contact the principal of the school at the time who claimed that
25 the children were being properly cared for. The inspector wrote

1 a letter to the local Indian agent to ask his opinion and the
2 Indian agent in frustration said, if you had followed my advice
3 when I had originally requested a medical officer, then you
4 might have found something. But too much time has passed and
5 there's no point in investigating.

6 So the final report of the inspector was that
7 there's no purpose to be served from an investigation at this
8 point, and that was the end of the matter.

9 Q Dr. Furniss, you're telling us that your
10 research, and correct me if I'm wrong, went as far back as the
11 late 1900's and culminated as early as 1920, would that be
12 correct?

13 A The late 1800's, yes and I mentioned 1920.

14 Q So in this particular case then, what
15 you've described is an institution whereby the children were
16 sort of left to fend for themselves, would that be correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Was there any sort of checks and balances
19 that were put in place in order to look after the welfare of the
20 children?

21 A No there weren't.

22 Q We understand that the local representative
23 from the federal level at the grassroots level would have been
24 the Indian agent. What was your understanding about the role
25 was for the Indian agent?

1 A The Indian agent's official responsibility
2 was to look after the welfare of the Native people, the Native
3 communities in his district. Literally, it was to look after
4 the medical, the health concerns of the Native community, their
5 educational needs, to manage, because of the Indian Act
6 structure ,to oversee the management of Indian reserve lands and
7 resources. And also, more generally, to be an intermediary
8 between Native communities and the larger non-Native society.

9 Q Through your research, did you find any
10 correspondence from the local Indian agent to Ottawa involving
11 St. Joseph's Residential School?

12 A Yes I did.

13 Q What kind of comments did you see which
14 stick out in your mind as coming from the Indian agent?

15 A There were several Indian agents between
16 the 1890's and the 1920's, and of course, they had, you know,
17 they differed in character and personality and, you know, their
18 relationship with both the church and the Native communities.
19 But a fairly consistent kind of set of beliefs, I think on their
20 part, was that any kind of problems that Native parents or
21 students might voice about the care of children at the
22 residential school was basically, probably a fabrication.

23 They generally didn't believe the testimony that
24 students were, were giving to them, and they felt that any kind
25 of allegations that were raised by the students were simply

1 foolish excuses, and again they believed that the school was in
2 Native children's best interests and therefore any kind of
3 resistance just affirmed the Department of Indian Affairs'
4 mandate of civilization.

5 Q Now earlier in your testimony you described
6 at some point a connection with the provincial government, is
7 that correct?

8 A Um --

9 Q Or is that a misassumption on my part?

10 A There was one of the inquest into Duncan
11 Sticks' death was a provincial inquiry, I believe.

12 Q Okay, were you able to determine as to why
13 the provincial government conducted an inquiry instead of the
14 federal government for that particular problem?

15 A No I wasn't. I think that, that that
16 inquest was a response of, again, local pressure from the non-
17 Native community to look into the Mission. Why they went
18 through to the Attorney General versus the Department of Indian
19 Affairs I'm not too sure.

20 Q Dr. Furniss, apart from the two inquests
21 that we see revolving around the deaths of two young boys, did
22 your research uncover any other information that you felt was
23 very obvious or should have shown the federal government that
24 there were very real serious problems at this residential
25 school?

1 A Well I think that those two incidents speak
2 for themselves about that, yes. Those are just the incidents
3 that happened to be captured in the documents that I happened to
4 look at. And I mean, the evidence was overwhelming that there
5 was serious problems and I think the evidence is also
6 overwhelming that both the federal government and the staff at
7 St. Joseph's Mission were well aware of the problem.

8 Q To the best of your knowledge, was anything
9 done to try and rectify the problems that existed in the early
10 part of this century?

11 A One of the results of the 1902 inquest, was
12 that I think part of the government investigation that concluded
13 that issue, my understanding is that that, in reading the
14 report, the Department of Indian Affairs was indirectly
15 communicating to the Oblates that they had better take control
16 of the situation. And they were indirectly insisting that
17 better care be provided to the students and more food be
18 provided to them.

19 But in terms of any sincere effort to improve the
20 conditions that the actual, the plight of students at the
21 school, I don't think anything was done. In fact, my sense is
22 that after that, the 1902 incident especially, what happened was
23 an even greater imposition of coercive power on the students, so
24 that we find, for example, in some of the letters being written,
25 extensively being written by students to the Department of

1 Indian Affairs at Christmas time, that students are insisting to
2 the Department of Indian Affairs that they are being well cared
3 for, that they're happy.

4 One student wrote of how thick and fat he was,
5 this same student went on at length talking about how many
6 pounds that he and his classmates had gained since arriving at
7 the residential school that summer. And I read that as kind of
8 an, one of the elaborate strategies that was put in place to
9 create this public appearance that the problem was being
10 addressed at the school.

11 Whereas, in reality and some of the other
12 documents that I went through, what was happening was that there
13 was increasing thinning of the official record to ensure that
14 only good news got into it and that anything having to do with
15 the abuse or bad treatment of students at the Mission was being
16 systematically taken out of the official documentary record.

17 Q Thank you. Dr. Furniss, your 'Victims of
18 Benevolence', copies have been provided to the Commissioners for
19 their reading in helping them provide a final submission to this
20 inquiry. I also would like to thank you again for appearing
21 before us and providing us with an unfortunate but real
22 understanding of what happened with the St. Joseph's Residential
23 School at the early part of the century and I now leave you to
24 any questions that the Commissioners might have.

25 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Just a quick question,

1 | thanks, it was interesting listening to you. In your, in the
2 | course of your studies, your research, have you arrived at or
3 | are you arriving at some sense of, let's call it a context to
4 | not only the school and it's history here, but in the context of
5 | BC, compared to the Prairies, the North, down East and if so is
6 | it better or worse or just as bad as anywhere else, or it's
7 | better?

8 | A The residential school issue itself or
9 | Native, non-Native relations, in general?

10 | COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: No, the schooling of
11 | Indians in general and the form it took in many communities of
12 | residential school?

13 | A I can't make any conclusions about --

14 | COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Okay.

15 | A Yes, about what may be unique about British
16 | Columbia.

17 | COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Besides the mountains and
18 | the salt air.

19 | A I kind of think that the similarities are
20 | more overwhelming in the differences.

21 | COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: That's my impression too.

22 | COMMISSIONER JOHN: Thank you for your comments, I
23 | just want to be clear in your study, the book, "Victims of
24 | Benevolence", you focus on a very -- that during that period,
25 | okay one other point, and it had to do with the care being

1 provided to the students in residential school, that's the focus
2 of your, that study.

3 A That's one of the focuses, yes.

4 COMMISSION JOHN: I didn't get the other focuses.

5 A Yes, I think the basic core of the study
6 has to do with the issue of the care being provided to the
7 students. At a more general level, I'm looking at how the
8 different parties involved in the care of children being
9 government officials, the church, Native community, how they
10 responded to the runaway problem.

11 COMMISSION JOHN: Yes, okay. So, did you have an
12 opportunity this morning to listen to Dr. -- short memory.

13 A Dr. Miller.

14 COMMISSION JOHN: -- Milloy.

15 A No, I didn't, no.

16 COMMISSION JOHN: No you didn't?

17 A No.

18 COMMISSION JOHN: Oh, okay, it's no use asking my
19 next question then. It had to do with the -- in your book then,
20 you mentioned in your testimony earlier, "that the school was
21 established to assimilate Native people to mainstream society",
22 or words to that effect. How would you characterize your study
23 as achieving that objective or that policy objective of
24 government?

25 A How was the assimilation policy carried

1 out?

2 COMMISSION JOHN: How was the assimilation policy,
3 in your examination of this time period, how was that objective
4 achieved?

5 A Well I don't think it was achieved, I think
6 that on the surface the policy was to assimilate Native children
7 and that was through the educational curriculum, the trades
8 curriculum. But I think that also, what was being learnt at the
9 residential school wasn't that Native people could potentially
10 become members of Canadian society, I think what was being
11 learned was that Native children were inherently different from
12 non-Native Canadians and that that difference could never be
13 surpassed. And that's, I think kind of the latent curriculum
14 that was being taught, was one of racial inferiority.

15 And I think that we see that in the kinds of
16 discussions that went on between the church and the government
17 and the Native community. Trying to understand the runaway
18 problem, so it was being continually taught to students that
19 they were inherently inferior and that they could not, so that
20 on the one hand there was the explicit curriculum, on the other
21 hand there was the hidden curriculum of inferiority and
22 incapacity.

23 COMMISSION JOHN: In the subsequent period, are
24 you aware of any other events that may have come to the surface
25 of students running away and being punished or committing

1 suicide as a result or dying while away from the school?

2 A Well, in, again there's a difference, of
3 course, between the documentary record and what I've learned
4 from talking to people who've been to the residential school.
5 The runaways continued up until the closure of the school,
6 sometimes mass, you know mass numbers of students ran away,
7 sometimes it was only a few. There were a lot of problems with
8 the physical layout of the school, it was, you know, dilapidated
9 and it was a real fire hazard and there were a lot of concerns
10 about that. There were concerns about over-crowding and
11 disease, there concerns with Native children who became sick at
12 the residential school and being sent home, basically to die.

13 These kinds of concerns were ongoing up until St.
14 Joseph's Mission closed. I think that there are, of course, a
15 lot of stories of abuse and other things that have been part of,
16 you know, kind of the oral tradition of people who attended the
17 schools and as was spoken here earlier today as well. So I
18 think that I don't see any kind of radical discontinuity between
19 the years when I'm describing and the later experiences of
20 students at the school. I think that what only happened, from
21 my perspective, is that those became erased from the documentary
22 record.

23 COMMISSION JOHN: One final question and I'm
24 curious about the comments you made towards the end of your
25 presentation. In your examination of the official record, this

1 would, I assume, mean to take a look at all of the records that
2 the Department of Indian Affairs has in it's possession with
3 respect to that school in that time period. Would I be correct
4 in hearing you saying that towards the end, because of these two
5 incidents of these two children dying, that there was a
6 systematic effort by government in sanitizing it's records?

7 A I don't know if that happened. My
8 observation is that the kind of detailed discussion about the
9 care of the students was no longer present, except for isolated
10 concerns about epidemics and fire hazards.

11 COMMISSION JOHN: And the good news letters.

12 A The good news letters, yes.

13 COMMISSION JOHN: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Some people, I'm sure,
15 would glance at your book and say that it merely tells the story
16 of events that happened long ago, 95 years ago in one case, and
17 75 years ago in another case. And why is it necessary for
18 somebody, such as yourself, to come into the community and stir
19 up memories of these long ago events. I'm sure that that has
20 been a response that you've heard, I wonder what you would say
21 to somebody who voiced thoughts like that?

22 A Actually I haven't heard that, but I will
23 respond. I think that one of the reasons that I personally
24 thought this was an important story to tell is because when the
25 residential school issue began to be a public issue in the

1 1980's, there was a lot of focus on individual experiences of
2 abuse. But what I thought was missing from the debate was the
3 implications for the present, because the point that I'm trying
4 to make in writing that book is that, while we can talk about
5 past tragedies and we can feel sympathetic for students and we
6 can analyze the residential school as an unfortunate incident in
7 Canadian history. The point I'm trying to make is that what the
8 problem that those students faced and the problems surrounding
9 the residential school isn't just that these schools existed.

10 I think that the problem is that there is an
11 over-riding system of relationships between the Canadian state
12 and Canadian society and Aboriginal people and its the problem
13 is with the system of relationships, of which the residential
14 school was just one product. Because even though today although
15 the residential schools have closed, the same powers that were
16 used by the government and by the church to suppress Native
17 complaints are still in place. And so, for example, we now
18 have, we still have the Indian Act, we still have the Department
19 of Indian Affairs and both of those institutions are based on
20 the inherent inferiority of Native people from the rest of
21 Canadian society.

22 So we still have certain groups in society who
23 are exercising the legal and administrative powers to interfere
24 with the lives of Native communities. And we still have the
25 same kind of belief system in place among the dominant society

1 that feels that it has a moral obligation and the authority to
2 make decisions on behalf of Native people. So I think that the
3 problems that created the residential schools are still in
4 existence and that's the reason that I wanted to write this
5 book.

6 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Tongue in cheek, I take it
7 then you're looking forward to Manning's election?

8 A Personally, not exactly.

9 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Well, example in my view
10 of a technocratic approach, condescending and patronizing to the
11 Indian question.

12 COMMISSION JOHN: A follow up question, and I got
13 to the point that was troubling me initially, and I take the
14 view that two deaths is two many. But there, like Cunliffe
15 Barnett's question, there maybe there, there maybe people out
16 there who say, well, given the history of period we're talking
17 about, some hundred years during the operation of this school,
18 that there have been two deaths — we're not left with that
19 impression.

20 I want to be clear that what we're looking at, at
21 two incidents, that there maybe other incidents that we're not
22 aware of or you're not aware of or that you haven't reported
23 here. That there maybe other incidents where students have died
24 in care at the residential school or have run away from
25 residential school, or in some way died as a result of being

1 | there. And I, yes, I just, I want you to clarify that
2 | impression, if you feel you could.

3 | A Yes, I think that, you know the story of
4 | these two deaths, it's just the surface of the problem. I mean
5 | it will await for people to speak on that, but I'm, I would not
6 | be surprised and I don't think anyone that I've spoken with
7 | that's attended residential school would be surprised to, you
8 | know, learn of other deaths for whatever reason that have
9 | happened at St. Joseph's.

10 | COMMISSION JOHN: And the book then, I would take
11 | it, would be illustrative of, it's not the entire research of
12 | the area but these are just but two examples.

13 | A Yes.

14 | COMMISSION JOHN: Would I be correct in saying
15 | that?

16 | A Yes, they're just two examples that I think
17 | tell a story that was important to.

18 | COMMISSION JOHN: Thank you.

19 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Dr. Elizabeth
20 | Furniss, congratulations, thank you for your information.
21 | Before we go with our Elder witness, we're going to take 15
22 | minutes, it's hot, you need to get up and stretch and we'll take
23 | 15 minutes or 20 minutes, so 3:30.

24 | --- MEETING RECESSED AT 3:12 PM

25 | --- MEETING RESUMED AT 3:35 PM

1 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Can we get everybody to have a
2 seat so we can get started for the final witness. If everyone
3 can have a seat so we can finish with the final witness for
4 today. We'll now call on Fred Johnson to swear in our Elder
5 witness, Charlie Johnson, Fred.

6 CHARLIE T. JOHNSON; Sworn

7 EXAMINATION BY BRAD WICKS

8 Q Your name is Charlie Johnson, correct?

9 A Yes.

10 Q How old are you?

11 A I'm 82, going to be 83 in the Fall, that's
12 what I am.

13 Q Where do you live?

14 A I live right here, born here and still
15 here, can't get me out.

16 Q Now sir, did you go to school at the St.
17 Joseph's Mission School?

18 A Oh, yes, I went there and I served 10 years
19 there.

20 Q Do you remember what years they were?

21 A Well, I remember from 1922 when I was
22 brought there and came out in 1932.

23 Q How were you brought there?

24 A You mean how old I was?

25 Q No, how, in what way were you brought to

1 the Mission School?

2 A I was, I think, well I wouldn't know but
3 according to the time I was born I got there I must have been
4 seven, I count them this way.

5 Q Sir, what kind of things did you study or
6 learn at the school?

7 A Well, I learned reading and writing, read
8 and write and a little bit of speaking, I know how, know how to
9 count and what other, reading and write, sing. I had to do a
10 lot of singing, I mean, the time when you got to go to mass, you
11 know, on the special day, and then the times that you got to
12 learn everything by heart, when you sing you don't have a book
13 at all in front of you, just sing just from what's up here and
14 what you put up. Because at times we just, just drilled into
15 us, what they call drilled, keep on, you keep on singing until
16 you know everything by heart, that's how we were taught.

17 Q Sir, when you went to the school, could you
18 speak English?

19 A Well, when I went to school, all I knew was
20 Shuswap and it took me, took me a while before I learned to say
21 hello, or yes, or good morning.

22 Q Were you allowed to speak Shuswap at the
23 school?

24 A Well, we weren't allowed, but at times you
25 know you can sneak, sneak and talk your language when there's no

1 supervisor around, that's the only, that's one of the ways we
2 got away with it. But if you're heard, you're heard talking you
3 get a knock on the head.

4 Q Who would knock you?

5 A Other times you get a slap on the face.

6 Q Who would do that, sir?

7 A Well, the one that's looking after us,
8 looking after the boys, that was, Brother Joseph, the one that
9 was looking after us, when I mean at the time when I went, first
10 went in, went in school. I wouldn't even remember what he looks
11 like now, he was some, he had some sort of accent on him, you
12 can't really tell what he's talking about.

13 Q How many times did that happen to you?

14 A Well, it was a lot of times, I wouldn't
15 remember even to count, because it happens, all of a sudden
16 you'll forget that you're, that you're not supposed to talk
17 Indian and you will just talk, just without even thinking.
18 Never even look if there is a boss around at all and you'll
19 talk, next thing you get a knock on the head.

20 Q Would the knock on the head be with a hand
21 or something else?

22 A Well, it's like this, sometimes it's right
23 on the mouth, I mean at times you get it on the mouth too.

24 Q Did that happen to other boys as well.

25 A Oh yes, it had happened to other kids

1 | there, it was, there was the rule that, they're trying to break
2 | out the Indian language mostly, is all I can see, and that was
3 | they're, that was what they probably got that in their contract,
4 | break out the Indian language.

5 | Q Were there any other things that you
6 | weren't allowed to do in school?

7 | A Oh, I can remember, I know not allowed to
8 | steal, I mean you weren't supposed to, that's one thing I can
9 | remember what we weren't allowed. I couldn't remember every
10 | other thing too, that we weren't supposed to because --

11 | Q When, if somebody did something they
12 | weren't allowed to do, what would happen?

13 | A Well you get a licking, that's the thing
14 | that was usually, usually happens.

15 | Q Who would give you a licking?

16 | A Well the one, the supervisor, I mean the
17 | one looking after the boys there, he give you a licking right
18 | there. I've watched that happen.

19 | Q What kind of a licking?

20 | A Well, sometimes it's with a, if you're
21 | really asking, I seen them use the strap and I've seen some of
22 | them getting the straight stick, bigger than this.

23 | Q And where would the person be hit on his
24 | body?

25 | A Well, some of them were getting all along

1 | here, the arm, I've watched that, I've watched when they turned
2 | around and they wanted to hit you with the whole, the butt, the
3 | butt was bigger than the end. I watched once go like this and
4 | let them hit it on the floor instead, I've watched that happen.

5 | Q Did you ever see a whip used?

6 | A Well, yes. They whipped me too, I got
7 | whipped, I got whipped with a -- you talk about strap, I've
8 | heard a lot of them talking about strap. But what I got was
9 | team lines, you get that on your back and your, and when you're
10 | tied up like this.

11 | Q What do you mean by that?

12 | A They made me, like the way you'll see it
13 | done with Jesus Christ, and making something like that on me.

14 | Q What do you mean by a team line, sir.

15 | A Well the team lines, they probably got it
16 | from the barn.

17 | Q Is that a --

18 | A They were about from here to that, from
19 | here to your table, the one who had got it, that Turner
20 | couldn't, there was there the point they couldn't handle me and
21 | he was making an example of me that he's going to use some other
22 | way, that he was the boss.

23 | Q Where did he hit you with the team line?

24 | A Hit me on the back, you'll probably find
25 | some marks there yet.

1 Q How many times did he hit you with the team
2 line?

3 A Must have hit me a good dozen times or
4 more, because when you're getting hit you don't just. You think
5 you'd count if you was getting hit like that?

6 Q No, sir. Where were your hands, did you
7 say?

8 A What?

9 Q Where were your hands when this was
10 happening?

11 A Well it happened somewhere in '28, 1928,
12 somewhere.

13 Q Sorry, I thought you may have said earlier
14 that your arms were tied up or something like that?

15 A Yes, tying them up, I remember to a post or
16 something.

17 Q What were they tied with?

18 A What?

19 Q What were they tied with?

20 A Well some kind of rope, a rope that's tied
21 up like this, to the post.

22 Q Who did this to you, sir?

23 A Bill Turner and Phil.

24 Q What was his job at the school?

25 A Well they was the supervisor, supervisor of

1 the boys.

2 Q How many times did that happen to you?

3 A Well that happened once, as far as I can
4 remember.

5 Q Sir, did you see other boys whipped with a
6 bullwhip at some time?

7 A Well, there was George, there was George
8 Boyd (phonetic), the one that got the bullwhip, the bullwhip and
9 that was loaded with buckshot. I remember seeing that, that
10 bullwhip in Alphonse Zirnhelt's room, it was, like this and the
11 guy that went and ask him to use it, he didn't say what it was
12 for, he didn't say he was going to lick a kid. And he used it
13 and he used it to, he might have put marks like this. And when
14 they caught that guy in Quesnel after they left school, five of
15 them, five of them go after, go after the one that was
16 supervising at the time. Five of them went after him and they
17 cut him down, by that time somebody reported to the provincial
18 police, it wasn't the Mounties at the time.

19 And when they, when that guy come, I mean the cop
20 come, he went and asked the boys, what was going on, and George
21 and them, they told him we caught up to the guy that bullsnake
22 and George Boyd took off his shirt, this way according to his
23 word, took off his shirt and he showed the provincial what the
24 marks were, marks were still on his back like this, criss-cross.

25 And that thing had a popper on it and that is for a bull, bull

1 has got a thicker hide than the Indian, I know that part of it.

2 Q Do you know if the provincial police did
3 anything when they saw the marks on his back?

4 A Well the thing was, you knew it as just
5 like, he must have been showing off, what he can do but after,
6 after they found him out, found him out and they, he took off
7 and they never see him no more, wherever he went.

8 Q Why was it that this whip was used on that
9 boy?

10 A Well, one thing was he used to run away and
11 they want to quit, they wanted to quit running away from school,
12 that was one thing I know. Those guys are, you can't make them
13 quit when they want to go, they just go.

14 Q And who was it that used the whip on him?

15 A It was Jim Fraser, as far as I can
16 remember.

17 Q What was his job in the school?

18 A His job was supervisor of the boys at the
19 time when they done it, that's what.

20 Q Sir, how did you find the food at the
21 school?

22 A Well, the food, the food itself is what, at
23 times it was short, it wasn't just enough and that's how always
24 some of the kids there, they used go and steal, steal even what
25 the pigs were getting fed, like, for one like turnips. I seen

1 the one that the big one like this and the other one and then
2 when the one looking after, looking after, oh, what he was
3 doing, he came along after those guys, they were all kneeling in
4 front of what they stole and Brother Collins came along and he
5 said, so these are the thieves, that's the way he addressed the
6 kids. Well I don't blame them, they were hungry, what they
7 wanted, a big turnip there is quite a meal for, they split it up
8 around they did. But I didn't eat anything out of it, myself.

9 Q What about the food that you did eat, sir,
10 was it good food?

11 A Oh good enough there, I'm still alive yet.

12 Q I understand, sir, that sometimes the food
13 wasn't very good, do you remember that?

14 A Well, let me see I can't remember just what
15 I put in, my memory at times get's going.

16 Q Sir, perhaps I can help you a little bit,
17 you told me about a boy named Bernard Rocky.

18 A Oh yes, that happened onward, when Bernard
19 Rocky, there was, he was hungry and there was a cake, a cake
20 that another guy must have puked out, he puked it out and
21 Bernard, he took it up and he ate it. He ate that cake and two
22 days later, two days later and he was dead, whatever that food
23 had done to him, he was, I was there when they was, pretty well
24 on his last hours. I watched him, I watched him when he was
25 suffering and whatever it done to him inside, whether, it's got

1 to be food poisoning, now I mean that's the way you'd put it
2 now, that it was food poisoning that got him.

3 Q Were you or the other boys hungry from time
4 to time.

5 A Oh yes, there was sometimes you're pretty
6 hungry when you're not given enough, it's barely when you're
7 working.

8 Q Did you have to work in the school?

9 A Oh, yes, we worked when we were, the worst
10 only it was in the winter time when we had saw wood, split it
11 wet and sledge hammer in the wet and when you're taking 40 below
12 zero, that's the thing you had to do, I couldn't blame, and we
13 were out there, we were out there chopping wood.

14 Q How old were you then, sir?

15 A Oh, I must have been, I must have been
16 getting about 13, 13 at the time.

17 Q Did you have any brothers and sisters in
18 the school?

19 A I had only my older, my older sister, that
20 was the only one that I had in school, all the rest weren't of
21 age yet. They weren't old enough to go in, not until I came
22 out, after I came out of the school and then they, then some of
23 them starting going in, going into that.

24 Q When your older sister was in the school,
25 could you see her if you wanted?

1 A Well my older sister was about three years
2 older than me, well yes, she was three years older.

3 Q And did your younger brothers and sisters
4 go to school there later on?

5 A Well, yes, my brothers there and sisters,
6 they were in after I left at the residential school, they were
7 brought in.

8 Q Now sir, I understand, I understand, sir,
9 that you experienced some sexual abuse when you were in the
10 school?

11 A Oh yes, that's what I said was, it's I
12 heard something, that it was gang sexual, that I went through
13 that, I went through all that, those guys are dead now.

14 Q Was that with, from other students in the
15 school or from teachers?

16 A Other students, older, older students.

17 Q Okay, did you ever tell anybody about that?

18 A Well telling wouldn't do any good, they
19 wouldn't do anything about it.

20 Q Why do you say that?

21 A Well I know, well even when, even when the
22 priest himself was, was after a student.

23 Q Did you ever --

24 A They had the girl in his own, the priest
25 had the girl in his own bed, according to the way I learned it.

1 And they were just at it, when the door opened, the sister came
2 in and seen it, seen it all, so there's why telling, they won't
3 do anything about it.

4 Q Were you afraid of the priest?

5 A Well I had to be afraid of him when they
6 can lick you.

7 Q And did they lick you sometimes?

8 A Well I guess I got, I got strapped too,
9 from the priest for small things there, I don't remember just
10 why, sometimes if you're late, if you're late getting up,
11 milking cows, that was something that we had to be down and if
12 you're late or were asleep.

13 Q And on those or at those times, the priest
14 himself strapped you?

15 A Yes he can strap a guy when his, at his own
16 feelings.

17 Q Where would the priest strap you on your
18 body?

19 A Well, he'll strap you just on your behind.

20 Q Sir, I understand that after you left
21 residential school you went on to have a large family?

22 A Oh yes, I had, I have got this one here and
23 there's, I got six boys alive yet and four girls, one of them is
24 the Chief, she's around here somewhere.

25 Q And sir, I understand you went on to become

1 the Chief, after you left residential school?

2 A Oh yes, I was proclaimed, there was no
3 ballots, you didn't have to write your name or make an oath or
4 something, but just proclaimed at the time because the one that
5 was Chief at the time didn't want, didn't want the job anymore.

6 Q When did you become the Chief?

7 A 1952 to 1972, about 20 years at it.

8 Q Sir, those are all the questions I have for
9 you and I thank you very much. The gentlemen here, the
10 Commissioners, may have some questions for you.

11 A I might hear what you're saying but I won't
12 understand you at that distance.

13 COMMISSION JOHN: Charlie, do you remember
14 Augustine Allan?

15 A No, I don't remember Augustine Allan, he
16 might have been in, well I remember Augustine Archie but not, no
17 Allan.

18 COMMISSION JOHN: Maybe I have the -- I heard the
19 name wrong, it's the young man, the young boy that was, took
20 some poisonous roots, took some plants that were poisonous.

21 A Poisonous roots that was, it was a
22 different one from this for sure, but it wasn't any Augustine.

23 COMMISSION JOHN: Okay, I might have my
24 information not correct.

25 A I might have been not even in school yet.

1 COMMISSION JOHN: It was two years before your
2 time.

3 A Oh yes.

4 COMMISSION JOHN: You were, you said that you were
5 tied and you were whipped and you said that you still might have
6 scars on your back?

7 A Yes, well I can't see it behind here,
8 that's one thing, I see only so far, but I never use double
9 mirrors there, I might see something else yet.

10 COMMISSION JOHN: I just wanted to follow up on
11 that question, because you were saying that you did, when you
12 were younger, had scars on your back from that whipping that you
13 got.

14 A Well I could have some, but I can't see it
15 at all and nobody has told me, I know underneath I know have
16 broken ribs, but the scars is one thing it doesn't show on that
17 picture what they took of me, I mean that, what's the name, x-
18 ray don't show it, doesn't show scars.

19 COMMISSION JOHN: I understand, I have just one
20 last question, when you were a young boy in residential school
21 and your village was over here, and the residential school was
22 in Williams Lake, how did you feel.

23 A Well, well I, while I was at the
24 residential school I'd sooner be at home, that's the way I felt.
25 It's away from all the hidden things, the priest were into.

1 COMMISSION JOHN: I'll give you an example of,
2 another question, but I'll give you an example of what I went
3 through. I went to residential school and that school was 80
4 miles from my village and when you're a young boy that far away
5 from home, you feel very powerless, that somebody else is in
6 charge of your whole life. And I wonder in your day, whether it
7 was the same thing?

8 A Well a lot of times there I felt the same
9 way, I guess, the way you felt, because at times I was at the
10 verge, at the verge of running away and whatever held me back is
11 I don't know yet why. At times I was just about ready to go,
12 but I never did run away, run away from school.

13 COMMISSION JOHN: But it came across --

14 A It was my old man he told me, he says I'll
15 never, I'll never stay quiet until I find you, that's what he
16 says and they told me don't try it, don't try running away and
17 that's what might stay in my head, that I didn't run away, kept
18 me. Okay?

19 COMMISSION JOHN: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: It's been really
21 interesting listening to you, Mr. Johnson, but I don't have any
22 questions for you.

23 A Okay.

24 COMMISSION JOHN: I have one more question and I'm
25 sorry I didn't ask it, but I want to ask it while I still have

1 a chance. You went to the residential school to learn, how much
2 learning did you do and how much working did you do? How much
3 of your time was spent in going to school while you were in
4 residential school and how much of your time was doing the work
5 you were talking about.

6 A Well, I done a lot of farming there, I mean
7 I learned from Brother Collins, I learned farming, that's one
8 thing I learned from, how to feed the pigs too and I don't know
9 all that. So I don't know what other, what I learned was
10 carpentry, carpentry, but a lot of the things that I know now is
11 what I learned after I came out. I came out of school and then
12 I learned, I learned what I didn't have a chance, chance to do
13 at the Mission.

14 COMMISSION JOHN: I'm not very good at asking
15 questions and I should be better, but I want to ask you was most
16 of your time in residential school learning how to read and
17 write or was most of your time spent on learning how to do
18 farming?

19 A Well I think that it's about splitted, it's
20 not reading and writing, we were out, we were out too, and I
21 used to go out — fix things is one thing I learned from old
22 Tommy, Tommy Wycott (phonetic). He learned me how to stretch
23 wire and how to cut rails and cut, and put them in on the fence
24 is one thing and there was miles too, that we had to go around
25 horseback and learn a bit of the country and learn how to follow

1 an older Indian that knew how to come back. Does that answer
2 your question?

3 COMMISSION JOHN: I thank you for being very
4 patient with me and I thank you for answering my questions.
5 Thank you.

6 A Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: I couldn't help but wonder
8 if you had time for a girlfriend while you were at school?

9 A I don't think so.

10 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Charlie. We want
11 you to join us up here. If we could ask the Alkali Drummers to
12 join us up here and I would like to ask John Milloy, Shadowhawk,
13 Wilfred Robbins, Elizabeth Furniss and Charlie, to join us here
14 so we could have a closing drum song. I would like us to just
15 acknowledge these people's courage today, these people's
16 honesty, to be able to tell their story to the Commissioners.
17 And on behalf of the community we thank them for their stories.
18 Before we, we sing the song, I want to remind you of tonight's
19 important event, at 7:00 o'clock we will meet here and go
20 through pipe ceremony to remember all of the children that have
21 died at residential school. So we will start that ceremony at
22 7:00 pm.

23 They are making supper here so feel free to stay
24 here and eat, so we will see you again at 7:00. But in closing
25 we want to thank these people for their evidence and their story

- 1 | through a drum song, Fred.
- 2 | (CLOSING DRUM SONG)
- 3 | --- MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:25 PM

May 20, 1997
Alkali Lake, BC

ALKALI LAKE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL INQUIRY

Grand Chief Ed John
Doctor J. Coutoure
Judge C. Barnett

Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner.

INQUIRY

Brad Wicks

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Richard Rogers

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Joe Morrison

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Key West Reporting Service
2301 Quamichan Park Rd
Duncan, BC V9L 4T7

1 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 9:18 A.M.

2 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Good morning, we'll get started
3 with the day's session. We'll start with an opening prayer with
4 our youth representative, Stephanie Paul, so if we could all
5 stand.

6 STEPHANIE PAUL: Good morning, everyone, my name
7 is Stephanie Paul and I'll be saying the opening prayer.

8 (OPENING PRAYER)

9 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, you can have a seat
10 now. Thank you. We have some opening remarks with our youth
11 today for a message of hope and the message of prayer and
12 strength. So I'd like to call on Freda Johnson to say a few
13 words on behalf of the youth at the request of our people.

14 FREDa JOHNSON: Good morning. First of all I
15 would just like to welcome all the guests, the media and the
16 people of Alkali Lake to this inquiry. I guess, I think that
17 this inquiry is a real, really good thing for the people, the
18 Native people particularly. And if it could help anybody to
19 realize why our people are suffering and why there are Native
20 people on the streets and in prisons, I hope that this is the
21 thing that will help.

22 I grew up with, like I didn't go to the
23 residential school, but my parents and my grandparents and my
24 great grandparents all went. And I've seen many of the
25 destructive behaviors that they learned from the residential

1 school, like the anger, the shame. And I know that I didn't go
2 but these learned behaviors were passed down to me and for a
3 long time I was really ashamed of being Native and learning my
4 culture. It took a long time for me to start actually being
5 proud of being Native. And it wasn't until about a year ago
6 when I went to a workshop with Charlene Belleau and found out
7 all this information of why I felt this way and why I didn't
8 like being Native.

9 But I'm just glad that this is happening right
10 now, so that we can all see why our Native people are suffering
11 all over North America. And I'm glad that, to see the drums and
12 the pipes sitting here before me. And in closing I would just
13 like to thank Charlene for opening the doors, for me and
14 countless other people, thank you.

15 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Freda, thank you for
16 your songs, thank you for your prayers and thank you for your
17 message, thank you very much. Okay, the first witness that we
18 would like to call is Steve Belleau, will have a slide
19 presentation, so Fred, if you could swear Steve in. And for
20 this part of the presentation, we will ask the Commissioners to
21 move to the side but we'll do the swearing in first.

22 STEVE BELLEAU; Sworn

23 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Okay, so if we could ask you to
24 just maybe move to the side, we're going to do the slide
25 presentation right behind you here, or just move around the

1 table. And if want to move closer so you see these slides, feel
2 free to move in.

3 (SLIDE PRESENTATION)

4 STEVE BELLEAU: Good morning, Steve Belleau,
5 Cunliffe, Ed, Joe. I have seen these slides so many times, it's
6 just like going back in time again, to watch these young people,
7 to see their pictures again, many of them have died already.
8 I've lost a lot of friends and every time I see it, it really
9 hurts, because it reminds me who I lived with for 10 years over
10 at residential school. These slides are for a purpose to show
11 you how we lived, to show you how it was, to show you the truth.

12 These slides were never altered, they were found
13 in archives, found in the homes, in storage for many years. And
14 the slides that I selected are for reasons of sadness, despair,
15 loneliness, falsehood, anger, and all those things that we have
16 heard yesterday from the people that spoke. Many people told me
17 that I don't understand what I'm saying, but -- don't know what
18 I'm talking about, but they don't realize that I, I was there
19 for 10 years, I know what they're talking about, I understand,
20 I lived with them, but here are some of them.

21 This is the front of the residential school, the
22 building, and the reason I was showing this, this is the girls
23 side. And we're only allowed to live -- we were never allowed
24 to speak to the girls, we were even never allowed to look at the
25 girls, otherwise we were punished in such a way that we either

1 get strapping or kneel down out in a field, so we were isolated
2 from our brothers and sisters. See how tiny they are, yet they
3 were taken away from our parents, we were taught the religion,
4 the Roman Catholic Church. And that's some more of that, the
5 same church, the only time we get to wear our really nice
6 clothes was when we go to church. This is some more of that.

7 This picture shows loneliness, being alone, no
8 parents, look at her toys, pop caps for toys, I always wonder
9 who her friends was. This is one of our friends that is still
10 on the streets today, he's hiding at the bottom of the bottle,
11 some day he might come back, he was a real good friend of ours.
12 This here is one of our stage shows that we did when we were
13 there, the residential school. And it was really hard for me to
14 act as a non-Native and then to be an Indian, who was ashamed to
15 be a Native, I think that was one of the reasons why I put this
16 in there.

17 This is the cattle, calf club, and if you look
18 right here, that's our bus right here, two of them, cattle
19 trucks. This is one of the Oblates, Brother Robbie (phonetic).
20 I wonder if I can move just a little bit, it's a little better.
21 This is one of the hockey teams back in the 1940's that was at
22 the residential school, I don't know who this priest is, I think
23 it might be Father Willard, might know who he is, Willard, yes,
24 Father Murphy. We used to play football at the residential
25 school and soccer and this is one of our victory dances. We

1 talk about, you probably heard the names of the people that they
2 were praying for last night, this is one of them here, Leonard
3 Johnson and here's the other one, Gilbert Johnson.

4 This is Cyril Coin (phonetic), he's up in the
5 Northwest Territories, and this is Brother Robbie. This is
6 another hockey team but I don't know what year this was, but
7 again it's in, between the 1930's and the 1950's, I guess.
8 School pictures was done every year, I think, if I can remember
9 in 1965, '66, by the look, Grade 4, yes. See, you look at all
10 these kids, all of the false smiles, aren't they real. This is
11 one of the Sisters, I can't remember her name. And that's
12 another set of, probably the same year, yes, it is, '65, '66,
13 Grade 6.

14 When I look at these pictures, a lot of these,
15 many of these people have either died or have gone or is still
16 out in the streets. See how tiny these peop — these children
17 are, see how tiny they are, yet, they take all these children
18 away from their parents, bring them to the residential school.
19 I'm pretty sure this is the same year, '65, '66, a lot of you
20 here probably have friends in these pictures. And again,
21 whenever we go to special occasions, the only time that we get
22 to wear really nice clothes is when we have school pictures or
23 we go to church or it's Easter time or it's Christmas time.

24 And who's this, see look at my shirt, I bet you
25 this shirt is about 20 years old. I had long hair when I went

1 to the residential school and they took that away from me. I
2 put this picture in to show I'm home, and my friend Cyril, we're
3 home, we're happy, see that. They took that away from us when
4 they sent us to the residential school, they took away our
5 laughter, our freedom, our honour, our self-respect. And this
6 is, this is my brother Dave, Hollywood. I show these because of
7 the good old days are the good old days, we had no worries, we
8 had freedom and we had laughter, fun.

9 These are some of our friends from across the
10 river, Stanley Stump and Gerry Elkins (phonetic) and he used to
11 play for the hockey team there. And Brother Robbie and some of
12 the boys. That's again, that's from one of our stage shows that
13 we had at the residential school, that's Francis Dick
14 (phonetic), and I don't know who this guy is, no, that's me. I
15 put this picture in because my life was around humour and
16 laughter and that was someway of me escaping what was going on
17 in the residential school, is I thought I'd do this to make
18 myself happy, that's me right there, that's Art Paul. I show
19 this slide because this little room, this is a little room where
20 I think things that happen, have happened, that's a small room
21 where, they call it the boy's club, club room where it was
22 sports and things like that.

23 These are some of our students during the show,
24 during our stage show. This is 1965, '66, also, look how tiny
25 they are, see, I see this as a real, it's a real, I shouldn't

1 | say pitiful picture but. I know who this is, her son was here
2 | yesterday, that's Mrs. Zirnhelt. I bet you these children here
3 | are five, six year olds, taken away from their parents very,
4 | very young. Another school picture where again, you know, I
5 | think I just like to show this because many of these people are
6 | either still out on the streets or have died, things like that.
7 | This is the same thing also.

8 | This here is a photo in the dormitory of the
9 | boys, it was too bad that we couldn't get this really clear, but
10 | this here is just during Christmas time and everybody I think
11 | was getting ready to go home for Christmas, that's why you see
12 | smiles in this picture, is they're going home. This here is a
13 | banquet after football season, I guess, CFL. This here is a
14 | movie night, the reason I put this in there, I think also, our
15 | footwear had to last us pretty well the whole year and you look
16 | at the clothing in this one here. This guy here is too small,
17 | his shirt's too small, this guy here his pants is too big, it's
18 | rolled up. Like when I was listening to Billy yesterday, that
19 | was true, you had two sets of clothes that had to last you the
20 | whole year and I tell you when holes start to come in there you
21 | tried to fix it yourself, same with the footwear. See, look at
22 | this one over here.

23 | This is our playground down below the building
24 | where we play football and things like that. This window right
25 | here, supervisor sticks his head out and blows the whistle and

1 everybody runs, we used to always watch for that one window when
2 things were going on, we used to always watch for that window.
3 These are two little guys having their own fun, I don't know who
4 they are, but again you just look at the age, look at the
5 haircut, they have taken away their pride. I bet you these guys
6 had braids one time. Keith Popoff (phonetic) I think is his
7 name, he used to come to the residential school quite a bit and
8 teach music, I think, Les, if I'm right.

9 Oh, here's, we're having a dance, this is a
10 dance, see how far apart we had to be, you know the Sister used
11 to come by there with a ruler and make sure you're three feet
12 away you know, hey, back up, you're three inches too close, I
13 still remember that. And then when you finished the dance, the
14 girls would go down to the other corner, the boys would come
15 down to the other corner, you know, spoiled, Charlene knows
16 that. Brother Robbie and this is Charlene's brother and this
17 is, I can't remember who that is.

18 These, he's down in Hollywood, where I think,
19 that's Fred Johnson and that's, what was her name, Rose, Guys
20 and Dolls, that was what it was called. Ray Hance, (phonetic)
21 another friend of ours from across the river. See how bony
22 these guys are, been starved there for 10 years, that's Brother
23 Robbie again. I put this in, this is Father or Bishop Lopsinger
24 (phonetic), when we hear this thing making, when we hear this
25 thing making noise in the hallway we know what's coming, this is

1 a cross, it's a big cross and makes lots of noise when they
2 walk, Brothers and the priests used to use that, see they all
3 had one, see, all the crosses.

4 Again, a false front, dress her up really nice
5 we'll take a picture and send it to the government saying that
6 we look after these children very well. This here is a dance
7 again, oh, no, this is a banquet. This is a hockey team when I
8 was there and that's Whip, Chris Emmett (phonetic), Robert Jeff,
9 no, David Jeff, he's still out in the streets today, I see him
10 every now and then when I go to town, George Archie and I don't
11 know who this one is. Look at the clothing, see how it's
12 starting to get all ragged. This is from our weight lifting
13 club, he was so big they had to cover him up. Again, you know,
14 I bet you these guys had real nice long hair before they went
15 into residential school, they had it all cut off.

16 That's one of the things I had to do when I was
17 at residential school, I had to cut their hair and that was one
18 of the hardest things I ever done. Because one time, one of the
19 boys from Mt. Currie came in, he had long braids and I cut it
20 off, broke his spirit, he was nobody anymore. This is one of
21 the last graduating classes in the residential school at St.
22 Joseph's Mission. I put this in here, I think, for, because
23 these are the kids that did not get a chance to go home for
24 Christmas, look how tiny they are, don't get to go home and see
25 their parents. That's the other part, Santa Claus, Santa Claus

1 had to stay there too, so, they were very young and they can't
2 go home.

3 This is backwards, it's, the barn is suppose to
4 be on the right side and the leaning pole suppose to be facing
5 the other way, it's facing the wrong way. This person here was,
6 I don't know if I should say this or not or whether, he was
7 always on girls side. Every time you see him photographed, he's
8 with little girls. This is some of the nuns. This is the
9 dormitory where we stayed, see how our beds were made, how our
10 beds were all in line and we only had limited room, we had no
11 privacy. All our clothes were placed in here and closed, locked
12 up, then we had to wear the clothes issued by the residential
13 school.

14 This is Father Brown, having a birthday of some
15 kind. That's up in the fourth floor I think, Father Robbie.
16 All the girls going on a trip. That's the school where we were,
17 that's the school we went to, there are two levels, one down in
18 the basement, one upstairs, there's eight classrooms. There he
19 is again. Chief Dan George and friends, Chief Dan George again
20 and I think this is Father Black, if I'm right, and I can't
21 remember her name. And this here, again that's the dormitory,
22 again on the girls side, it must be Sunday since they're dressed
23 nicely. See they're all nicely dressed and ready to go in the
24 church.

25 Was listening to some people, and when we go home

1 for summer or go home for Christmas, this was how we were taken
2 home and I remember, I remember coming back, coming home for
3 Christmas in a cattle truck. When I look at it and think about
4 it, how degrading this was, how humiliating it was. I always
5 wondered how does my mom and dad think, what were they thinking
6 about when I seen the cattle truck coming down the road with
7 their children, what did they think. I was embarrassed to get
8 off of that when I got off, but that was the only way we could
9 get home for holidays and we took it and we didn't complain,
10 because it was going to get us home for the holidays, that was
11 going to get us home for the summer. Nobody wanted to stay back
12 because we know what was going on there, some of the children
13 that were abused were the ones that stayed for the holidays,
14 stayed at the residential school for the holidays, stayed for
15 the summer.

16 I think this here is a beautiful picture for the
17 human rights to look at and say, how could they do that to these
18 children. I'm pretty sure there was a bus parked there when
19 they loaded us into the cattle truck to take us home for
20 Christmas, I'm pretty positive. But they preferred to use a
21 truck because we can haul a little more, they can haul 60
22 instead of 36.

23 And with that I'd like to thank you very much for
24 your time and your patience to watch and look at some of the
25 historical photographs that have happened, there are many other

1 | photographs that are available to us to show the truth. The
2 | real thing that happened to our children, to my dad, to my mom,
3 | my granddad, they went through the same thing. And I think it's
4 | something that we shouldn't forget and not let go. And again I
5 | think you very much, thank you.

6 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Steve. Can you turn
7 | the lights on there. Thank you, Steve, for the slide
8 | presentation. It is early, 10:00 o'clock, we're going to wait
9 | until our first victim witness before we take a coffee break, so
10 | Fred, if you could swear in Dave Belleau.

11 | DAVE BELLEAU; Sworn

12 | EXAMINATION BY RICHARD ROGERS

13 | Q Good morning.

14 | A Good morning.

15 | Q Dave, perhaps we can begin by having you,
16 | for the record, provide your full name?

17 | A My name is Dave Michael Belleau.

18 | Q David, when were you born?

19 | A I was born June 29, 1942.

20 | Q And where would that have taken place?

21 | A Alkali Lake, British Columbia.

22 | Q Dave, we had an opportunity to speak
23 | yesterday, in preparation for your presentation here today and
24 | your answers. It took you some time to decide to come forth in
25 | a open forum to speak, is that true?

1 A That's true.

2 Q Why was that?

3 A Fear, fear of, I guess being discovered,
4 the secrets of the past, the hurt, the bottom line loneliness of
5 being hollow.

6 Q Well perhaps we can start with a little bit
7 of background information, if you can tell us how many children
8 were in your family?

9 A Right now we have seven, six boys and one
10 girl.

11 Q You say right now, did you have a larger
12 family before present?

13 A Yes, we had five and we have an addition
14 now, because of the children we had lost, I had relinquished.

15 Q I understand that you were a student at St.
16 Joseph's Mission School, is that correct?

17 A That's correct.

18 Q Perhaps you can tell us your earliest
19 thoughts about when you entered?

20 A I always remember when I first entered the
21 residential school in 1951, in September. My mom and dad took
22 us over there on a wagon and team, team of horses. For me it
23 was exciting, I guess, because I didn't know nothing about
24 residential school. I remember watching that team of horses
25 getting out of sight in the horizon going towards, onward range,

1 and my thoughts started to change and started to wonder, for the
2 first time I was alone there.

3 Q Did you have any idea where you were going
4 at that time?

5 A I very vaguely if nothing, I didn't even
6 know what this was all about.

7 Q Had anyone told you that you would be going
8 to school and that you would be staying there away from your
9 family?

10 A I didn't even know what school was and I
11 didn't even know that I would be away from my family.

12 Q How old were you when you entered school?

13 A Pardon?

14 Q How old were you when you entered the
15 school?

16 A I entered that school when I was nine years
17 old.

18 Q Can you remember what it was like when you
19 first started?

20 A I guess, in terms today, we call it
21 apprehension, you don't know what you're getting yourself into.
22 For one, I'm playing with my friends here in Alkali Lake and
23 next thing I'm surrounded by a whole bunch of strange kids. I
24 didn't know how to react to that and so I needed to adapt
25 somehow and somehow and for me even that was hard.

1 Q Were there any other of your brothers or
2 sisters at the school when you started?

3 A I remember my brother, Percy, was there and
4 that's all I think I remember, when I first began.

5 Q Do you remember if Percy was able to help
6 you with the transition to begin at St. Joseph's Mission School?

7 A He did a lot, he protected me a lot, he
8 tried his best to see that I was not in the wrong places in the
9 wrong time and, I guess, he knew what might happen to me, but I
10 didn't know all that.

11 Q When you say that your brother was there to
12 protect you, can you recall what kind of things that he would
13 protect you from?

14 A Well, for one thing, he told me never to go
15 downstairs, down to the heater rooms or not to go upstairs at a
16 certain time of the day. To respond to the whistle as soon as
17 I hear it or to the bell, also to be, to be in the room quickly
18 when I was told to do something. And to stay with people that
19 I know, like Bernard Dick (phonetic), people from this reserve.

20 Q When you entered the school I understand
21 that your main language was Shuswap, is that correct?

22 A Yes, correct.

23 Q Could you speak any English at the time?

24 A I was, I would speak pretty good but, I
25 guess it would pass, I could respond but were reluctant in

1 school to speak any of my Shuswap.

2 Q I take it that you were not allowed to
3 speak your Native language?

4 A That's true.

5 Q What would happen if you did, if you were
6 caught speaking Shuswap?

7 A I would be reprimanded with a punishment,
8 usually a corporal punishment with the strap and it was
9 immediate.

10 Q Did that ever happen to you?

11 A Yes, one time when I was — it's really
12 funny when you're told not to go downstairs, you do things that
13 you were told not to do, I was caught downstairs and I believe
14 we were, the three of us I remember, Bernard, Bernard Dick and
15 Gordon Sqweenham (phonetic). We were downstairs, down in the
16 heater room and I was saying something in my Shuswap and the
17 supervisor caught me and I, that was the time I had my first
18 strap.

19 Q How long had you been in the school when
20 you received your first experience with the strap?

21 A Must be about the third month maybe, second
22 or third month, around November or late October somewhere.

23 Q Do you remember what the strapping was
24 like?

25 A It was, it was a very scary experience when

1 | you're young and it's like an electric shock. I was imagining
2 | that how many times, usually when you're a young boy and get hit
3 | about eight times on each hand, how many seconds. I guess what
4 | really hurt me more than the strap was the look in that person's
5 | eyes, that dominant look, that fear that instilled in me, that
6 | was most scared me, that.

7 | Q Did that experience change you?

8 | A Yes, traumatically.

9 | Q In what way?

10 | A From there on through that shock for the
11 | first experience it was just like --

12 | Q Take your time, would you like to have a
13 | moment?

14 | A Just a second, that's all.

15 | Q Perhaps if we can adjourn for just a brief
16 | moment, Mr. Commissioners.

17 | A I need, this needs to happen, it's very
18 | important. I was telling you about that fear, this used to be
19 | a mystery, I didn't even know where that fear was coming from,
20 | that day, the reason. People like this guy here is my witness
21 | to my ordeal, to my pain. When my brother was showing those
22 | videos up there and he said, look at those smiles, I was one of
23 | them that was gleaming with those false smiles, the smile of
24 | fear, I had to be alright, I had to be bowing with the
25 | institution of the regimentation of life. The very first

1 strapping I ever had, the days of my secondary hurt, it's not
2 the main reason that I'm saying this, that I'm free.

3 My primary pain is disconnection, that I wasn't
4 Dave anymore, ever since I was nine years old. I lived from
5 there on like I was in a circus, when I saw my brother there in
6 a clown suit, that was me too, I had to be funny. To be funny
7 was a way of life, I had to live in that rage, rage was my
8 companion of life and survival. That very first strap was very
9 important and significant, that was the beginning of a surgery
10 without anesthetic.

11 Q David, did you see the strapping applied to
12 other students?

13 A Many, many, many, many times.

14 Q Do you feel that it had the same effect
15 upon them as it did to you?

16 A Oh yes, definitely.

17 Q Apart from speaking your Native language in
18 the school, what other reasons would be an excuse to strap a
19 child?

20 A You don't need an excuse. Sometimes the
21 reasons were so foolish and so stupid. I remember just for, as
22 an example, my friend was just enjoying himself there and he got
23 whacked behind the ears and right on the spot he got strapped
24 and for reason at all.

25 Q Did you see other forms of corporal

1 punishment?

2 A Severe, severe ones. And sometimes we used
3 to be herded upstairs and stand around this bed where this
4 person was disrobed and he was flogged and then he was given a
5 haircut and dressed in girls clothes and he lived like that for
6 a whole month.

7 Q I understand you had told us that this was
8 a result of a young boy who had ran away?

9 A Yes. He was caught and brought back and I
10 guess this was an example of what would happen should any of us
11 had the idea.

12 Q Who would have inflicted this punishment?

13 A The supervisor.

14 Q Had you seen that happen on more than one
15 occasion?

16 A Perhaps around three, two, three. It
17 happened, this one was in the intermediate one, but I would
18 assume that the seniors had more because they were the ones that
19 done more of the running away.

20 Q How did that make you feel to see one of
21 your friends being flogged, stripped down on the bed?

22 A I was terror-stricken, I was, I guess in
23 the words, just severely withdrawn in, I was paralyzed, seems
24 like I was like a trapped animal in this quarantine of hurt. I
25 didn't know what to do, helpless and hopeless I guess.

1 Q David, you said earlier that your brother,
2 Percy, had warned you never to go down in the heater room or
3 upstairs at certain times of the day. Did you ever find out
4 why?

5 A I think one of the first reasons is he
6 didn't want me to get strapped, he didn't me to get caught and
7 get hurt. And he already knew all the areas of, I guess, a
8 place where you're not suppose to be, forbidden areas you know,
9 at certain times of the day.

10 Q You told us that yourself and some of the
11 other children had developed behaviors in order to survive and
12 avoid punishment. How did you do that?

13 A It's really strange over the years from
14 there on, from right from the beginning there was a thing called
15 the underground. That being that we learned a code of survival,
16 whether you're Chilcotin, Carrier, Dog Lake or Shuswap, you had
17 a code with them and to survive you had, even there was some
18 times you fight at one another, there was still a code and that
19 code is that you don't squeal on each other. And there was a
20 warning, like what Steve says, you hear the beads, you hear the
21 walk and you know exactly where every supervisor is. You case
22 out the whole building, you become, I guess, a hidden warrior,
23 you become, I guess, a developed person known only to survive
24 underneath all this hurt.

25 Q Can you perhaps just tell us what some of

1 the daily activities were like, for instance, the food, the
2 clothing?

3 A I remember when I first got there, before
4 they start giving us the regular shirts and pants, for the first
5 while I used to wear my same clothes, but we had a heck of a
6 time when you're a junior, you know, and you're nine years old,
7 the cowboy king pants is all the same, all in one big pile, I
8 ended up with somebody else cowboy king pants all tethered, I
9 lost mine. So right off the bat I lost my cool pants, I guess.
10 But later on we had the standard clothing and we had numbers on
11 them, my number was 19, on my clothing, on my shirt and my
12 pants. And we used to change I think every Saturday morning.

13 And we abided by whistle and bells and we, for
14 example, my typical day might be like this, you know, as I grow
15 older, not when I was nine or ten, maybe when I was ten. You
16 get up at 5:00 o'clock in the morning, you go serve mass, early
17 mass, you come back about 6:30, you go up the dorm with the rest
18 of the boys, 7:00 o'clock, quarter to seven you're downstairs.
19 Sometimes you're lucky you get upstairs you, the boys are
20 praying right before you get up, you get in the kitchen, they
21 say their grace and you pray, ate, finish, they pray again and
22 leave.

23 And about 8:30 somewhere around there they line
24 you up and head you back up to the two room schoolrooms Steve
25 was showing you, you get up there you pray before you go to

1 | classroom, in the class you go, pray after you leave, get back
2 | down for lunch -- you pray again, you go in the diningroom you
3 | pray again, you eat and after you leave you pray again. Then
4 | you go back up to school, do the same thing, the routine was
5 | like that over and over. In the evening, 6:30, 7:00, 8:00
6 | o'clock you say the rosary. And the evening again you say your
7 | night prayers and the day was over and then it goes on over and
8 | over and over, consistently.

9 | Q Was that the same routine that you would
10 | have virtually every day?

11 | A Every day.

12 | Q What kind of facilities or time did they
13 | give the children to be children, to play?

14 | A I think after 3:00 o'clock, you could play
15 | until about 5:30, a lot of times there was some organized
16 | soccer, football, hockey, baseball, season of sports, track and
17 | field. I think, for me, I use to find it as my means of escape,
18 | I was quite athletic when I was young. I liked running, one of
19 | the things my friend, Carl -- and I, we used to be the runners
20 | and Wilfred and Louie, a lot of my friends, very dear friends of
21 | mine. I used to go with the 100 yard dash, I use to be quite
22 | fleet footed when I was young and I just loved running.

23 | Q Do you recall that incident that you told
24 | us yesterday about having too much fun, too much enjoyment and
25 | having the whistle blown on you?

1 A Maybe ask that another way?

2 Q I understand that you indicated to us at
3 one point that one of the Brothers had seen you running and
4 enjoying yourself too much, decided to blow the whistle on you
5 and force you to kneel down?

6 A Oh yes, a lot of times you know, if we were
7 running around in here, they blow a -- if you're having too much
8 fun you know, he makes you kneel down in the middle of the floor
9 there. And you know what, we responded like that, two of us, we
10 kneel down together at the same time, clunk, just one boom, you
11 know, that's how much we were trained.

12 Q What other kind of activities were you
13 involved with?

14 A I was in the calf club and that's another,
15 there were little things that was giving me some venting space
16 when I was in that school. I was in the calf club and I done
17 really well, I like working with animals. Also, I was in the
18 air cadet league, I was in there for four years and I excelled
19 quite well. I did so well, as a matter of fact, I served the
20 Hand of the Queen in 1958, and I took arrow engines and one of
21 my dreams was to become a fighter pilot, which I never did get
22 off the ground.

23 Q I understand that you actually went so far
24 as to go to the recruiting office?

25 A Yes I did. I remember that in 1963, before

1 I graduated, as a matter of fact, a friend of mine said, why
2 don't you go see the recruiting centre, I told him I wanted to
3 become a fighter pilot and he was a good friend, and I did. And
4 the recruiting officer assessed me and he said, you need your
5 Physics 91 and you need your English 12 and you need your
6 Academic Math. I went back and I qualified and I came back to
7 them and I gave them my papers and I said, I want to go in the
8 air force and become a fighter pilot, reinstated what I had
9 stated before. And they looked at me and they said, no, you
10 cannot become a fighter pilot but you can become a chef. And
11 right off the bat I was shot down before I even got off the
12 ground.

13 Q In your mind why do you think he indicated
14 to you, you could be only a chef rather than a pilot?

15 A I don't know, I think because of my skin,
16 I think, they couldn't see how I could fly a jet plane.

17 Q While you were in the school did you
18 experience any other kinds of abuse, apart from the physical
19 strappings?

20 A I guess one of the primary abuses I had was
21 my emotional abuse and my mental abuse and, of course, being
22 witness to many sexual abuses, exploitation of boundaries by the
23 handlers, the supervisors and the consistent exercises of
24 intimidating, punishments to my fellow boys. And to become, I
25 guess, very self-conscious of what was happening, but didn't

1 know what was happening. Like a lot of times, you know, I
2 didn't know, I thought I was going crazy sometimes, trying to
3 live in that environment, that nine years that I spent there.
4 A lot of people say, oh, nothing happened to me there, you're
5 lucky.

6 Q Do you remember having any problems with a
7 Father Toosie?

8 A Yes. This supervisor was a very ordinary,
9 extra-ordinary in delivering his way of being a supervisor.
10 When you're a young guy, you know, you're, when you're nine, ten
11 years old, and you're in this kind of environment you, it's
12 really hard to know whether you're going to live.

13 I remember, I remember the time when I first,
14 it's really strange you know, it never has happened to me and I
15 remember taking a shower, I was told to take a shower. I
16 remember the two building room, that school Steve showed you,
17 that used to be sleeping quarters and that sleeping quarters
18 only had one shower in it. It was a long process to shower the
19 whole boys dorm, and I use to remember we use to take turns and
20 I think I was the last one, one of the last boys to take a
21 shower. And there was a incident that happened with me the day
22 that made it very uncomfortable for me.

23 I remember being in that, being in that room, in
24 that washroom where this person had done some things that wasn't
25 comfortable to me. That, it's really hard to explain because I

1 never, in my life, anybody grab my penis and made it feel real
2 funny, real funny. And I shared this with my friend to make it
3 small, to say it never happened, he just said Dave, it's big.
4 I done a lot, my friend, Wilf, by running in the washroom
5 quickly and I think, I think that was when shame was born at a
6 very early age. And he was, he was very demanding and I didn't
7 want to come out of that shower but I hear him leave and finally
8 come out and I notice when I came out there was three or four
9 boys outside and I think they know what happened. And I think
10 that's the deepest secret that many of my friends have. It's
11 the first time I have ever told this.

12 Q I understand that Father Toosie is passed
13 away, is that correct?

14 A I think in 1968, I hear.

15 Q Dave, were there any other teachers or
16 clergy people in the school that were violent or abusive to you
17 that you can recall?

18 A Indirectly, I think, a lot of times because
19 I learned, I learned how to stay out of trouble pretty early
20 because I had my best teacher, my brother Percy. I guess one of
21 the first supervisors I had was my scary supervisor too, in that
22 he was consistent. And he made known of where he was all the
23 time, when you see the cassock that you see in there, bulging
24 out, you know what's in those cassock, there's two straps, one
25 on each side and even that in it's presence is a mental abuse to

1 me. That at any time you could be somebody as an excuse to be
2 strapped.

3 Q Was there ever a time when you were in this
4 school that you did not live in fear?

5 A No, I always lived in fear. There was, the
6 only time that I didn't live in fear is when I use to played
7 hockey. I used to just love hockey, I used to remember my
8 friend, Bernard and I, you know, Gordon Sellers and all these
9 guys, they're best friends, they're all passed away today. And
10 we use to be avid hockey players, we use to be out on the ice
11 all the time just to get away from the monotony of residential
12 school and we use to play, I mean, we use to be damn good hockey
13 players. But when we use to play for our school, you know, we
14 had that losing touch, we were, we didn't want to win.

15 Q But I understand that sometimes you
16 couldn't even really enjoy hockey because of feelings of guilt?

17 A That's right, I guess I didn't feel good
18 enough, I didn't, you know once you become scummy inside and
19 dirty, you can't reach, you become very idealistic, meaning
20 you're not authentic, you're not real, you become very, just
21 like cement. I mean I'll hurt you out there and I wouldn't have
22 any feelings at all, I'll fight with you, you can beat me up but
23 I wouldn't feel a thing. And these are the kind of things that
24 already begin without there, very disconnected personality.

25 Q Dave, you recall to us as well earlier, not

1 here, but outside, about Father Toosie and the way he use to
2 treat children for bed wetting?

3 A Yes, I use to remember that, I remember
4 wetting my bed, you know it use to be scary, I use to hate
5 wetting my bed because the next morning he use to make us pull
6 our blankets right down. He use to go up and down them rows
7 checking all those beds, I use to remember boys starting to cry
8 even before they reached them. Because when they reached my
9 bed I use to be grabbed by the scuff of the neck and my face use
10 to be rubbed inside my pee in my sheets and then strapped. And
11 that added to my shame and my guilt.

12 Q I understand that on some occasions, more
13 than one child would wet the bed?

14 A Oh yes, it use to be a circus and I think
15 that's the time we saved our lives, because to many boys the
16 strap, unless you have about 10, 15 minutes to get back to
17 breakfast so that really made them mad, so they couldn't take it
18 out on all of us, but he use to holler lots. And all this way
19 a whole bunch of us use to wet our beds so we wouldn't get
20 whipped.

21 Q Do you recall seeing any suspicious events
22 or behaviors that occurred in the washrooms?

23 A I remember, mostly I guess in the
24 intermediate dorm, second floor, I use to remember my bed use to
25 be behind the supervisor's room near the window. And I use to

1 wonder why for a long time, you know, this clicking sound use to
2 come through the door, that's near the exit sign. And this
3 happened for some time you know, and I wonder what had happened,
4 what is going on. And sometimes I use to see boys being taken
5 into the washroom by these people, that the other boys, the guys
6 here had described. And you know what, that even deepen that
7 fear. One time I was sleeping there and one of these people
8 that came through the door grabbed my penis, through the
9 blanket, and you could smell him, that body odour.

10 Q Did you know who it was?

11 A That's really hard, but you know what I get
12 to know who they were, these people coming, I guess, through
13 that exit sign, you could see that one person had a stooped
14 walk, I know which one that was and the other one is a kind of
15 mystery me until I hear in court who this person was.

16 Q These weren't other students, these were
17 teachers?

18 A Supervisors, and priests.

19 Q Was this a common thing that they'd come to
20 the rooms of the children at night?

21 A Usually at night, yes, about, oh God, must
22 be about 11:30, 12:00 right up to 2:00, 3:00 o'clock maybe.

23 Q Could you even sleep during that time?

24 A Now that you mentioned it, you know that
25 really disturbed my sleep because now you start to wake up 3:00,

1 4:00 o'clock in the morning and your sleeping patterns become
2 erratic. You can't seem to want to get some rest you know, for
3 school and stuff like that because of these rats coming in, you
4 know.

5 Q How old were you when you left school?

6 A I was 18.

7 Q What was your life like after you left the
8 residential school?

9 A I remember when I first went to Prince
10 George College in 19 — let's see, '59, September, I went through
11 culture shock, I stayed in a private home and I couldn't get
12 used to being free, I couldn't get used to coming back from
13 school. I couldn't get used to not hearing the voice of that
14 bell, and I couldn't get used to, you know, having a room to
15 myself. However, there was one catch, they still had power over
16 me, I didn't know that, because if you want to go downtown
17 Prince George, you had to phone the principal and ask permission
18 to go downtown. We were still snagged by this authority.

19 Q Did you have a problem with alcohol after
20 you left school?

21 A Yes I did. I had already learned how to
22 drink even when I was in residential school, probably later in
23 the '50s and my present at the residential school. However as
24 I grow older there I no longer was experimenting with alcohol,
25 I discovered now what alcohol does. You know, it helped me

1 forget my past.

2 Q Help you forget the school?

3 A Help me forget the school, help me forget
4 the horror experiences that I had witnessed and I had become
5 part of and it's really strange, you know, I never knew I let
6 the school go. And from there on that school lived in me for
7 another many, many years.

8 Q I understand that at one point and in order
9 to run away from your past you ended up on the streets of Los
10 Angeles?

11 A Way back, I guess in the mid-60's, by this
12 time my alcoholism was, was going pretty strong. I got involved
13 with some, I guess, bad company down in Vancouver, and my
14 drinking got worse, by this time I was a full fledged alcoholic,
15 I never knew that. And about this time, you know, I made my
16 wife pregnant with our first child and this caused a lot of
17 panic in me and that fear became alive again, you know, that
18 fear that I was telling you about, just took charge of me and I
19 ran, I abandoned my wife and I abandoned my boy. And I ran and
20 I ran and I ran. I lived in skid row most of my time,
21 Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles,
22 Phoenix, San Diego.

23 And it's a very lonely life, it's a very
24 unpredictable life.

25 Q I understand there was an episode that

1 | happened in Los Angeles that may have been instrumental in
2 | saving you?

3 | A Yes. I remember in Christmas, probably I
4 | can't really recall, '72 or '73, maybe '71. I remember having
5 | a bottle of wine in my hand and walking into the gutters, going
6 | into the alleys of Los Angeles in skid — and I ran into this old
7 | white man, very wretched, unkept, real dirty, and he called me
8 | and he said, hey son, get out of the rain. I couldn't see him
9 | and it's night time, I went in there, there's this old guy
10 | sitting there with his bottle of wine and he talked to me.

11 | And he told me his story, life story and at the
12 | end he said, he said, what the hell you doing around here kid,
13 | and I was about maybe 27, 28 years old, 26. He said, look at
14 | you, you're young, he says, look at me, he say, you want to look
15 | like me, you're going to look like me someday, if you're lucky.
16 | He said, Canada sounds like a good place to be at, why don't you
17 | go home, get out of here, you don't belong here kid.

18 | You know, at that time I never knew I hated white
19 | man, I really did, because of my experiences, but this man was
20 | very instrumental in turning me around and sending me home. I
21 | always remember that old man, I always remember those eyes, just
22 | vaguely I could see, he meant what he said.

23 | Q During this period of time, did you ever
24 | have thoughts of suicide?

25 | A Yes. At this time, at that time when I was

1 down there, I think I was too busy surviving, I wasn't living I
2 was surviving. However, when I sobered up I was still carrying
3 a lot of garbage, I was still carrying a lot of rage and anger,
4 you know. I still had a whole bunch of core issues with me, I
5 didn't know all about this stuff, I thought you get sober and
6 you get well. But today I understand that sobriety is not
7 enough, it doesn't give you solutions, it's only means of
8 getting to the next stage, and for me I had not yet reached that
9 stage.

10 And one time that clicking sound of the door
11 where the perpetrator use to enter our residential school, saved
12 my life, ironically one time. I remember having my .308 to my
13 forehead, and I was sober, and I remember my whole family
14 running out of the house, bare feet. And I still yet apologize
15 to my oldest son and I have to do this right after. I remember
16 the time and fully aware and I made small of it that I didn't
17 want to do it, until my friend said, Dave you were going to do
18 it.

19 I remember I heard that click again, that ironic
20 sound and in walked my brother-in-law, my finger left the
21 trigger. That's the thing that's, that goes through one, if
22 it's okay I'd like to read you an angry man's letter here. This
23 is what was inside of me here, this is what almost pulled the
24 trigger. Only take a minute, it's called 'The Lonely Sole
25 Warrior'.

1 "I have doubt my spirit for too long, I have
2 marred by spirit's truth by staying in my
3 protective A-Eagle armour. My spirit thirsts
4 for ultimate intimacy, yet my power fear has
5 paralyzed me from speaking my sole's language.
6 I only wimper and whisper my sole's anguish for
7 connectedness, sex is but a curse for love is
8 but a prize. I have been brainwashed to believe
9 I am dirt and an unlovable being, a fool I give
10 my power to such a beast. I am 55 years in
11 silent, starved dungeon poet, no one wants an
12 old man to inspire their beauty, knowledge hides
13 deep in my squandered youth and daring, as a
14 marine I die to be validated. A true warrior
15 trained to kill, kill what, oh yes, kill me.
16 No, I will not fight for the beast, I'll keep
17 secret my code of battle, an old warrior I'll
18 strike at fate's spirit killer, I feel no spite.
19 My groin is banished to enjoy such wealth of
20 true intimacy. I must make claim, it's not over
21 the lying wind, I'll sleep with my beauty I
22 salvage within my bosom, whip and despair you
23 will, I am a warrior. My people are my
24 mountains. Shoot your harmless bullets, my
25 armour of truth is my shield, sweating envies is

1 my woman. The truth of beauty that listen to my
2 sole. Curse my Elders you will for generations
3 of truth will bain at your stark cold heart.
4 Fear my spirit guardians for rides the horseman
5 of clans, chastize they will, horror and fowl
6 sense spews their steed of lust, lust they will.
7 Beware, lust to kill a pain to loneliness. The
8 horseman from the East will tilt your true life,
9 from the South the horseman's poisonous spirit
10 traps the live being in horror agony. How
11 hopeless the great wind plans this. From the
12 West blessed eater horseman cannibals the sole,
13 only scorched eyes live. Re-load your angry
14 soles, prepare only you the language keepers
15 prevail. Scream you eagle ray awaken from snows
16 of the North, your horseman leaps with flaming
17 beauty of virgin beauty. You kept the truth of
18 embrace a beauty beyond belief, stagger me
19 onward you fear of phobias, it's okay, I'll not
20 hurt you, for your ancestor's blood lives in
21 you. I hold no excuse for my loneliness, ripped
22 off in childhood I hiss, ripped of in my teen's
23 virgin, fate experience, ripped off by the
24 colour a holy penis. You have jabbed my spirit
25 and my woman's spirit by your selfish lust, you

1 beast, you husband my woman into an empty
2 passing. I'm no good to any man with this thorn
3 so deep in my sole. Free me, oh chalice of
4 spirit freedom, please love me. Release me as a
5 love song from my spirit dungeon, all my women,
6 my lovers, forgive my cold heart for you. I was
7 exploited of my innocence and pleased his lust.
8 Scummed and shamed I lay beside you in dead
9 being, teach me, oh woman, to show love, have
10 you but an ounce of care. I'm a tired warrior,
11 I have fought and won many battles, no I don't
12 need your metal for bravery, my eyes are old
13 eyes, my skin is looking like Mother, The Earth.
14 My limbs are showing weak embrace to show your
15 love, sorry if I hurt you. I feel your retreat
16 to younger hearts, ah yes, lady, acceptance is
17 my lover. Your ultimate organism is caused by
18 the beauty of whole foreplay, I am the keeper of
19 Estamba, secret sweat lodge. Cleanse my coward
20 body, irked by woman's touch, burn the shame
21 where bain had failed to cleanse. I sing my
22 warrior's song of earth, my own death, my old
23 self breath lives it's last life. Let me go
24 then, I despise the battle ground, I am famous
25 in dignity. I am still a human, cheat not

1 yourself my gift, this warrior is no lover. His
2 females wear pedals of sweet rose, I'm a lover
3 only to one woman, she borne me to enjoy her,
4 she listens to my blood rivers in body. She
5 arouses me to receive full body, she readies
6 herself in naked beauty, I ready myself for
7 ecstasy to spirit, oh such a deed. I was only
8 in a dream as I awaken on the white breasts of
9 Mother Earth, she's my lover, I hide no more in
10 her, release insipid love, I always lived it, I
11 feel loved. I search no more, my spouse will
12 see the hole in my sole, wounded in beauty I'll
13 find my mate of different men, I'm tired of
14 being lonely. Take me home oh great spirit, for
15 no one needs my love. I have done my work in
16 your children, in celibacy I cheat my thirst in
17 tenderness your breath, I must return to my
18 lover mountains, a place of rest. I let my
19 women go in heartfelt friendship in love. I
20 can't guard you anymore, for my brain had stalled
21 and my sniper's eyes blurred, seek a young man,
22 adios my sole's breath blesses you, you're free.
23 Fly my friend, forget me, I was only a dream,
24 warrior in beauty. Okeetchita (phonetic), One
25 who goes first.

1 Q Thank you. Now Dave, I understand that as
2 a result of a lot of the pain that you have suffered, that you
3 went through counseling?

4 A Yes I did, I must have went for about five,
5 six years of therapy in Edmonton. And this realigned my way of
6 thinking and I still need a lot of work on that part yet, I
7 believe.

8 Q You, yourself, now, are actually helping
9 some of your people, is that correct?

10 A Yes it is, I'm, I guess you call a
11 professional trainer. I trained Native drug and alcohol
12 counselors.

13 Q Through your experience now as a counselor
14 and trainer of others, do you see any consistency in the amount
15 of damage that the residential schools have caused your people?

16 A I believe we need a lot of work, a lot, a
17 lot of work. I believe the residential school has silenced,
18 especially our men. You see, you see these empty chairs, a lot
19 of my men on this reserve should be sitting in those chairs.
20 But probably I don't blame them, this is a big hurt, they're
21 still caught by that leg hold trap of yester years of
22 residential school experience and would rather not talk about
23 it.

24 However, they know their behavior and their
25 presence of silence is very lonely. It's, I'd like to talk with

1 | them you know, but you know it's really hard to talk to somebody
2 | who's hollow and, you know, to approach somebody. I used to be
3 | like that, now I can talk with this guy and several other men,
4 | I'm really happy that I'm not lonely.

5 | Q It's your opinion then, that in order to
6 | deal with this wide spread problem, that there's a lot of work
7 | to be done?

8 | A Yes. We not only need a lot of resources,
9 | we need qualified people, we need sensitized non-Natives
10 | professionals, to guide us, not to live our lives but to guide
11 | us. And to leave us within our power, to help us through our
12 | own ordeals and sometimes we may say things that may, hurting to
13 | them. You know a lot of times I say things that I wish I never
14 | said, but you know it's because of my experience that I've, I
15 | sometimes say things that are very confusing and a lot of times
16 | even when I talk with my wife, you know, I could never say
17 | things properly.

18 | And today I kind of accept that, you know, it's
19 | a part of my life that I have to reclaim, see being here in
20 | front of you, that's a big chunk of shattered glass I have to
21 | bring back and say this is mine today. It will never, ever hurt
22 | me or take control of my life.

23 | Q I wish I could go on further and have you
24 | speak to us, however, of course, we're precluded by our
25 | limitations with time. I will not be asking you any further

1 | questions, if you'd like to say something now, however, I now
2 | leave the floor open to the Commissioners to ask you anything
3 | that might be on their minds.

4 | A Thank you.

5 | COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: A heartfelt thanks for
6 | being allowed to witness some of your journey. I don't think
7 | there's time here or given the nature of this inquiry, to go
8 | into working details of the kinds of people as you just pointed
9 | to that are needed who have competence and insight and
10 | sensitivity. But that is not simply a recurring theme here, but
11 | it's also, you know, there's the judgment across the communities
12 | I'm familiar with including is jails is that, yes, we need that
13 | kind of person, like yesterday. And we're only, like others
14 | have said, touching on the tip of the iceberg, that there are
15 | those who are coming forth but there are also many who aren't
16 | coming forth yet. I'm not sure I'm raising a question, it's
17 | just more of a comment, pointing to something that I think is
18 | pertinent.

19 | As worker, I think now we're getting to a point
20 | where the model of recovery has been, is shaping up and model of
21 | recovery, what do I mean by that. The phases that a man or a
22 | woman has to go through to reclaim, to use your word, to reclaim
23 | that part of one's life that was rendered, in the sense of
24 | rendering fat, that was put through, distorted by manipulation
25 | and related to behaviors and attitudes. I think the model is

1 starting to focus, I'm not sure that's something that needs to
2 be written out and then put in textbook. But maybe it is time
3 for Maggie's second book on recovery from sexual abuse and sex
4 related trauma. And it also a time for our own people who are
5 into, who are at various levels of learning traditional ways,
6 we've only begun to discover the power and the efficiency of
7 traditional approaches to healing on all levels, physical,
8 emotional, mental and spiritual.

9 There are points in that traditional approach and
10 training where Western psychology can make, and has and is
11 making contributions. So I don't really have a question, and
12 I'm reluctant to say more, I think it's just a central practical
13 issue that warrants a brainstorm workshop of it's own.

14 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Dave, I don't got a
15 question for you, it's an observation, and my observation is
16 that I have been to Alkali a number of times over the past 20
17 years or more and I, of course, met and listened to you and
18 others in this community on occasions before today. My own
19 belief is that the people at Alkali, perhaps for many reasons,
20 were able to begin confronting some of these issues very early
21 on, 25 years ago, somebody mentioned yesterday.

22 But anybody who thinks that the issues that you
23 and others in this community are now able to talk about, albeit
24 with great difficulty, anybody thinks that those issues are
25 unique to this community, they would be very wrong. You just

1 | said that, that in your work as a trainer in Edmonton, you see
2 | people and work with people from other communities, but I have
3 | seen people from other communities who haven't come as far along
4 | the path as the people at Alkali. Struggling and as you and
5 | others have said, struggling on their own without help and I
6 | have seen the intense pain, the incredibly intense pain
7 | surfacing and be expressed in other communities.

8 | It's a hard thing for somebody, such as myself,
9 | to witness events such as we witnessed last night and I've seen
10 | on previous occasions here and in other communities. It should
11 | give the people of this great country no pride to know that
12 | people in Native communities across the land are struggling
13 | virtually without assistance, trying to cope with problems that
14 | are almost, they almost defy imagination. It's not a question,
15 | simply a comment.

16 | COMMISSIONER JOHN: Dave, thank you very much for
17 | your comments and talking to my friend sitting beside yesterday
18 | morning, I couldn't help but think about what he told me, about
19 | the runs into town by someone or individuals bringing cases of
20 | wine to each house. And this went on week after week after week
21 | after week. And this community struggling to come to grips with
22 | that, that problem, and to find underneath and behind that a
23 | deeper problem of what we've been hearing about. That this
24 | alcohol is a mask for the problems that you're, the issues that
25 | you and the other witnesses to date, to now have talked about.

1 I have a number of questions, but I want to echo
2 what you said about disconnected. And I think it's really true,
3 I, like you, went to residential school for many years and I
4 couldn't even the course of yesterday and this morning, feel
5 myself closing up at times listening to what I've been hearing.
6 And so, it's a real struggle for me to stay focused, through
7 some of this. But I have to give you credit for the journey
8 that you've been on, I wanted to know, you said that you started
9 with counseling for five or six years in Edmonton. And I wanted
10 to know in your own lifetime when you started this process?

11 A I think when I first went, when I first got
12 hired on as a trainer at Nechi Institute in Edmonton, I had
13 lingered on this mystery and I was wondering why I was moving on
14 sort of, I was moving but very, very slow, like I was walking
15 shackled you know. Finally, I reluctantly sort of in myself
16 pushed myself into seeking a therapist and again, you know I'm
17 married into the biggest family here on the reserve, the Johnson
18 family, you know. And they're very resourceful people, and one
19 of them had gone to this therapist in Edmonton and just by
20 listening to him, sounded good. And I started my therapy and I
21 didn't know what therapy was, you know, all I know is that the
22 way this guy talked about it, sounds good telling your story to
23 somebody who's trained to guide you along. He said they don't
24 give you answers, they just guide you along and that's all I
25 wanted.

1 And it's really funny, you know, how things that
2 had gone on with this certain individual and it's very
3 instrumental today to have helped me and my boys, connect us,
4 reconnect us. When you talk about disconnection, I had been
5 disconnected with my children when I was there, but today I'm
6 more or less connected, closure with it. And that's when it
7 really begin. However on the onset, prior to that when Alkali
8 Lake sobered up, it mobilized me to create that awareness you
9 know of coming clean of my alcoholism, of my compulsive
10 gambling, of my sexaholism, all this became part of a stepping
11 stones toward addressing the behaviors that these addictions had
12 created and had more or less log jammed. I guess the therapist
13 helped me you know to break through that log jam and to get, you
14 talk about focus, and to more or less focus on this person
15 instead of externally you know, but to go back internally and
16 then working in there. That's what therapy does and for that
17 I've done for about five, six years.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHN: When, how long ago was this
19 now?

20 A Maybe about 1989 or `90 until about last
21 year or so. And you know what really, what really struck me is
22 that my therapist said, maybe we can't do this anymore, because
23 Medical Services say now we can only have 12 visits a year or
24 something like that and I was supposed to get well in 12 visits
25 you know, I don't know. I don't know if I want to unstitch some

1 part of me you know for 12 visits, you know I don't know if they
2 can stitch it back up.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHN: I wish it was that easy, 12,
4 one hour visits for 10 years.

5 A Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER JOHN: I wanted to, I asked
7 Shadowhawk this question and I want to ask you this question as
8 well. Is there a period in your life going through this journey
9 where you feel that you've, I think it's a life long journey to
10 begin with and I'm trying to get a sense of whether, when it is
11 in your own lifetime or when it is in that recovery stage or
12 that process where you feel strong enough that you get beyond
13 this sense of being victimized, being a victim. And I'm not
14 sure if the answer to that and I'm wondering if you have any
15 comments on that?

16 A I learned something from my wife one time,
17 she taught me a good lesson and I think, I asked that of my
18 therapist and he said, well, Dave are you a victim, and yes, I'm
19 a victim. He said, no, no, no, no, you didn't hear me, are you
20 a victim, yes, I'm a victim, and she said, that's funny, I don't
21 see a victim. Now Dave, are you a victim, and I said, no, I am
22 not a victim. See there you go, it just disappeared.

23 You know I think one of the greatest things about
24 de-victimizing yourself as part of your recovery and your
25 wellness, I needed to be validated, I needed to be humanized

1 | once again, by you asking me this question, by my brother
2 | sitting here beside me, I need to be validated and be heard.
3 | Therefore, the victim part of my past has weakened and has
4 | created a life, and I have come alive again. And coming alive
5 | is the scariest part of life today for me, sometimes I vibrate,
6 | I can't stand it's pleasance you know. Because I'm so used to
7 | living in a slop, you know.

8 | COMMISSIONER JOHN: That's amazing. I understand
9 | that during this time that you've been involved — the young lady
10 | that opened up with the prayer this morning, Freda Johnson. I
11 | heard her comment that we, I didn't go to residential school but
12 | I end up also being affected by it. And I wonder in your own
13 | journey, how you're process of becoming well in yourself and
14 | being strong in yourself, how that has impacted on your own
15 | family with your children?

16 | A Very significantly it had, because today
17 | you know I was really proud of Freda and the girls up there you
18 | know, Stef, because they're the ones that's going to break this
19 | cycle. As a matter of fact, my daughter said that to me, she
20 | said, dad, we're going to break this cycle. And I notice one of
21 | my boys was in here and I remember the time when we were at the
22 | Royal Commission in Canim Lake, he came to me and he heard my
23 | story and he said, dad, why did they have to hit you and he was
24 | nine years old. And today at breakfast table I noticed that
25 | little frown on his face you know, and he's still in mystery and

1 I think we need to talk to him.

2 However, to recall the good things that's
3 happening in my family today, I believe there's hardly any
4 secrets in the house anymore, there's more or less an open
5 family, I have. They don't have to tiptoe around the house
6 anymore, because in my process of recovery and wellness, I have
7 learned here to come clean, I mucked out as much as I can out of
8 me, so that way I can hold a feather in pride and to respond to
9 you in a very, not only brotherly way but also as a connected
10 being between your spirit and my spirit, because it's so
11 important. In my immediate family it's like that, like when my
12 boy cries you know, or when my daughter asks me questions, I
13 respond accordingly as a father, instead of having a regimented,
14 marine sergeant's voice or very authoritarian, you know.

15 Today I listen, I sometimes, you know, forget,
16 when the words leave you know you can grab them words back and
17 you got, you have to apologize and say, oh, I'm sorry, I didn't
18 mean to say it way you know. Or, the day, I remember one time
19 my daughter comes stumping in and said some nasty words and two
20 minutes later she come back, I'm sorry, dad, I dumped on you.
21 You see we learned how to do that, we don't have to do war all
22 the time, like somebody said, why is that we always have to be
23 in pain in our recovery, you know, we don't have to live in that
24 pain getting well. I'd rather say thanks, you know, and — one
25 of the things that I'm working with is that fear, today I'm

1 | scared to be up here, you know. But today you know, it's okay,
2 | I'll be scared, I'm sure I'm not going to die.

3 | But for these young people to be up here, if it's
4 | but a small part that I can be part of they're never having to
5 | have to experience that's on the wall, then I would have won the
6 | battle there, that's all I'm asking for.

7 | COMMISSIONER JOHN: Thank you.

8 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Dave, for your
9 | information and evidence, thank you very much. We will take a
10 | coffee break for 20 minutes, so quarter to 12:00, we will start
11 | back in session. Thank you, Dave.

12 | --- MEETING RECESSED AT 11:25 AM

13 | --- MEETING RESUMED AT 11:52 AM

14 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Okay, if we could get started
15 | with the balance of the morning session with the last witness
16 | before lunch. I'll call on Fred Johnson to swear in Les Peters.

17 | LES PETERS; Sworn

18 | EXAMINATION BY BRAD WICKS

19 | Q Thank you, Les, I'll be asking you
20 | questions for the morning. I wonder if you can indicate your
21 | date of birth, Mr. Peters?

22 | A February 19, 1940.

23 | Q And where were you born?

24 | A Williams Lake.

25 | Q Did you attend residential school?

1 A St. Joseph's Mission and KIRS.

2 Q Okay, and during what years did you attend
3 the Mission School?

4 A I believe it was in 19 — I was taken away
5 in 1945 up until about 1950, then I went to a day school for one
6 year.

7 Q Where did you go to day school?

8 A Clinton, and then I was sent out to KIRS,
9 for another two years there, then back to Mission. In 19 — the
10 Fall year of 1954 and the Spring of 1955 in Mission, it was my
11 last year.

12 Q Okay, now you indicate that in 1945 you
13 were taken away to Mission School, what do you mean by that?

14 A Well, at that time I didn't know where I
15 was going, I didn't know what was happening, they came into the
16 reserve with a big stock truck and they loaded a whole bunch of
17 us young kids in the back. I didn't know where we were going,
18 they treated — I thought we were just going for a ride. But
19 when I looked through the cracks on that stock truck, I seen a
20 lot of the women that were standing on their steps, even my
21 mother, they were all crying, I knew then we were going
22 somewhere. They said, Mission, I didn't know nothing about the
23 Mission, but they took us in the back of that truck and that's
24 where we all ended up. They took us like we were cattle or pigs
25 or whatever.

1 Q How did you find out you would be staying
2 at the school?

3 A Pardon?

4 Q How did you come to know that you would
5 actually be staying in residence at the school?

6 A Well they have, as soon as we got off the
7 truck there, they made us line up, we had to line up, they gave
8 us, took our clothes away, gave us clothes to wear that they had
9 and they gave us a number. And I had a hard time to understand
10 because my grandmother only spoke to us in the Shuswap language
11 and my mom and dad spoke the language. And I was having a hard
12 time to understand why I had to take my own clothes off and why
13 I had to wear a number, why I had to line up. I didn't
14 understand all that.

15 Q How many grades did you finish in school,
16 at the St. Joseph's Mission School?

17 A When I, what, how many grades?

18 Q How many grades, how far did you get in
19 school?

20 A In the 10 years that I went to school, I
21 was promoted to Grade 3 when I left, I was one of the educated
22 ones.

23 Q Was that a common thing for people to get
24 to, Grade 3 or less than Grade 3?

25 A No, there were those that went to Grade 4,

1 Grade 5, very few, I believe, made it Grade 6.

2 Q What kind of things were you taught at the
3 school?

4 A We went to school in the morning, I
5 remember when I first started, we were taught Catechism in the
6 morning, we had to, we prayed, we prayed and prayed all day
7 long, I don't know why I never got to heaven alive, I prayed so
8 much. But Catechism and, oh yes, they taught us how to read, so
9 that we could read that Catechism book. I didn't understand it,
10 they talked about some guy called God, some woman called the
11 Virgin Mary, didn't make no sense to me and still don't today.

12 Q During the day, how much time would you
13 spend learning to read and write and things like that?

14 A In the morning, I think it was about from
15 9:00 until 12:00 noon, and then in the afternoon we went out and
16 worked, we had to pack wood into the basement, saw wood, chop
17 wood. Then in the Springtime we were out cleaning ditches,
18 picking rocks, cleaning barns, milking cows about 5:00, 3:00 or
19 4:00 o'clock in the morning. We had to clean the pig pens, cow
20 barns, chicken houses.

21 Q Did you have to do that kind of work every
22 day of the week?

23 A Every afternoon we had to do it.

24 Q How well could you read and write when you
25 left the Mission School?

1 A Pardon?

2 Q How well could you read and write when you
3 left the Mission School?

4 A Writing?

5 Q Could you write?

6 A I knew how to write my name but I was
7 never, I could never really write, even today I don't write very
8 good. I don't nothing about, I'm not very good at spelling, I
9 don't know much about arithmetic or numbers. I could read, but
10 I don't know, I don't understand what I'm reading, people read
11 out of books and I don't understand the words.

12 Q Okay, now I understand that when you went
13 to school in Clinton, to the day school, you felt that that was
14 a better experience.

15 A One year, for one whole year I went to
16 school, I learned more in that one year than I did in all the
17 other nine years of school. Because I learned how to get along,
18 I learned that there was white kids, they made fun of me, they
19 laughed at me because I couldn't talk very good English, but I
20 didn't mind because I was home, I was at home all the time.
21 They wanted to beat us up, I stood and I fight, but I got beat
22 up, because I was a Native and they're supposed to be Jesse
23 James and Roy Rogers and I'm the Indian, the bad guy. They were
24 real about playing cowboys and Indians.

25 But I was really happy after we, after the one

1 year was up, we had respect for each other, I respected those
2 kids and they respected us. We learned to get along and I
3 learned so much in that one year, I was in Grade 2, but I still
4 learned a lot, because the teachers were so kind. They weren't
5 slapping me on the back of the head every time I did some little
6 thing wrong, I didn't have to go spit on my hair, to keep it
7 combed. They treated us good, they didn't tell us what to do,
8 they asked us, they didn't order us around, they asked us to do
9 things or they even helped us, they showed us how to do things.

10 But in the Mission Schools, if you didn't do what
11 you were told, you were slapped around, they didn't ask you to
12 do anything, I was told.

13 Q Yes, I'm going to come back to that in a
14 moment, Mr. Peters, in terms of the things that happened to you
15 at the Mission School. But right now I'd like to ask you did
16 you get any more education after you left the Mission School?

17 A When I went to prison, after I left the
18 Mission School in 1955, by the time 1956, I was already doing
19 time. I spent a lot of — well 26 years of my life on the
20 streets, in prisons, in the gutters, on the — everywhere, I
21 became a drunk. I started drinking when I was about nine years
22 old.

23 And I've been in prison, I went to school, they
24 taught me to read a little bit, how to write, I took up self-
25 defense, went to large stuff like that. And for the first time,

1 | when I was in prison, I felt like I was treated like a human
2 | being, where they food us good, they gave us good clothing, they
3 | allowed us to have a shower anytime we wanted. They didn't
4 | force us to cut our hair, they didn't force us to do anything,
5 | I was treated like a human being, but I was still, I had a lot
6 | anger after all the training I took in self-defense, I hurt
7 | people. I went around beating the hell out of people, fighting
8 | with four or five people at one time, didn't matter because I
9 | was the one that walked away.

10 | I may have killed a man with my hands, but that
11 | didn't matter, nothing mattered, I was so full of hate. If a
12 | priest came into prison and wanted to talk to me, he better be
13 | behind them bars, out of my reach, because I'd ring his God damn
14 | neck. I'd kill the sucker, that's how much respect I had for
15 | the religion. I spent 10 years of my life on my hands and knees
16 | and I wasn't going to spend the rest of my life crawling. I
17 | would rather die walking on my feet where you can, even if I was
18 | in prison, then to live the rest of my life on my hands and
19 | knees.

20 | I've been told what to do, I've been told that I
21 | was no good, I've been told that I would never amount to
22 | anything. I've been criticized, I've been judged, I've been put
23 | down, until I begin to fight back. Nobody, I didn't back down
24 | from nobody, I stood up. There was a lot of trainings that went
25 | through here, even after two years that I sobered up, I

1 | challenged the trainers, I wouldn't back down, I'd take them on.
2 | There was one incident where I walked up to one of the trainers
3 | and I was ready to go for it, I'm ready to rumble. I've hurt
4 | people, the last time I was sent to prison was 10 years to life.
5 | I'm on life parole for killing a man, and I don't feel a damn
6 | bit sorry for it.

7 | I don't feel sorry for anything I did because
8 | that is the way I felt when I left the Mission School. It takes
9 | a long time for me to settle down and to listen, to take a good
10 | look around, not at the people that are around me, but to look
11 | at the children. My own children that have been affected by my
12 | own attitude, I didn't know how to be a parent. When I left the
13 | Mission School, when I left the prisons, I walked out on my
14 | children, I walked out on my kids, my wife. I beat the hell out
15 | of her, the way I was beaten up in school. I did a lot of
16 | things that weren't good, perhaps I suffered for it, I've been
17 | shot, I've been shot three times, I've been stabbed, I've been
18 | clubbed over the head. Five years ago I came back here and I
19 | went hunting, I got shot in the head for the first time, I was
20 | shot, but I lived, I survived.

21 | I'm still alive for some reason, most of the
22 | people of my generation that went through that Mission School
23 | have died. There are very few of us left that have started
24 | school at the same time. It takes a long time for me to really
25 | look at the anger that I had, I made people suffer. The people

1 that loved me were the ones that suffered the most, I had a hard
2 time trusting people. I couldn't hug anybody, I couldn't let
3 anybody touch me, because I had a bad attitude, a jailhouse
4 attitude, and when you're in prison, if anybody hugs you the
5 guy's either queer or gay and you punch him out. Because nobody
6 touches you, not in prison, and I punched out a lot of people
7 because I needed the practice.

8 Q Mr. Peters, you talked about praying a lot
9 while you were at the school, I wonder if you can take us
10 through a day in the school and the life of the school as to
11 what you'd be doing on a particular, how often you'd be praying?

12 A Oh, we got up in the morning, first thing
13 we did was kneel beside our bed and pray. Then we went to the
14 washroom and washed up, then we lined up and we prayed before we
15 went to the church, we went to mass. We got into church and we
16 kneeled down and we prayed, then we prayed before we left the
17 church. We went back to the dormitory and we cleaned up, fixed
18 our beds, then we had to line up and pray again before we went
19 down to the recreation hall. When we got down there we had
20 about five minutes, then we had to line up and we had to pray
21 again before we went to, for breakfast. Then when we got to the
22 breakfast table, we stood by our place, our chair, and we had to
23 pray before we sat down. Then we had breakfast, mush, after we
24 were finished we all stood up the same time and we prayed again
25 before we left.

1 Then, after breakfast we went back to the
2 recreation and everybody has a chore, dusting, cleaning,
3 sweeping, then when that was done we all lined up again, go to
4 the classroom, the we had to pray before we left the recreation
5 hall. Then when we got up to the classroom, we lined up and we
6 prayed before we went into the classroom. Then when we got into
7 the classroom we stood by our desk and we had to pray before we
8 sat down. After we were settled down they taught us Catechism,
9 and then we were allowed to go out for recess, before we went
10 for recess we had to stand up and pray by our desk before we
11 went out.

12 Then before we came back in the classroom we had
13 to pray, then when we got back in the classroom we prayed before
14 we sat down. Then they taught us how to read, something about
15 Dick and Jane, or Jane and Dick, something, See Spot Jump, I
16 remember that, because I read that book over for 10 years. And
17 then at noon hour we prayed before we left the classroom, we got
18 to the recreation hall, we had to line up and we prayed again
19 before we went to the diningroom. When we got to the diningroom
20 we prayed before we sat down, and we prayed again before we
21 left, then we had 25, 30 minutes, seems like a short time, then
22 we had to go to line up and we had to line up and we had to pray
23 before we went to the classroom. When we got there we prayed
24 again, praying, after the class — no we didn't go to the class
25 in afternoon, we went to work.

1 We had to work from 1:00 o'clock until 3:00 then
2 the whistle would blow and we'd all come running in from
3 whatever we were doing. We had to line up and we prayed, then
4 they'd give us a dog biscuit, after that we prayed again to give
5 thanks for the dog biscuit. Then we had a hour, couple of
6 hours, then we had to line up and pray before we went to eat.
7 After we finished eating we prayed again, then we went back to
8 the recreation hall and we had 15 or 20 minutes, then we all sat
9 around in the place there, recreation and we had to sit around
10 and say the rosary. Then we said the rosary, after we finished
11 the rosary we had to go to benediction, after we finished
12 benediction, we went to our dormitory and we knelt beside our
13 bed and we prayed again before we went to sleep.

14 And they tell us when you're laying in your bed,
15 remember to pray, we get up in the morning, they ask us, did you
16 pray before you sleep, how in the hell do I know. I prayed so
17 damn much and that's just in one day and we did that about 300
18 days of the year. I never went home for Christmas or New Year.
19 That's just the prayers we did in one day.

20 Q Did you have brothers and sisters who went
21 to the residential school?

22 A There was my second, my second oldest
23 brother was there when I first went, my oldest sister, my other
24 second oldest sister and my brother, one year older than me and
25 then me. I was the youngest one that started, but I hardly, I

1 never saw my sisters, except I'd watch for them in church, I'd
2 watch for them when they were coming in. And just because I
3 turned my head I got slapped on side of the head, just for
4 looking to see if I could see my sisters. And I never did see
5 them, I couldn't talk to them even if they were in the same
6 classroom, I couldn't talk to my sisters.

7 Q How many brothers and sisters did you have?

8 A There was 16 of us in the family, 12 of us
9 went to school, to Mission School.

10 Q Of the brothers and sisters who went to the
11 Mission School, how many are still alive?

12 A My oldest brother is still alive and I have
13 one younger sister that's still alive, all the rest have died.
14 One died in Seattle, Washington, I believe he committed suicide,
15 jumped off the pier into the ocean. My other younger brother,
16 he committed suicide in Vancouver, OD, and my other younger
17 sister, she died in Vancouver. For example, when I first
18 sobered up, I came back here, I lost one brother that froze to
19 death in Williams Lake in 1980, New Year's Eve, then after that
20 I lost one of my brothers or sisters, one a month for the first
21 five months that I sobered up. And then after that it was one
22 a year until now there's only three of us left.

23 I didn't know how to cry for my brothers, I
24 couldn't cry for them, I couldn't have feeling, I didn't know,
25 I didn't know them.

1 Q Now you talked about being punished in the
2 school, what kind of things would you be punished for?

3 A Once I got slapped in the back of the head
4 for smiling, another time I was looking at a young guy, other
5 person beside me while we were in line, I got slapped on the
6 side of the head and it broke my eardrum I guess, never, I could
7 never hear from my right ear ever since. I got strapped on the
8 bare ass right in front of everybody in the diningroom, because
9 I was hungry and I went and snuck back in the kitchen, just for
10 a few crackers that was on the priest's table. I got 15 lashes
11 on the bare ass for that, and I got strapped for being late
12 because I was doing chores up in the cow barn and when the
13 whistle blew I was about five, maybe five minutes late.

14 I had to run on my hands and knees from the
15 recreation hall to the diningroom, I had to do that for about
16 three or four meals because I was late. I got slapped around
17 another time, I was playing around when we were lined up, we
18 were going to church, I got slapped around and beat up, then I
19 had to kneel down in the recreation hall. And if I tried to sit
20 down on my knees I got beat up, they grabbed me by the ears and
21 lift me up, made me kneel down. I had calluses on my knees, it
22 didn't bother me anymore, didn't matter.

23 I lived every day waiting to be punished, waiting
24 to be beat up, waiting to be slapped around.

25 Q Mr. Peters, you talked about being hit on

1 the side of the head and losing your hearing. Why was it that
2 you were hit on the side of the head at that time? Why were you
3 hit on the head when you --

4 A For smiling while I was standing in line.

5 Q Were you ever punished for speaking your
6 own language?

7 A The nuns used to beat me up because
8 everybody knew what (Native Language) means, and then if we were
9 alone we talked our language and I use to have friends, they're
10 gone now. But we use to talk the language, we got caught, we
11 had to go to bed without supper, we had to go to classroom
12 without breakfast, we got the strap, we got slapped around, we
13 got beat up. Because we, just because we were talking our own
14 language, that's something I couldn't forget that for.

15 Q How often were you strapped or beaten up by
16 one of the teachers or supervisors?

17 A I was, I would wait to get beat up once a
18 day, at least once a day all week long. Maybe they just wanted
19 exercise, maybe they wanted somebody to beat up on and I was
20 always available.

21 Q Were other boys beaten up as well?

22 A Only the ones that, seemed like it was only
23 the ones that were my friends, it seemed like there was no other
24 kids in the whole school but me and my friends and we were
25 always getting beat up. We were always stealing, we'd steal

1 cookies from the priests, we stole crackers, we never had enough
2 to eat, we were always hungry, we were always working and we
3 were hungry. Sometimes you hear them little kids, they're
4 crying because they're hungry. The food wasn't, some of the
5 food they gave us, I wouldn't even feed the pigs because it
6 might kill them.

7 Q Can you describe the food?

8 A The potatoes one time, I remember because
9 when you cut a potato in half it was all rotten inside, the
10 Easter eggs they gave us one year were all rotten and they stink
11 up the place when you opened them. The mush they gave us was
12 sour milk, because it was supposed to be fresh milk, we were
13 milking cows and the milk that they kept it for a month or two
14 or I don't know what. All the food and the good stuff they had
15 we never got any of it, mush was never good.

16 They gave us, they had them big cans of cod liver
17 oil, they use to give us a big spoonful every morning before we
18 have breakfast. And I couldn't swallow that stuff it was awful
19 and it come down all over my shirt and they make you stand there
20 until you swallow it, they keep pouring to you. And I kept
21 throwing up and they throwed me down, they held me over the
22 table and they poured it down my throat, finally I gave up I had
23 to swallow it. That's awful stuff, because some of that stuff
24 it was froze, we never had good heat.

25 All the wood we use to pack we never had heat in

1 | our building, our water was froze. We had no gloves for packing
2 | wood, I was one of the boys that had one side rubber boot and
3 | one side leather, a shoe for packing wood in. We had long, had
4 | to carry, sometimes there was two of us, double bagging one
5 | piece of wood to carry it in. We cried because we were cold and
6 | we got beat up for crying. Ever since then, I don't know how to
7 | cry and I still don't know how to cry.

8 | Q Mr. Peters, you told me yesterday about the
9 | meat that you ate at the residential school, were there ever
10 | problems with meat?

11 | A Meat was something we very seldom got and
12 | when we got it, the dogs wouldn't eat it but they expected us
13 | to. Everything that, I don't know why there was so many good
14 | things there, we're the ones that did the harvesting and we're
15 | the ones that did the butchering and yet we never got no meat,
16 | maybe once a week.

17 | Q When you did get meat that wasn't very
18 | good, did you eat it?

19 | A We had no choice, well I had no choice, I
20 | would rather — I ate it or I'll starve, if you didn't eat today
21 | you'll get it tomorrow or the next day. They keep giving it to
22 | you until you eat them, and the sooner you eat it, the quicker
23 | you get rid of it.

24 | Q You told me yesterday, Mr. Peters, about —
25 | or the day before yesterday about finding maggots on the meat,

1 did you --

2 A That's right.

3 Q Can you tell the Commissioners about that,
4 please?

5 A The maggots, it looks like rice, sort of
6 rice or puffed wheat that they use to give, that barley stuff.
7 It looks like that, you can't tell but when you see them, your
8 rice moving around, your meat starting to play tricks on you,
9 then you know that it's maggots and I wouldn't stoop low enough
10 to eat them. There was many different things that was spoiled,
11 the bread, I've seen moldy bread on our table and we have to eat
12 it.

13 Q You talked about being hit on the side of
14 the head and losing your hearing, who actually hit you on the
15 side of the head when that happened?

16 A I don't know, I don't remember that
17 Brother's name, I know he was Brother MacDonald. Ever since I
18 went to school every one of them was Brother MacDonald, I don't
19 know if they're descendants from each other or what, but every
20 one of them was Brother MacDonald. And that sucker slapped me,
21 all I could, just like bells, like I couldn't hear.

22 Q How did he hit you at that time?

23 A He slapped me with his hand right across
24 the ear. Because we were in a band, we was training to march
25 and I started playing around just a little bit with the guy

1 beside me, next thing I know I was stretched out on the ground
2 and I was looking up and my head was, like making roaring noise.
3 Ever since then I couldn't hear, my ear started to discharge and
4 it still does today. I have had three ear operations and the
5 last one the doctors told me maybe it's not going to do any
6 good. And when I was drinking, I never took care of my ear, I
7 never took care of anything.

8 Q When Brother MacDonald hit you and hurt
9 your ear, did you get any medical attention at that time?

10 A No, I don't remember ever getting any kind
11 of medical attention. He took one of them little round things
12 and squirted water in my ear and washed my ear out and he said
13 it's okay. But I couldn't hear him.

14 Q You had told him then about the problem
15 with your ear, had you?

16 A It wouldn't have done me any good if I told
17 him, because he would have probably slapped the other side.

18 Q Who then put the water in your ear?

19 A The same Brother that slapped me.

20 Q And why did he do that?

21 A Clean my ear out because my ear was
22 running, the ear started running, it was running bad back then.

23 Q Now I understand as you've said you had a
24 little brother in the residential school at one time?

25 A Yes, I had two little brothers, one was one

1 year younger than I am and when he first came to Mission, not to
2 Mission, we were in the KIRS, Kamloops Indian Residential
3 School, he came there with us. He couldn't understand why he
4 was there, he didn't understand why our mom and dad wasn't
5 there. And he always coming in late, he sat down by the bank
6 and he'd watch the traffic and he was always getting strapped
7 for being late. Then one day, the boss man, I forgot his name,
8 he called us into the recreation hall and he handed us the strap
9 and he told us that we have to strap our little brother. I
10 said, no, but he made us do it so I had to strap my little
11 brother, than my other brother, he went and he had to strap him.

12 After we were both through with strapping our
13 little brother, then the boss man he took the strap and he
14 strapped our little brother and we stood there and watched. And
15 I didn't know, I couldn't have feeling and I didn't have no
16 feeling for my little brother. I didn't know how to, I didn't
17 know how to care for him because we were taught not to care for
18 anybody else, for something, I don't know. And when I left,
19 when I was over the Mission, my last year there, I had another
20 little brother, he came to school with us for the first time he
21 was taken away from home.

22 He came to Mission and when we went into the
23 office we had to be signed in and all that stuff, we were going
24 upstairs to the dorm and my little brother was taken away to the
25 dorm down the hall, they were dragging him, they were dragging

1 him down the hall, he was screaming and he was fighting, he
2 wanted to come with us. And my other little sister, she had to
3 go the other way and that was the last I seen them, my sisters
4 for about a month.

5 They beat up on my little brother because he was
6 resisting, they had to fight with him and I and my other brother
7 went upstairs to the dorm. They, I guess my little brother
8 didn't know we were that close and he didn't know who all those
9 other kids were. But he had to stay with them, he cried, there
10 was a lot of other children in there, they were all crying
11 because they all got back to the Mission.

12 Q When you talked about having to strap your
13 little brother on the hand, how many times did you have to strap
14 him?

15 A I believe we had to give him 10 or 15 on
16 each hand, because I don't know why we had to do that, we were
17 supposed to have been the teachers to our little brother and we
18 were supposed to tell him what the rules and everything was.
19 They expected us to do that but we, ourselves, didn't even know
20 what the rules and regulations were.

21 Q How old was your little brother at that
22 time?

23 A He must have been about seven, six or
24 seven.

25 Q And who forced you to do this to your

1 brother?

2 A Pardon?

3 Q Who caused you or forced you to do this to
4 your little brother?

5 A The boss man, I don't know who these people
6 are that was suppose to be looking after us. I think they were
7 just a bunch of bums that were picked up off the street, that
8 needed a job. They were brought in there and they were suppose
9 to be our instructors, they were a bunch of bums that wanted to
10 torture people, that's who I think they were. Because they sure
11 and hell had no training, they didn't teach us anything there,
12 but they needed punching bags so they beat the hell out of us.

13 Q Were they priests or Brothers.

14 A There were priests and Brothers.

15 Q And Kamloops there was instruc — what you
16 call those boss people, one of them was Mr. Sullivan, I found
17 out his name, he was an army man. You can't even look at him or
18 he'd give you a slap on the side of the head. The other one, I
19 don't know they just couldn't, they couldn't stand you around or
20 something. They made you run around or do something, get out of
21 their sight.

22 Q Did the people who were taking care of you
23 ever say, call you nasty names of any kind?

24 A Oh, I was called a savage, heathen, I'm
25 glad they called me a savage, at least they recognized what I

1 am, they recognized who I am. I'm glad to be a savage today,
2 I'd rather be a savage than a piece of white trash any day,
3 because that's just how I feel. Those suckers were still alive
4 today, they'd have a funeral for them next week.

5 Q Did they call you things like that very
6 often?

7 A Just about every day, if you were late
8 getting in line, you were called a dumb savage, can't you hear
9 the whistle, don't you know why you're here, you're here to
10 learn, get in line. And if you weren't you're a dumb savage,
11 stupid idiot, heathen.

12 Q You made a comment to us when we met with
13 you a couple of days ago about feeling like you were in a
14 circus, can you tell the Commissioners about that?

15 A I think we were, because we were treated
16 like a bunch of animals and we were given big numbers, pinned on
17 our, when I was in the KIRS, we all wore the same striped shirts
18 that I wore when I went to prison in Ocala, we had a big number.
19 They'd line us up and walk us through Kamloops street, showing
20 off with us, people were looking at us like we were a bunch of
21 retards. Like we didn't know who we were so we had these
22 numbers, it seemed like we were in the circus the way they were
23 treating us, they needed somebody to train like animals. They
24 trained us the same way, they beat us up or whipped you if you
25 didn't do what you were told. It's like they see the lion that

1 | was getting whipped in the circus, that's the way they treated
2 | me and maybe everybody else.

3 | Q Now sir, I understand at some point you
4 | began to drink, I think you said at age nine?

5 | A I started drinking at an early age because
6 | when I came home for the holidays, we weren't allowed to come
7 | back for the holidays until after the Williams Lake Stampede.
8 | Because we had to be in the parade, we had to be in the parade
9 | up Quesnel, they use to tell us to keep our uniforms clean, but
10 | they hauled us around in the back of a stock truck and when we
11 | got off in Williams Lake we were all dirty and dusty, so we got
12 | beat up for that. Then they make us line up and we march around
13 | all day, Williams Lake Stampede and we marched around Quesnel
14 | all day, they never feed us, they wouldn't give us anything to
15 | drink. But they made us — we were there to make them look good,
16 | we were, we use to march from Mission School where it is now, we
17 | marched around Rocky Point all the way around to 150, down
18 | through Sugar Cane and back to the Mission.

19 | We marched that and everything you did you had to
20 | march, you had to run, have to lift your feet, look straight
21 | ahead don't look beside you. Then after they sent us home, they
22 | come and pick us up in the last week of August, I think we only
23 | had six weeks holiday. I never really knew my mom and dad after
24 | that, because I never spent enough time with them, I never knew
25 | my brothers and sisters because they were all strangers, we were

1 all strangers in one house. Today I have one sister that I know
2 and my nieces and nephews. Teaching, what teachings, the only
3 thing that I learned was how to survive and that's what I'm good
4 at.

5 Q What did you learn about religion?

6 A Pardon?

7 Q What did you learn about religion?

8 A I learned, I don't know, I still don't
9 understand, what is religion? I believe in the spirituality, I
10 believe in the eagle, I've become a very spiritual person. For
11 the longest time after I left the Mission School, I criticized
12 the priests, I criticized the churches, I punch out a priest now
13 and then just for something to do, or kick them in the nuts,
14 just for something to do. I make fun of them nuns, they look
15 like a bunch of penguins, I made fun of those people.

16 Then one day, two years after I sobered up, when
17 I was in Kamloops, the four Elders that came to me and talked to
18 me, they asked me, how can I expect people to respect what I
19 believe in if I can't respect their ways. There's people even
20 in this community that still believe in the church, the very
21 same church that I was criticizing. There's people here that
22 have respect for the priests, the very same priests that I
23 criticize. I had to give in, I had to surrender my anger, when
24 I looked around at my sons and my daughters that are grown up,
25 they taught their children the same way I taught them. I beat

1 up on my kids. Today I have grandchildren, which I can take
2 care of, which I learned to hold them, to feel them, to love
3 them, to respect them. But I couldn't do that to my own
4 children, I didn't know how to be a parent, I was never taught
5 to be a parent.

6 But I'm grateful today that I have been given
7 these grandchildren, they have given me a second chance in this
8 life, not to teach them what I have been through. I spent 26
9 years of my life on the streets, 15 of them I spent in the
10 prisons, I hurt people. When I took training, martial arts,
11 self-defense and everything else, I hurt people, I killed a man
12 with my hands and I didn't feel a damn bit sorry for it. I was
13 bad, I was mean, I was more deadlier when I was drinking than I
14 was when I'm sober. I can take on four or five guys at once and
15 think nothing of it, because I'm the one that walked away.

16 I don't have to teach my grandchildren these
17 things, I don't — they don't have to know the life that I lived.
18 My grandchildren, if I can prevent the suffering and pain that
19 I had gone through, why should they suffer the same way I have.
20 Why should they go out there and live on the streets, why should
21 they drag themselves through a living hell. In a way, today,
22 when I look back at the way that I was treated and the way that
23 I lived, I'm glad, I'm glad that I survived. Because now I know
24 that I would never want to go back there, I know that no human
25 being deserves to be treated like many of us have, because we

1 survived. Unfortunately nine of my brothers and sisters did not
2 survive, none of them made the age of 30, the ones that died
3 before me didn't even reach the age of 40. They committed
4 suicide by drinking themselves to death, dying of loneliness.

5 You asked me if ever had, what's that word,
6 therapy, ask me if I ever had counseling, no, and I won't accept
7 it. I don't trust those people, who the hell are they, who the
8 hell is a counselor to come and tell me how I feel. Who the
9 hell is a counselor to tell me what I've been through, why the
10 hell should I trust them. I know where I've been, and I know
11 what I've been through and who the hell is a counselor to tell
12 me what I must do. If the government themselves or the Queen
13 herself came here and said I'm sorry, I'd spit in the sucker's
14 face and tell them to go fuck themselves. Why should I accept an
15 apology today, when they're about over 500 years too late.

16 It's been 40 years ago when I went to that
17 school and still the anger comes back and I'm glad it does
18 because it reminds me of where I was. And it reminds me of what
19 I've been through and I don't have to pass it on to anyone else
20 from now on. I've had alcohol and drug counseling, training, I
21 know where the people are coming from that are on the streets,
22 because I've been there. I've worked in the prisons, I know
23 what those people are feeling, because I've been there. Some
24 university student going to come and tell me how I feel and
25 where I've been, they can go fuck themselves too.

1 I don't give a damn how much university education
2 you got, you can't tell me nothing until you've gone out there
3 and woke up in the gutter, you can't tell me nothing until you
4 woke up in a jail cell and wonder what the hell you're in there
5 for, then maybe I'll listen to you. But up until then the only
6 people that I understand are the people that have been by my
7 side, that woke up 3,000 miles away from home and wake up lonely
8 and look around you and know, — you don't know anybody, you wake
9 up with a knife sticking out of your stomach and wonder how it
10 got there. The people that have been there are the people that
11 I understand, because they understand where I've been and I know
12 where they're coming from.

13 I would challenge the first guy that come up to
14 me and said, hey, I've got seven years education in the
15 university and I know how you're feeling. Yes, you either got
16 to be God or somebody called God, (Native Language), maybe then
17 you'll understand how I'm feeling.

18 Q Thank you, Mr. Peters, I don't have anymore
19 questions for you, but I think perhaps the Commissioners may
20 have a word or two, thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Les, I can't pretend to know
22 how you feel, but I can hear in your words and in your tone that
23 deep anger, anger that's there. And I too, went to residential
24 school and I don't have the deep sense of anger that you have,
25 but I do have one. And having gone through all of the beatings

1 that you've gone through and the torment that you went through,
2 what I feel after all these years, that you're able to hold your
3 grandchildren. That, to me, tells me that you're dealing with
4 this issue, even as long as it's taking to deal with it. And I
5 feel good about that, I feel good about knowing that you're
6 moving in that direction -- and for the afternoon edition.

7 I don't have a question, I guess it's, what would
8 you say to the many men and women in our villages, I guess I do
9 have a question. What would you say to those men and women in
10 our villages who want to come forward and want to talk to
11 someone, but don't know who to talk to or don't know how to talk
12 to them, because maybe they feel angry, maybe they feel
13 frustrated, what would your advice be to them? If you have any
14 suggestion about that because I think there are many of our
15 people, maybe they're not like Dave Belleau who's spent some
16 time talking to people and tried to deal with his anger.

17 But there's many more, he was talking about the
18 empty chairs this morning, I'm not sure whether you heard his
19 comment. I just wonder about those people out there who have,
20 who just don't want to bother, who just don't have the time or
21 are totally pissed off and don't want to deal with it. What
22 advice you might have for them?

23 A The only thing that I know, I may not be
24 able to advise anyone to come forward, but in my own experience,
25 I've had a lot of hate, a lot of anger. When the people here

1 begin talking about these things, I said it's a waste of time,
2 what am I going to gain, what good is it going to do me. But I
3 came out, I came, I'm here, I don't feel any better, but I'm
4 here. It's people like me, perhaps I am an example, you don't
5 need courage to come forward, but there are those that have
6 shame that don't want to expose.

7 I've never been sexually molested, I have been
8 physically, spiritual and mentally abused. It's fear, what are
9 people going to say, will they believe me, will people
10 understand, whether they believe me or whether they understand
11 don't matter as long as I talk about it and feel better.

12 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Mr. Peters, I wonder if we
13 can perhaps just interrupt you for a few minutes, I think
14 perhaps the three of us may have some other questions that we
15 would like to ask you, but I believe that there is some news
16 that will be of great interest to everybody who's here and that
17 we should, because the news is important, interrupt you for a
18 few minutes.

19 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Just before we do though, Mr.
20 Peters, I would really like to thank you for coming forward, I
21 can't imagine how much it's taken you to come forward and tell
22 this, I think a very compelling story about your life and your
23 experience in the residential school and I want to thank you
24 from the bottom of my heart for having come forward. I know
25 that we'll come back to you with questions, but before we leave

1 | it and go to this other issue, I want to let you know that.

2 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: I wonder if the people could
3 | just come and join us, you know in the circle here and for the
4 | drummers, if you could grab your drums please.

5 | We wanted to, before we break for lunch, we
6 | wanted to announce to you, you know that over the last year, the
7 | last two years, our community was involved with the Gustafson
8 | Lake matter. A lot of you provided support, a lot of you
9 | provided guidance, a lot of you had ceremonies for those people.
10 | The decision has been handed down by the jury, with Jones Ignace
11 | and Jo Jo, they were acquitted of murder charges. Everybody
12 | else except Jo Jo was found guilty of mischief, there were three
13 | that were found guilty of mischief with attempt to injure. I
14 | guess regardless, you know, of anyone's response outside the
15 | community, you need to know what your role was there.

16 | You need to know and remember that when we went
17 | into that process, we went to save lives, we went to make sure
18 | that our people would come out of that process alive, regardless
19 | of the land question, regardless of who was involved, there were
20 | people's lives at risk and that was our biggest concern, that
21 | was the goal we had in mind when we went in.

22 | So to honour the decision of the acquittals, to
23 | honour the jury, the people, that the work you did was very
24 | important. I think that it's very important for us to sing a
25 | song, as this part of the process comes to a close, Fred.

1 (DRUM SONG)

2 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, we'll break for
3 lunch now for at least until 2:00 o'clock. Just take time to
4 support each other and hug one another. Thank you for all the
5 commitment and the work that you did during Gustafson, remember,
6 you'll recognize who was there, all of you were there supporting
7 in some way. So take time to just acknowledge each other, than
8 you.

9 --- MEETING RECESSED AT 1:10 PM

10 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 2:25 PM

11 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Can we start with the afternoon
12 session, you could close the side doors there. Okay, we'll
13 continue with questions by the Commissioners of Les Peters.

14 (EXAMINATION OF LES PETERS, CONT'D)

15 COMMISSIONER JOHN: I left off, it was just a
16 couple of points I wanted to ask you about, Les. You were
17 talking about the food that was served in residential school,
18 the kind of food that was served. Did the Brothers and the
19 priests and the nuns eat in the same place as the students and
20 did they eat the same food.

21 A In Kamloops school they ate in a room, they
22 had their own private diner and over the Mission when I was
23 there, the first few years, the one Brother sat at the table by
24 himself and he, I don't think he ate the same food we did,
25 looked a little better than what we had.

1 COMMISSIONER JOHN: I know what you mean because
2 every day I had to go to breakfast, lunch and supper, I went
3 past the diningroom of the Brothers and the priests and I saw
4 that what they were eating was something different than what we
5 were being served, so I was just wondering if it was the same
6 experience. So you're telling me it is the same experience?

7 A Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHN: One last point, in the
9 classrooms, in the mornings when you were in classes, aside from
10 learning how to pray and being taught Catechism, did the
11 teachers teach you during the nine years you were in residential
12 school about Indians at any time, anything about Indians?

13 A I've never heard anything, I remember one
14 story they told about the Native people that were killing
15 priests over back East in the Six Nations. And they were called
16 heathens and savages and that was the only time I ever heard
17 anything about Indian people.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHN: So even if they were teaching
19 you about Indians it had to do with something that they saw as
20 negative?

21 A I guess what they saw about us was a bunch
22 of savages, stupid savages, dumb, that's what they called me, a
23 dumb, stupid savage. I guess that's how they saw all Natives.

24 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Those are only, the only
25 questions I have.

1 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Hello, Les, my name is
2 Joe. I sort of, I'm not sure if I have questions, but I've been
3 turning over in my mind two levels of things, in terms of things
4 that you've shared this morning. The focus is on residential
5 school as such, but the focus also has been on what happens to
6 the person once they leave residential school and what happens
7 with their life. And you were very clear about what happened to
8 you, and I respect that.

9 It's not a time for show and tell but I lived the
10 best I can with the fact that I've, putting all the years I've
11 gone to school back to back, I'm in Grade 34 moving on 35, so
12 I've gone to school a long time. And that includes, I'm non-
13 Status, but that includes Mission run schools, residential
14 schools, but I was as a boarder in a convent as we used to say,
15 and I have no need to detail that. Like everyone else in this
16 room I'm a card carrying recovering human being, I come from a
17 dysfunctional family. And I've been working decades on my own
18 anger and moving out from under the clutches of victimization,
19 and I like the fact that I'm getting older and mellowing out and
20 I get less angry.

21 Now that's background, I guess I have kind of a
22 question, but maybe I'll answer my own question first. Like I
23 was telling William yesterday when I was — Shadowhawk, when he
24 was speaking, that I said I met you before, when in fact we have
25 never met before. But I've met him before, I meet, I met him in

1 the joints I go to, I've been working in the joints for eight
2 years now, federal system. And my assignment has been as a, and
3 I'm a psychologist, without apology, and I acknowledge that
4 psychologists have poor public image inside and outside of the
5 institutions for all kinds of reasons and that's a problem we
6 can discuss another day.

7 But the assignment was to develop an assessment
8 approach that took the culture of Native people into account.
9 And eight years later I think maybe I'm onto something. And in
10 the course of that, and the boys fit on a wide, wide, wide, wide
11 spectrum of need and history and Tribal things and language
12 things and so on, understandably. And at one end of the
13 spectrum, at one end of the continuum, you know the range of
14 difficulties the boys are going through in their lives when
15 they're doing time, and especially the boys doing hard time, you
16 know, life and 10, life 20, life and 25.

17 And I'm thinking only of Native boys, I have no
18 experience with white boys, I work with Native women also.
19 There is that kind of need that, where there's extreme anger and
20 extreme — and rage and a sense of outrage and I resonate to that
21 because I kind of know that in a sense, where that comes from.
22 I cannot ever talk to anyone about being in the gutter and
23 waking up in jail next and wondering why the hell I was there or
24 how I got there. And but I also can say but for the Grace of
25 God, that didn't happen to me but I come from the same place.

1 And I'm leading up to the question, I think the
2 answer and I'm giving my own answer, but please comment, feel
3 free to comment or not comment. Is that more carefully than
4 ever before those who are working, and I'm talking about Indians
5 working with Indians here, like here in this community. That
6 more than ever before, while we've made great strides in the
7 last 10 years here in this community and elsewhere in learning
8 about healing, getting into healing, going to school if you had
9 to go to school to get a ticket in counseling or addictions
10 counseling, somewhere, university, college, community college,
11 Nechi Institute or wherever and but picking up skills, but in a
12 traditional framework.

13 And I think there are, for some individuals, the
14 only route for them to go in terms of initiating recovery and
15 sustaining recovery over the rest of their life, is to go full
16 blown traditional, and that takes time. And one of the things
17 about the traditional approach is that kind of patience, patient
18 caring, non-intrusive caring, but intelligent, smart caring,
19 that that's something that we need to think more about as we
20 wrestle with the issues of dysfunction and unhappiness and hurt
21 and anger and despair and ridicule by the dominant society and
22 all those things that make for a lot of unhappy Indians. That's
23 one aspect of what my thinking and I'll stop now.

24 Oh, I did think, and I like your smile, I like
25 your eyes and I'm getting very personal now. I have that strong

1 feeling that if we were to go, you and I, into the mountains to
2 do a fast, we would make a few miles together. I also have the
3 feeling that, I can't tell you when, but the gift of tears will
4 come. I'm not a smart man for saying that, that's just my
5 hunch. I'm finished.

6 A And to comment, I have nothing against
7 counselors today, because I have listened to some of those
8 people, whether they can help me or not it doesn't matter, it's
9 the people that are around me. The people that I have affected
10 through my anger, my distrust, my hate, my bitterness, that's
11 people that I could work with as a counselor. I have worked as
12 a counselor, I still work as a counselor today, unknown to many
13 people. I work in a way where all the elements that are here,
14 I have a problem right now talking over these things because
15 they are sacred to me. And to speak over them, to talk over top
16 of them, it's difficult because I seem that I'm not getting
17 across. In many cases I have put these objects aside, with the
18 circle to join the circle.

19 Last week I had gone to the mountains with a
20 group of people who had gone on a fast, and some of those people
21 were very troubled. They were, they were mistreated also, they
22 didn't know how to be parents, because I understand where they
23 were coming from. And during the time that we were preparing to
24 go, they were preparing to go on their fast, I was talking to
25 them. I talked mostly of my own experience and that's not easy

1 to forget the past, to me, I lived it and I learned to survive.
2 But my grandchildren don't have to learn to survive the same way
3 I did, through violence, through alcohol, running and hiding,
4 they have a better chance in this life than I did.

5 As talking as a parent, I didn't know nothing
6 about it, I still don't know nothing about being a parent. But
7 I'm never too late to learn, I have grandchildren and they are
8 giving me a second chance in this life to learn to be a parent,
9 to learn to love and trust them. So that they will grow up
10 trusting me and feeling comfortable around me, where my own
11 children would run and hide because they saw me beating up on
12 their mother. I beat up on them, they would run and hide, but
13 they came back, they saw what I was doing, 14, it's been about
14 12 or 13 years that I've been in the ceremonies.

15 I took part in ceremonies down in the States, and
16 they came with me, now my sons are grown up, their also dancers,
17 drummers, singers, they don't use alcohol or drugs and they have
18 children of their own that I, that's where I come in. I steal
19 their kids, I look after them. But for the people that were on
20 that fast, they seemed to have a hard time to understand that I
21 had lived through that and yet, I seemed to be kind and gentle.
22 You don't have to throw your anger out every time something goes
23 wrong, I learned to accept it. There are other ways, you don't
24 have to be violent to prove your point, accept it. There are
25 other ways, there are simpler ways without hurting anyone. I

1 had to overcome fear of responsibility, I had overcome fear of
2 trusting because I didn't trust no one for a long time.

3 I had fear of people, people with authority
4 bugged me and I had fear of them, until I started pushing back,
5 for years I pushed people, anybody that had authority I bugged
6 them, I told them what I felt. But today, I can sit and
7 recognize what these people are doing and help them the best way
8 that I can. Because there's so many people around that are
9 willing to do something for people like me or people that are
10 close to me. I find that it's hard for me to work with my own
11 family because I feel that I still have a barrier between me and
12 my sons. I have a hard time to talk to them and really, and
13 explain to them what real feelings are, I couldn't sit and talk
14 to them. But it's easy for someone else to come and talk to
15 them, and I can talk to anyone else. Is that what you wanted?

16 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: That's pretty good, thank
17 you.

18 A Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Mr. Peters, Joe, here can
20 say that he can resonate with your thoughts and that he can know
21 where your sense of rage comes from, and I can't say that. But
22 what I can say to you is that despite your protest that you
23 never learned how to read very well and perhaps that's exactly
24 true, you're an immensely articulate person and you have a
25 message that really ought to be conveyed beyond this room. And

1 | ought to be conveyed to persons who really haven't heard, I
2 | think, your sort of a message, it's not that they've never been
3 | able to read it, not that they haven't ever had the opportunity
4 | to listen to somebody saying things perhaps similar to what you
5 | say. But you speak in a way that you make yourself heard, you
6 | make yourself understood.

7 | For one, I think your message ought to be
8 | conveyed by you, not by somebody else, but by you, to persons
9 | who become judges. Perhaps it ought to be conveyed to the
10 | persons on the other side of the table when this Band is
11 | negotiating for a treaty with the province. Because you can
12 | make other people understand just how to take a boy and make him
13 | grow up, "bad", and thus guarantee a lifetime of work for
14 | lawyers, judges, jailers and parole officers. With an
15 | expectation that unless there's a very big change, such as has
16 | happened in your life, there will be more generations absolutely
17 | predictably likely to follow.

18 | That is a message that I think many people in
19 | this country need to understand and won't, there are a lot of
20 | politicians out on the stump these days conveying the message
21 | that what we need in this country is more and better jails and
22 | I think they're wrong, thank you.

23 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Good, thank you very much, Les,
24 | for your evidence, thank you. We'll now call our next victim
25 | witness, Cyril Paul, Fred, if you could swear in Cyril Paul.

1 CYRIL PAUL; Sworn

2 EXAMINATION BY JOE MORRISON

3 Q Could you please state your full name for
4 the record?

5 A My full name is Cyril Lloyd Paul.

6 Q Now Mr. Paul, could you tell the
7 Commissioners when it was that you attended the residential
8 school?

9 A I attended St. Joseph's Mission Residential
10 School from 1957 to 1966, '67, somewhere around there.

11 Q Now ,sir, can you recall how you first went
12 to the residential school?

13 A Yes, I do. I recall leaving from Canim
14 Lake in September of 1957 with Father Casey in his blue station
15 wagon and I remember getting off by the flag pole, that was kind
16 of the middle I guess, the boundary between the boys side and
17 girls side of the residential school. I remember I was seven
18 years old, I remember being so happy that I was going to get
19 time to spend with my older sisters and my older brothers who
20 were there.

21 Q Now, sir, would you please tell the inquiry
22 about a typical day at the residential school?

23 A A typical day for me at residential school
24 was getting up early, I sound like a broken record I guess,
25 praying, kneeling down beside the bed and praying. During the

1 time I was at residential school I was a bed wetter, part of my
2 day was getting up, praying, and then the Brother would check
3 around, up and down the beds and, I being one of the bed
4 wetters, got strapped, had a cold shower, came out and got
5 strapped again. And then after everybody had gone to the
6 kitchen to have breakfast, I had to march along with the rest of
7 the bed wetters, through the kitchen, rather than go out the
8 back door and come around, to take my wet sheets to the laundry.
9 For me I felt that was the way of them making fun of me or
10 ridiculing me, trying to embarrass me enough so I won't wet my
11 bed.

12 And then, then I'd eat my breakfast, we prayed
13 before and after each meal, after we had done our chores after
14 and we were prepared, just before we'd go to school we'd line up
15 and arm-length away from the next guy and we would pray again
16 before we went to school. You're going to hear about a lot of
17 praying and whatever, but when we got to school we prayed again
18 before we started class and guess what the first subject was,
19 Catechism. That was my day and at night after school or after
20 school we had time to play and they used the whistle to call us
21 in. If we were late we were punished in some way, usually the
22 strap or miss your meal, miss your supper or whatever.

23 Q Now sir, you indicated that you were about
24 seven years old when you first went to the residential school,
25 could you speak English when you first went to the residential

1 school?

2 A Oh yes, I was, I spoke English quite a bit,
3 at home I spoke English with my brothers and sisters, with my
4 mom and dad. And I remember as a young kid I was rambunctious,
5 I did things because I was happy, I use to like singing and then
6 making people laugh. And I remember getting a blue guitar for
7 a gift one Christmas, and when I went to residential school I,
8 don't know all that went away.

9 And then just recently I have a son who's nine
10 years old, who's telling me that he's going to be a singer and
11 that I got to go pay to see him when he starts having his
12 concerts. But I want to be like my nine year old son, I want to
13 be able to speak my mind and then do things that I enjoy because
14 at one time I did.

15 Q Now sir, what else can you tell the
16 Commissioners about speaking language at the residential
17 schools, did you also speak your Native language?

18 A I guess about the only Shuswap I knew that
19 I would speak of in residential school was (Native Language),
20 when like some of the guys were talking before I got up here had
21 mentioned that we had, we knew where every supervisor was,
22 whether you were Chilcotin, Carrier, or Shuswap, everybody knew
23 what (Native Language) meant, it meant he's coming. And we'd all
24 be quiet or stop doing what we were doing, which most of the
25 time was against their rules.

1 Q Now Mr. Paul, you indicated that you were
2 punished, specifically made to take cold showers whenever there
3 was bed wetting. Can you tell the Commissioners if there were
4 any other occasions where you were punished and what it was you
5 would be punished for?

6 A I remember, to me it seemed stupid, to this
7 day I don't know why, why they did this to me. Like you talk
8 about bad food and stuff, it's hard for me to share this but
9 this is what happened to me. I was a junior boy being seven or
10 eight years old, they talk about sometimes we use to have bad
11 food. Red and green is Christmas colours right, well we had
12 green and red boloney and it wasn't Christmas. Anyway I had
13 eaten some of that, like Les said, you eat it or starve or steal
14 from your buddy. An embarrassing situation happened to me that
15 I'm never going to forget, but try and find some healthy way to
16 overcome some of the pain and embarrassment it has caused me.

17 I had eaten this food, this bad food and we were
18 cleaning ditches down at the field and I had a stomachache and
19 for people, (Native Language), scared to fart I might shit
20 myself. But anyway, I asked to go to the washroom, I said I
21 needed to go bad, that I had a stomachache, and man I was
22 twisting around and everything, God damn thing. And I think
23 this guy enjoyed himself watching me go through the pain that I
24 was going through and anyway I ended up shitting my pants. And
25 then he starts asking me why, why I did it, you know, all this

1 | shit stupid stuff, and then he takes me from the field to the
2 | dorm, not gently, roughed me up all the way up, pulled my ears,
3 | pulled my hair, yard me around by my arms, being seven or eight
4 | years old at the time.

5 | Then I got to the dorm, his fun began, got me to
6 | strip my clothes and then wash it and hit me on the head with
7 | his knuckles and asking me why I did it, you know, you could
8 | have asked and I was asking. I had, I was scared shitless and
9 | embarrassed at the same time, made me shower, cold shower after
10 | he had strapped me. And when he was, when I was done my cold
11 | shower, crying and trying not to cry and wanting to cry and
12 | wanted to, I don't know what else I wanted to do. When I was
13 | done my cold shower I had to, oh no, I'm not done with you yet,
14 | he said, strapped me some more.

15 | If shitting yourself and being so afraid and then
16 | getting embarrassed in front of your friends is not good enough,
17 | having a cold shower and getting licked wasn't good enough, I
18 | had to go without supper because I was a bad little boy. I've
19 | been strapped, you hear people talk about strap here, I get
20 | strapped all the way up there. A third time I had that strap
21 | hit one of my arms, I just shut off the pain, I felt that if I
22 | cried I was going to get dealt, you know, I'll give you
23 | something to cry for, so I was pretty confused.

24 | And then one time this guy came around, I know a
25 | lot of things go through my mind, but I know it's not going to

1 solve what happened. Talk about confronting people about the
2 hurts they've inflicted in me, I talked about picturing myself
3 as that killer whale playing around with that seal, I'm the
4 killer whale, they're the seals, I'll play with your lives and
5 then I'll take care of you for good, but that's not going to
6 make the pain go away. I have a really hard time crying, I
7 don't feel I have a right to stir up any hurt feelings in
8 anybody, but it's going to happen. I learned to make something
9 positive out of the things that happened to me, as a little boy.

10 I know today I didn't deserve any of the
11 embarrassing situations I had to go through, not just me but
12 many of my buddies, too. But right now I'm focusing on me and
13 how much it hurt me. As I told my friends, I'm listening to
14 tapes, self-help tapes, this made me strong, a little stronger
15 person. One day I'm Mother Theresa and the next minute I'm
16 Hitler. I don't know if you're going to ask me questions but
17 can I keep on talking here?

18 Q This is your chance to, to tell the
19 Commissioners your experience at the residential school.

20 A One of the things that my friend, I call
21 him my brother, Wilfred, mentioned yesterday, that somebody had
22 thrown a chalk brush. Guess who they were throwing it at, I had
23 a buddy sitting behind me and I see him now and then and I think
24 about, that he took some physical pain for me. It was meant for
25 me, that brush, because I was talking and talking to my buddy

1 over here and I had stooped over to grab something from the
2 floor and he threw that brush which was meant to be for me. And
3 hit my buddy in the back, cut him, bleeding, and all they gave
4 him was a tissue to clean it off. He use to always show off
5 with these muscles and tear his shirt or whatever, yes, it's
6 easy to talk tough when you got a lot of people up high with you
7 that we can't do bugger-all about. He bragged a lot about
8 logging and what he could do, you know, well what the hell was
9 he doing teaching us if he was a good logger.

10 I excelled in school, I talk to these guys here
11 from Grade 1 to Grade 8, I was in the top three of the students
12 all the time, we had ranks, first, second, third. In Grade 3 I
13 won a little red and white bow, hurray, I was happy. But when
14 I was sexually abused in the residential school, talking about
15 it even today, I'm 47 years old today, I have a lot of anger.
16 Ever since I have gone to court and this guy's been convicted,
17 he's gone to jail, I picture myself slamming him off two walls,
18 back and forth. I picture myself playing with him with my
19 rifle, stick it down his throat, pull the trigger, have a little
20 fun with him before I kill him.

21 The thoughts that have gone through my mind
22 because of the anger and the shame that I've had, was to things
23 like, kind of get all my kids together and shoot them all and
24 then shoot myself so I don't have to worry about anybody blaming
25 me for how terrible they're doing. I, two days before this

1 | thing started, I said, oh, good time, my daughter's gone, nobody
2 | in the house tonight, good time to just shoot myself, and I bet
3 | you everybody's going to say, why did he do it you know, start
4 | pointing fingers and blaming other people. But these are
5 | thoughts that go through my mind from the pain that I've gone
6 | through, through the many years.

7 | I lost a sister in 1963, who had attended
8 | residential school, was married, had two children. She kept
9 | going back to this guy, supposedly love each other, she used to
10 | get the shit beat out of her, she'd come home, she'd get better
11 | and she'd go back. Well one of those times she went back, she
12 | came back here, on her way home, was too tired, in February, she
13 | was found froze to death, my nephew in hospital later of some
14 | kind of hyperthermia, I guess you'd call it. And I lost a
15 | nephew that I never even saw, I went to see him about in April,
16 | kind of got an idea of where he was buried and I prayed. Last
17 | night I let them go together.

18 | The pain that I had, that I had gone through,
19 | through the relationships I've had, I have had, lost children
20 | through a thing they call a miscarriage, I had no feelings about
21 | stuff I didn't understand. But last night I talked about losing
22 | a daughter who would be two years old next month. My dad, I
23 | loved him very much, he was residential school stuff too, my dad
24 | was a very violent man when he drank. And my mom's here today
25 | — I'll make it, tears are healing stuff, I just got to keep

1 breathing and keep going on. My mom's been a pretty special
2 person in my life, my mom went to residential school, too. My
3 mom lost her parents when she was quite young, she was raised in
4 a foster home. I use to watch my mom get beat up lots by my
5 dad, it was hard for me, seven or eight years old, but I love my
6 mom and dad and I still do today. Because I understand why my
7 dad was the way he was.

8 My dad used to tell me, I'm going to drink until
9 I die like my dad, and he did. I found out only after my dad
10 died that he was working on his sexual abuse issues from
11 residential school, you talked about scars on the back from
12 lashes, my dad had that. Out of 16 of us, eight boys and eight
13 girls, there's 12 of us left. I have older sisters who have
14 gone to residential school, I have older brothers who have gone
15 there too, and they won't even come here. I remember after
16 being sexually abused in residential school how numb I got, I
17 numbed out some feelings, I forgot some things that happened.
18 But one thing I do remember is after Grade 9, I mentioned I had
19 up to Grade 8 I was top three in my class, after that I just
20 didn't care, I joked with my friends and say, I liked Grade 9 so
21 much I took it twice.

22 I know that I'm, the potential I have to go on
23 with my life, English wasn't a problem for me at school, I was
24 good at things maybe just to impress the people that were there
25 but I think I should have just took on things on my own and just

1 | went on, took the pain with me and find some way to deal with
2 | it. My first drink was at seven years old, that was just to
3 | kind of try it out, see what it did for me. Well I drank a lot
4 | since I was 13 years old, I didn't know it was because I was
5 | sexually abused.

6 | But later on in my life I started to get in touch
7 | with some of my feelings, there was times that I left booze
8 | alone and then I would go back drinking, it seemed like that
9 | every time that I got in a crisis situation. Not knowing how to
10 | handle separation in a relationship, not knowing how to deal
11 | with loss of a loved one. I can say today, because of the work
12 | I'm doing, I have nothing against my sister's husband's family,
13 | it's not their fault. I've been strapped a lot, I've been
14 | punished for things like crossing boundaries, I think one of the
15 | reasons I like writing a lot is because I did write a lot in
16 | school because I cross that boundary and I had to write 500
17 | lines saying, I must not go on the girls side, I must not go on
18 | the girls side. Is there anything else?

19 | Q Yes, now sir, you've mentioned that there's
20 | an issue of sexual abuse here, could you please tell the
21 | Commission who this abuser was?

22 | A Yes, I can. In 1963, when I became a
23 | senior boy, when you turn 13 you became a senior boy, Wilfred
24 | mentioned yesterday something about going through a line. You
25 | had to go through that line when you were leaving intermediate

1 dorm and they take your shirt off and you have to run through
2 this line and they slap you as hard as they could or punch you
3 and if two or three of them don't hit you because they know how
4 much it hurts, they hit you on your bear skin, we got to go
5 through there again, it's something he didn't mention. And then
6 when you go downstairs to the senior dorm, that was initiation,
7 you're a big boy now, run through this line.

8 And just yesterday I was saying, wow, I wonder
9 what the hell was my initiation, running through this line, they
10 call it the congo line or something I think. Was my initiation
11 running through that line or being sexually abused by this
12 Brother Doughty. When I was sexually abused, every time
13 somebody talks about their story, I can smell that cassock, I
14 can hear that guy talking to me, telling me it's okay, he's got
15 his hands in my pajamas, playing with my penis, trying to
16 masturbate me and trying to tell me to do the same thing to him.
17 Like my friend, I refused to touch him. I mean, this is a guy
18 you're supposed to trust, this is a guy you're supposed to look
19 up to. Who the hell was I supposed to go to, you heard about
20 O'Connor, he was the principal at the time. I couldn't tell
21 nobody, I didn't know nothing about my buddy or my brother as I
22 like to call him, until yesterday and I shed tears.

23 Because of that violence in my home, wasn't my
24 mom's fault, I was telling my friends, -- oh, my two moms are
25 sitting together, they were for when I came in. I was one of

1 those kids that was quite rebellious in my family, out of 12 of
2 us that were left, I drank a lot from 13 years old until up to
3 four years ago, four years, two months and 21 days or something
4 like that. But I realized that I had to do something with
5 myself or I'm going to die. I'm raising one of my daughters,
6 she's 12 years old, and that's one of the things that I'm
7 learning, is parenting skills. The parenting skills that I
8 learned at the Mission, they can stick it where the sun don't
9 shine.

10 I'm proud to say that I never laid a hand on my
11 kids in the last four and a half years. You don't beat up on
12 somebody you love, never, I don't accept that. You don't
13 mentally, emotionally and spiritually, you don't hurt anyone in
14 that manner. I drank for many years and it was to see if that
15 pain will go away, and it doesn't go away, it never had. I have
16 two sons, three daughters, two grandsons, and the last while
17 I've been able to say I love them and they're very special to
18 me. But I haven't been able to go and visit on a regular basis,
19 but I'm not God, I ain't going to pretend to be either. I hurt
20 a lot, it takes maybe you to walk from here to over there and
21 hug somebody and, hi, how are you doing, but not me, I'm scared
22 shitless, but I want to. Why? I'm working hard on trusting, I
23 can't trust anybody unless I learn to trust myself and how I
24 feel about me.

25 I was beat on the back with a two by four,

1 | busted, somebody said something about having a tough hide, two
2 | by four maybe two or three times and it broke across my back, so
3 | wire better, don't break, it'll wrap around you and it'll hurt.
4 | I've been whipped with a lot of stuff and at this residential
5 | school I had to laugh when they strap me or put on the cry or
6 | whatever so they leave me alone.

7 | I was beat up a lot in school and people, your
8 | own friends double-banging you and I heard mention that to break
9 | the monotony that whatever in residential school, you get
10 | strapped a little too much maybe we should double-bang you, kick
11 | the shit out of you or whatever, yank some of your hair out, see
12 | how many times they can kick you in the crotch and you still get
13 | up. I was getting beat up by these three guys and the Brother
14 | came in, three of those guys word against mine, I had to kneel
15 | down, try kneeling down after somebody kick you in the crotch a
16 | few times, kick you in the ribs and almost pull your hair all
17 | out, that was fun times.

18 | There was some things said, I excelled in
19 | highschool — or not in highschool, from Grade 1 to 8, I got into
20 | Air Cadets, I went from private, corporal to sergeant. I didn't
21 | get nothing out of that, I didn't have no satisfaction out of
22 | that. They talked about hockey, my best year was '65, '66, we
23 | won every game that year in town, we played players like Ted
24 | Plow and Bill Margarets (phonetic) and all them. But there was
25 | the biggest thrill I got out of that I guess was shaking hands

1 with Andy Bathgate. And the other things that helped me through
2 residential school was the acting or the plays that they had, I
3 joined that, I joined the bugle band. Is there anything else
4 you want to know?

5 Q Yes, sir, you just mentioned being hit
6 across the back with two by fours, could you just tell the
7 Commissioners who did this and why it happened?

8 A I want to say this, that didn't happen at
9 residential school, it happened out here. To this day I don't
10 know who the hell the guy was, but he sure could swing anyway.
11 Because I feel that, when I have those pains in my back, between
12 my shoulder blades, I think that's where that's coming from. I
13 didn't — I was going to say he didn't hurt me, physically yes,
14 but whoever he is if he wants to come and apologize, I'm here.
15 I was fighting with somebody else at the time anyway, maybe he
16 was helping his buddy.

17 Q Now, sir, aside from the residential
18 school, did you attend any other schools?

19 A Oh yes, I attended this school out here for
20 a little while, like Whip did, and then I had to go back to
21 residential school because my dad worked all over the place.

22 Q And where did you attend highschool?

23 A Grade 9 and junior high, like I said, I
24 liked it so much I did it twice, and I think for myself would
25 be, it was the change from being, schooling with all your own

1 people and integrating, I was too busy looking around, not at
2 books. I was feeling free and wanted to try many things. After
3 finishing Grade 9 I went to Demano (phonetic) or Prince George
4 College, the best three years of my life, educational wise.

5 Q Perhaps sir, you could compare the
6 highschool in Prince George to the residential school?

7 A I didn't have to pray as much, I don't have
8 nothing against prayer, because prayer has helped me get to
9 where I am today. But I would like to say that Prince George
10 College compared to the residential school was heaven, I've
11 never been there to, but it was like heaven. There was Polish
12 people, Italian people, German people, Carriers, Shuswap, and it
13 was a fun thing. More freedom to do things for myself and more
14 freedom to be myself, to go and do things without being afraid
15 that I'm going to get pound or whatever, get strapped there, be
16 embarrassed in some situation.

17 I graduated from highschool in 1970, and I went
18 right back to drinking, it's only recently in the last 10 years,
19 last eight years I would say that I really done something for
20 me. The consequences of abuse, sexual abuse, disclosure, I had
21 to face them. Being the drunk I was and rebellious guy that I
22 was, while I was drinking, when I had disclosed what had
23 happened to me, never got no closure to me. But I love my
24 family, I love my family very much. One day I would like to be
25 able to just walk up to my brother and hug him without thinking

1 | somebody's going to think I'm queer. I want to be able to hug
2 | my mom and say, I love you, I want to be able to hug my
3 | grandchildren and say, I love you, I'm proud that you're my
4 | grandson. I want to be able to tell people that are close to me
5 | that I love them and they mean something to me.

6 | Because of sexual abuse and the thing I went
7 | through, my mind was distorted about the word 'love', it's not
8 | anymore. Because I worked hard to get where I'm at, it's like
9 | I said, two days before this was started I was contemplating
10 | suicide, planning to make tapes and then saying, oh yes, you
11 | guys are going to start pointing fingers. I always getting away
12 | from what I'm really focused on, I want to remain focused no
13 | matter how much pain I go through, I'm learning to love and
14 | accept myself, accepting the fact that the abuse that I went
15 | through is not my fault. And I went through a lot of pain, but
16 | I never gave up searching for ways to overcome that pain.
17 | Today, I live my life the best that I can.

18 | Q Now, sir, perhaps you can tell the
19 | Commissioners about the therapy or counseling?

20 | A In the last while, I guess it's been going
21 | on for a while, I use to go to treatment, I hear comments from
22 | my own people and other people, time to take a break or a
23 | holiday. You look at it that way you'll be gone for another
24 | holiday pretty soon. But I went to Round Lake, I went to, Round
25 | Lake was a drug and alcohol dry out centre, in 1979 I went

1 | there. In 1981 I went to another one, I think I've been to
2 | treatment, there's Maple Ridge and Nanquani (phonetic), Prince
3 | George and out here, so five times I've been through treatment,
4 | drug and alcohol treatment and it's helped me. I've been seeing
5 | counselors, one of the counselors comes out here and, to talk
6 | about the pain, knowing that these people are only here to help
7 | me through my pain or to help me see what I can do, so I can go
8 | further on in my life because that's what I want.

9 | I am presently going through a procedure of going
10 | for one on one therapy, I got my doctor's referral to see a
11 | therapist. And I'm doing my own footwork on stuff like that, if
12 | I'm not, I go look for help because I know I need it, because
13 | I'm sober don't mean I know more than the next person. I've
14 | been going to, I guess, therapy on and off for about eight
15 | years, because it's scary. Sometimes I take a break and I
16 | forget to go back and I think that's what happened the last
17 | time. I've been sober for four years and I've just recently
18 | started going for help. My therapy, my self-healing program for
19 | myself is poetry and art, the effect of residential school, I
20 | was good in art and one of buddy's said, you're always showing
21 | off and all this, you know and I quit doing artwork up until
22 | four years ago.

23 | My daughters, two daughters were on the floor and
24 | my son and they were all doing artwork and I guess the little
25 | boy in me was starting to fidget around and wanted to do some

1 artwork too, so I did. So I do cards, birthday cards, whatever,
2 I'm done with you in five minutes, just kidding. But I write
3 poetry, my dream is to write a book that they can use in
4 schools, or use in programs. Like I wrote a poem it's called
5 Painful Memories, I've been carrying around some of my poetry,
6 got three of them with me and I'm willing to sit with anybody
7 who wants to read them and talk to me about how that poem came
8 about, because for me, it helps me too.

9 Q Now, Mr. Paul, when we met with you a few
10 days ago, you gave us one of your poems and I don't have anymore
11 questions for you, the Commissioners will probably have some
12 questions for you but as a last note, perhaps you could read the
13 poem that you presented to us a few days ago.

14 A I had, how this poem came about was I woke
15 up one night crying, I forgot to mention that I had a lot of
16 nightmares for years because of my misuse. Can you hear me,
17 okay. I title this poem, 'Thank you Mother Earth'.

18 "Why should my people suffer for my pain, it was
19 not their fault that I held my tears as I stood
20 in the rain. Why should my people suffer for my
21 hurts, what was I to gain. Mother Nature has
22 cried along with me for what I once saw as a
23 terrible day of rain. Why should my people
24 suffer for my shame. I hurt so deep I could do
25 nothing but blame. Why should my people suffer

1 for my guilt, I'm so full of blame I have no
2 foundation upon which to build. Why should my
3 people suffer for how I was treated, my feelings
4 were so numb it was only me that I cheated. Why
5 should my people suffer for my fears, after all
6 it was me who hung onto them all of these years.
7 Why should my people suffer for how I was
8 mistreated, I'm my own worst enemy so it's me
9 that I've defeated. Why should my people suffer
10 because I refuse to forgive, so afraid to humble
11 myself, live and let live. Why should my people
12 suffer because I refuse to let go of the pain,
13 thank you, Mother Earth, I no longer need to
14 hide my tears in the rain.

15 Q Thank you, Mr. Paul. If the Commissioners
16 have any questions.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Yes, Cyril, you -- I went to
18 school with you in Prince George College and your buddy, Freddy
19 and many others here. And over those years and to now and the
20 efforts that I've seen from this village and the people here,
21 and the courage that's out there. You are a part of that, what
22 is taking place in this community, the healing, and the
23 rebuilding and I think there's a lot of people on the outside
24 who look and see what's going on here and see the courage that's
25 being brought forward.

1 So you should, I have no questions, so you should
2 never lose faith in that courage, because a lot of people know
3 what's going on, because they have seen it in their own
4 communities and that they're looking and watching people like
5 yourself coming forward and telling your story of physical and
6 sexual abuse and people are finding courage in that.

7 So, I thank you very much for your story, sharing
8 your story with us and telling with us and I know that
9 friendship that we developed as young boys with others, like
10 Freddy and young girls at Prince George College, that will last
11 forever. So I just want you to know that.

12 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Cyril, for your
13 information and evidence, thank you very much. We will move
14 onto the last witness of the day, right, no coffee break, okay.
15 We'll move into the last witness of the day, if we could ask
16 Andy Chelsea to come up, we'll have Fred Johnson swear him in,
17 Andy. Okay if we could take one minute, one Commissioner had to
18 leave the room.

19 --- MEETING RECESSED AT 3:40 PM

20 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 3:46 PM

21 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Fred and Andy.

22 ANDY CHELSEA; Sworn

23 EXAMINATION BY BRAD WICKS

24 Q Can you tell us your name sir?

25 A Andy, Andrew Chelsea.

1 Q Okay, when were you born?

2 A May 20, 1942.

3 Q Now I understand, sir, that you're a Band
4 Councillor in Alkali Lake, is that correct?

5 A Yes, yes I am.

6 Q How long have you been a Band Councillor?

7 A The last four years, then off and on since
8 1972.

9 Q Did you attend the St. Joseph's Mission
10 Residential School?

11 A Yes I did.

12 Q During which years?

13 A 1950 to 1958.

14 Q And what grade did you finish there?

15 A Seven.

16 Q Did you go onto further education after
17 that?

18 A Yes, 1972, '71, '72, I took upgrading
19 course here in Alkali.

20 Q Did you have other brothers and sisters who
21 also went to the residential school?

22 A Yes, I had eight, eight brothers and
23 sisters, also went to the residential school, yes.

24 Q Okay, were they there at the same time as
25 you?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Were you able to see them while you were
3 there?

4 A My brothers, I guess, but my sisters, no.

5 Q Now I wonder if you can tell us what a day
6 in your life would have been like at the residential school?

7 A The first, when I first went there I didn't
8 understand anything, because of I guess the language barrier,
9 today I call it that. Knowing what happened and how, how I got
10 to go there was, I don't really, I couldn't really understand I
11 guess, until about November, what was really being said or
12 talked about because of my English at that time. I did not know
13 one word of English when I first went there, so.

14 Q Perhaps sir, you can just tell us about
15 your experience at the school and I may ask some questions after
16 you've told us your story.

17 A When I first went there it was, I remember
18 having long hair and I had a buckskin vest that my granny made
19 for me. And when my dad left and my mom and the rest of the
20 children that was with us at that time, did not start school
21 yet. When the wagon got out of sight, there was, like going
22 through hell, I didn't want to be there, so when you're crying
23 around there, nobody can tell you, everybody's talking English
24 to you, you don't understand. So what happened to me was
25 somebody grabbed me on the shoulder and I remember having this

1 | guy grab me, setting me on the highchair and with those old
2 | clippers that you use to have to use with one hand and he
3 | started cutting my hair and then after that they pushed me out
4 | of that highchair and onto the floor. And I was standing on the
5 | floor and he grabbed me and just pulled my vest, just like a
6 | button shirt, there was pebbles that I had for buttons, like the
7 | sweat house rocks now, I guess, all those little pebbles went
8 | flying all over the floor.

9 | I remember him pointing at those pebbles and I
10 | just, and saying something, I guess he was telling me to pick it
11 | up, and I just look at him and pretty soon one of my buddies, he
12 | came and he translated into Shuswap. So I went and I started
13 | picking up these pebbles and I handed it back to the Brother,
14 | MacDonald at that time. And he rolled up my hair in my vest and
15 | dragged me down the stairs and open that big furnace and throw
16 | it in there.

17 | And at that time it started sort of a war with
18 | me, because the hatred started right then, and through about
19 | five years I think I got strapped at least once or twice a
20 | month. And it was for all kinds of reasons. I sometimes was
21 | not listening, sometimes not running fast enough when the
22 | whistle blow or sometimes the bed's not fixed right or anything
23 | like that, or if the sinks weren't washed clean enough, it was
24 | my chore to clean the sinks after everybody did their thing in
25 | the morning, I had to wipe the walls in the showers.

1 That was the recollection I have of my first
2 maybe one, two or three years. After I learned how to speak
3 English, it was the language that I don't really know how to
4 write today, but I use it. I always wanted to hurt one of those
5 guys, after I dropped out of school from the Mission in Grade 7,
6 Grade 8, when they came to this reserve, I and my brother, who's
7 dead now, were always plotting away to do it. And we thought
8 about poisoning his wine before he drank it on the alter, we
9 wondered how we're going to get at that, that was the kind of
10 hatred I had.

11 Q When you say that they strapped you, where
12 would they strap you?

13 A In the butt, sometimes just above the
14 knees, at the back or right at the knees and then you couldn't
15 walk for about an hour. And I use to pretend to cry a lot of
16 the time just so they'd leave me alone. And I had my times with
17 the teachers, I remember standing up one time wanting to punch
18 the teacher. That night they reported to the principal, Father
19 Morris, at that time. I was strapped in 1953, September, 11th,
20 and I never could forget that day, because Father Morris could
21 not make me cry, I wouldn't cry. And at that time, when they
22 asked me if I had enough, I turned around I asked him if he was
23 tired. So he called in another priest to finish the job and
24 things got worse after that. Every chance they had I'd get
25 slapped, sometimes the back of the head, not even knowing why.

1 But at that time, back in 1953, the straps were
2 made of the harness hems, the pulling straps of those harness on
3 them horses. And I don't, to this day when I hear somebody say
4 forgive and forget, that really just pisses me off. Because you
5 can't forget that, might be able to forgive, but I'll never
6 forget it. And one of the teachers caught me with a can of
7 snuff one day and I was in Grade 5, Brother MacDonald made me
8 eat that whole can that was fresh. And I sat down on the bed
9 with enough people watching that I'd eat what they asked me to,
10 then I wanted to go to the bathroom after and just throw it up,
11 they wouldn't let me. Put me in my bed and they tucked the bed
12 in so I wouldn't move and I'd lay there on my back until I
13 swallowed all of that.

14 In 1958 after I quit school I seen him out here
15 and I walked right up to him and I wanted to punch him out, I
16 wanted to kill that son of a bitch. And then at that reunion
17 they had a few years ago, I heard he was there, I never went, I
18 couldn't forget what was happening already, I didn't want
19 another reminder of what I went through. The Indianness that my
20 granny taught me helped me right through my education, I guess
21 you could call it, what little bit of it, it was. We built that
22 Mission with the sweat, we cleaned the ditches, we milked the
23 cows, 5:00 o'clock, 6:00 o'clock in the morning. We built that
24 place and they turned around and sold it, when they sold it
25 after they closed it down in whenever that was. I went up the

1 graveyard and I told my brother about it, because I watched him
2 go through hell there, too.

3 I remember getting really sick, cold, and my
4 brother got in my bed with me, try to warm me up, and he got
5 caught. Father Toosie strapped him so much that he lost control
6 of everything, he shit himself, pissed himself. These guys were
7 supposed to be our teachers, biggest bunch of crooks this world
8 ever had. If my brother was around today, I think we'd probably
9 hurt somebody before I quit drinking, because we planned a lot
10 of stuff and it never worked.

11 Q Mr. Chelsea, you also told me earlier about
12 an incident with Father O'Shea (phonetic) when he had used a
13 cork on you, can you tell the Commissioners about that please?

14 A One of the teachers, I mumbled something in
15 school and I wasn't reading out loud enough for them, I guess.
16 When he was telling me to read a little bit louder I just
17 mumbled faster and he reported me to Father O'Shea. Father
18 O'Shea took us and one of my other buddies and put four fingers
19 together that made us open our mouth so we didn't bite his hand,
20 stuck the cork in there and we had to leave our mouths open for
21 about an hour and kneel down in front of the priests couch on
22 the cement for an hour with those corks in our mouth.

23 I tried to bite it but there was no strength left
24 in my jaws and this happened about 4:00 o'clock and we were
25 there until supper time. Right at supper time we were suppose

1 to have, to go and eat, can't eat after that. And I say, I
2 always wanted to grab that guy and pull his teeth out, the
3 hatred that I had for all of that. And my granny used to tell
4 me, they'll never beat you, (Native Language) and I believe her,
5 I'm not going to let anybody win that. The culture things that
6 happened, the genocide that happened all those years. The
7 boxing that I and my brother use to do, was a show for these
8 guys. Because I'd get in trouble he'd help me, we'd always have
9 to box and one of us had to beat the other guy up, divide and
10 conquer the family, he never made it.

11 I hit him so hard one time and this was at a
12 concert, made us walk on barrels and box, 45 gallon drums and we
13 were standing on that, boxing. And he told me, he says you're
14 going to have to do your best, I am going to have to hit you as
15 hard as I can, you do the same thing to me, it will be okay. So
16 he was falling forward one, on that second round of our boxing
17 match we had on those barrels, we had a three round match, he
18 was falling forward and I really swung and I hit him. He fell
19 back, hit his head on the post, knocked him out cold. What they
20 did though is just drag him aside and let the concert go on and
21 they wouldn't let me go over there and tend to him.

22 If this was a way of, call it civilization we use
23 to always say, then our culture and our way of life was 20 times
24 better than being sent to a prison. Today when I look at, when
25 I hear the news and I watch the news, they say 60 per cent of

1 the people in prisons today are Native people, across Canada.
2 Those guys are trained, you're not going to get anything to
3 change, these guys were already in prison, they're probably
4 having the time of their lives in there, that's how we were
5 trained. You're not going to hurt them, you're just locking
6 them up, they went already went through it, the Mission School.
7 And that change is going to have to come from the governments,
8 and when I look at everything around here, this whole community,
9 everything is still happening that same way.

10 We're still building for the government, look at
11 all you guys in your fancy houses now a days, who are you
12 paying, the government, it's our land, it's our trees. They
13 took it to build our houses and we pay for it, how many people
14 is going to really start looking at the political ends of
15 everything that's happened in our lives, (Native Language),
16 steal our trees, it's our land. I really wonder about that,
17 because like I said we built the Mission and then they took it
18 and sold it. How many of our parents sitting in the room today,
19 how many of our parents out there give up their allowance for us
20 kids to be over there. Then we eat raw beans, barely cooked,
21 one slice of boloney on Sunday was suppose to be a delicacy with
22 one spoonful of mashed potatoes and a slice of bread. We
23 learned how to steal, eating raw wheat to keep everything going,
24 go and hunt rabbits just to, even if you could have gotten any
25 worst strapped for eating rabbit. You eat everything over

1 | there, even squirrels, the muskrats too.

2 | And this was education, and when I look at that
3 | today and I look at what's happening, the biggest bunch of bull
4 | that ever happened was the governments of today, is still in
5 | existence. I watch that everyday and the hatred always comes
6 | because it reminds you, the political arena of what's happening
7 | with your life. They told us when we first went over there, it
8 | was an industrial school, we'll going to teach you how to
9 | survive, we're going to teach you how to make things, how to
10 | farm, how to make everything work. The Department of Indian
11 | Affairs steps in and says, no, we don't have no economic
12 | development dollars. Then why did you lie to our parents and
13 | send us to a mission school and try to teach us, something
14 | you're not going to help us with in the future.

15 | Where are we going to stop, where are you going
16 | to get your answers today. Are we going to pay for it for the
17 | rest of our lives, just make it work. I lost, I did not lose my
18 | culture, did not lose my language, although they strapped
19 | enough, they strapped me enough times to try to take it out of
20 | me. And I often wonder you know, there's a Queen out there
21 | somewhere, that sends her people to sign on behalf of her to
22 | help us, what does she know about me, nothing.

23 | I wonder where civilization is going to take the
24 | Native people and what they are. They are human, they have a
25 | rule to protect their families and yet when the civilization

1 started coming in, the RCMP got involved, if you didn't send
2 your kids to the mission school they were going to get arrested.
3 I remember hearing my mom tell that to my dad, you got to take
4 them over there, they'll put you in jail if you don't take them
5 over there, blackmail or was it law.

6 How are you going to straighten that out? I
7 don't know how often or how far my children's going to go, but
8 I tried to share with them what happened over there. When I
9 share with them they just get as mad as I do. In order to heal
10 that part of every Native that went through a residential
11 school, how are you going to fix it. There's no fix for it.
12 Drums, the feathers, something they took away, all came back,
13 something they were afraid of, came back. We talk about abuse,
14 Indian starting abusing their own children when, after they came
15 back out of the residential school. What happened? Is that the
16 teachings of the civilized world, something's wrong here,
17 terribly, terribly wrong, and we call it civilization, law.

18 Q Mr. Chelsea, I wonder if you can tell us
19 something about the efforts that this community has made in
20 healing over the last number of years?

21 A I don't know, in 1972, I quit drinking, and
22 I guess if I share, I've shared so many times before, that when
23 I quit, my brother died, so I decided I was by myself. And when
24 I quit, I decided well, he use to always talk about what it was
25 like, in Gang Ranch area, no wine, no booze, no, just tea and

1 | water, he wanted to go back there. I decided I'm going to try
2 | to change the community on his behalf, they did alright, but it
3 | was always still there. My dad froze to death, alcohol again.
4 | But the changes that came with this place, I guess, wasn't easy,
5 | but to me it was for the better, the community. To return the
6 | feathers and the drums, sweat lodges and return all that to us,
7 | the songs granny use to sing while she was sewing or while she
8 | was making the hide, buckskin.

9 | I thought about that in the early '70s, we
10 | started working toward sobriety, it'll never come as long as
11 | there's alcohol. So we started looking at it that way and once
12 | in a while, back in the '70s, I use to often wish that somebody
13 | would come along and understand the things that we went through,
14 | the mission schooling, the hurts that everybody carries. I
15 | dealt with a lot of it through trainings, Nechi, and when we
16 | built what we have here today, we build that from the inside.
17 | Again that's, I often wonder about that, how long is it going to
18 | take for somebody to realize that we tried our damnest to
19 | survive after what happened to us.

20 | Don't ask me to forgive, don't ask me to forget,
21 | because there's so much there and you can't say of all those
22 | people in the graveyard, said it wasn't their fault. They had
23 | a hard time, today when we build on something, going after
24 | treaty, they didn't want to talk about mission school. They
25 | wanted to leave it out, we worded in a way that they leave it in

1 | there and yet again we're negotiating in their language. In my
2 | language you say something you can't change one word, the
3 | English language you can change word the whole thing will mean
4 | something else different. And that's something that's sacred,
5 | it's sacred, important, if they made it to take that away, the
6 | negotiations today would be in the opposite direction. And I
7 | know that, that's why we have to have that in there.

8 | Q Mr. Chelsea, those are all the questions I
9 | have for you, the Commissioners may have some questions for you
10 | before we're finished, thank you very much.

11 | COMMISSIONER JOHN: Just a quick question, I've
12 | seen a copy of the Framework Agreement and reference and one of
13 | the points for, I believe for negotiations, substantive issues
14 | for treaty negotiations. And I read one reference and it says,
15 | and I'm reading from 5.1.9, talks about programs and services
16 | including remedial, cultural and social programs, standards of
17 | authorities to deliver programs and services. Is that as far as
18 | the Government of Canada and British Columbia are prepared to go
19 | in addressing the residential school issue?

20 | A Yes. We worded it like that for a certain
21 | reason, there are other things in that whole Agreement that's,
22 | like you take certainty. And if they're going to talk about
23 | that then we're going to have to settle a lot of issues before
24 | it even leaves the culture and traditional issues of the
25 | Sxoxomic People.

1 COMMISSIONER JOHN: The only thing I was getting
2 at is that they didn't want to talk about mission residential
3 school and call it directly and put it up front and say, yes, we
4 will deal with it, they didn't say that?

5 A No, the provincial government and the
6 federal government both agreed that the wording we had for it
7 were, was too strong, too powerful, that they cannot deal with
8 it unless there's a court system that deals with it first. And
9 if that court system happens first, then we'll be able to deal
10 with it through compensation or anything like that before it
11 comes up on the table. But I think, when I look at that, the
12 way it's written now, they'll have to deal with it anyway, no
13 matter which way it goes.

14 COMMISSIONER JOHN: So they'd rather go to court
15 and talk about it there then sit down with you and talk about it
16 with you directly.

17 A With the amount of loss that's happened
18 already in our culture and traditional areas, and the lands that
19 we're claiming, yes they want to go court for it.

20 COMMISSIONER JOHN: Yes, thank you.

21 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Okay, thank you, Andy, for your
22 evidence and information, thank you very much. It's a very
23 special day for Andy, so if you could stay with us for a minute,
24 we're going to sing you a happy birthday our own way, not the
25 Sxoxomic way. We forgot how old you were but that doesn't

1 matter, so we're going to sing, Jeanie wants to sing, yes,
2 let's sing.

3 Don't forget the honouring ceremony tonight at
4 7:00 and you can smell the turkey from here, we're having turkey
5 dinner, so you're more than welcome to stay, so make sure you're
6 here at 7:00 pm, thank you.

7 --- MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:26 PM

May 21 1997
Alkali Lake, BC

ALKALI LAKE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL INQUIRY

Grand Chief Ed John
Doctor J. Coutoure
Judge C. Barnett

Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner.

INQUIRY

Brad Wicks

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Richard Rogers

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Joe Morrison

Counsel Assisting Inquiry

Key West Reporting Service
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Duncan, BC V9L 4T7

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1 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 9:20 AM

2 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Can we get everybody to grab a
3 seat, please. Good morning, we'll get on with the morning
4 session, I was smiling because I thought priests were going to
5 open the prayers this morning. But we know we've had Father Jim
6 with us drumming for so many years that we will maybe have him
7 sing us a song, I don't know if he's up to that. We'll start
8 with an opening prayer by Father Jim, if you could all stand
9 please.

10 (OPENING PRAYER)

11 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Father Jim, were you
12 going to sing us a drum song?

13 FATHER JIM: Yes, but not by myself.

14 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Do you want us to support you,
15 Father Jim, okay, we will support you, Father Jim.

16 (DRUM SONG)

17 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Well done, Father Jim. Waiting
18 to see if Father Jim picks up his hat, you don't need to yet but
19 people need to know why it's there. We're blessing Father Jim's
20 hat in a special way, we're hoping and praying that this is the
21 only piece of clothing he ever loses, is his hat, so we're
22 praying for you, Father Jim. Thank you, we'll have opening
23 remarks this morning and we're really glad, Father Douglas, that
24 you can join us to address our people, Father Douglas.

25 FATHER DOUGLAS: Well first I would like to thank

1 the Elders and Chief Marilyn for welcoming us to Shuswap
2 territory and to address the Commissioners and everybody
3 gathered here. My name is Bob Douglas, most of the people on
4 this reserve know me as Father Bob, I don't think they even knew
5 my last name is Douglas, or just Father sometimes, but most of
6 my relatives here call me Bob and most of my friends here just
7 call me Bob.

8 I was asked to come today because Charlene had
9 sent an invitation to the Arch Bishop of Vancouver, Adam Exner
10 (phonetic), who at one time was the Bishop of Kamloops. And he
11 couldn't make it because of a heavy confirmation schedule so he
12 asked me to represent him as observer here, and so I've been
13 observing, and it's been good. Now that that formal part is
14 over, I'd just like to revert to being Bob and do a personal
15 kind of reflection on my feelings of being here and what I've
16 been hearing.

17 Alkali Lake and this particular Shuswap territory
18 has something very special about it and it always has.
19 Yesterday as I was speaking with one of the counselors, Paul, I
20 said, you know there's an energy here, it's like a magnetism,
21 there's something magnetic about Alkali Lake that draws you back
22 and it's a good energy. And things are happening and we were
23 saying, you know, yes, there's three things happening at once
24 here and it's really something.

25 And I was reflecting last night and thinking

1 about it and the Hoppie people (phonetic) in Arizona, Nevada,
2 call this a very special energy and I don't know if the Shuswap
3 people have a word for that energy. But the energy is a
4 transformant of energy, it's something that transforms society,
5 the people and the call it after the trickster, they call it
6 coyote energy. And I don't know if that's the name that I would
7 name it here, but it's something that is very magnetic and
8 beautiful and something that's special.

9 So it's that energy that brings us back and I was
10 just thinking just ahead of time, it's been a long time since
11 I've been here and it's good to be home, in a sense, there's a
12 feeling of being home. What I've been hearing in the past few
13 days, Monday and today, have been very painful at times, very
14 hard to hear at times. And yet, although I've been hearing it
15 for sometime and being at many residential school meetings and
16 inquiries, that an understanding, a deeper level of
17 understanding continues to develop in me. And I think what I've
18 heard this time is the need for the ongoing healing to take
19 place, that more and more people are just getting in touch with
20 it.

21 Denial is a very, very strong part of our, every
22 persons background and the atrocities and the cruelty that took
23 place is something that's very easy to deny and to run from and
24 to cover up with a variety of other abuses, substance and other
25 things. And so I've been hearing that in a different way this

1 time and it's good for me to hear.

2 The other thing that I would just like to reflect
3 on briefly is, as a member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary
4 Immaculate, I find that I have within myself a tug of war going
5 on at times, because I have a need to support my brothers in
6 their journey as well. And I thought how do I do that, what can
7 I do, I can stand there for them at times, because they're a
8 part of my extended family in their healing process as well.
9 And yet the commitment to victims has to be a precedent and the
10 welfare of victims has to be a precedent as well.

11 On several occasions now the Oblates and the
12 Catholic Bishops of Canada have made a variety of statements and
13 the first one that I think the Oblates made was with the Lac St.
14 Anne (phonetic) apology, and within that apology they
15 recommitted themselves to the First Nations people of Canada, to
16 stand with them and to journey with them. And I think sometimes
17 that it's up to those of us within the Order to push our
18 brothers into that stance but also it's up to the First Nations
19 people to call that forward as well.

20 And just as I was coming up I received a letter
21 that the Bishops of Canada had written to Ron Irwin on the Royal
22 Commission Report and backing the report and the
23 recommendations, and asking when things would start to be
24 implemented. And they also made in that letter another
25 commitment to the First Nations people of Canada, to walk with,

1 to journey with and to support and so I think that they have to
2 be called upon to honour that, that commitment as well.

3 Just in closing with these remarks, when I pull
4 everything together and I'll probably be reflecting on this for
5 some time, and I hear it and I heard the witnesses as they were
6 going through things, many of whom I know and many of whom I've
7 had an experience with, here at Alkali and in other places.
8 That the healing is happening and to see changes and to see the
9 beauty that's taking place in people's lives is good and I think
10 that that represents a hope. And I believe that the people of
11 Esketemc, the people of the Shuswap territory and the First
12 Nations people across Canada have a bright and beautiful future,
13 but to call on allies and to make the churches accountable,
14 responsible and to stand with and to journey with.

15 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you very much, Father
16 Douglas and Father Jim. We'll call our first witness of the
17 morning, Phyllis Chelsea and Fred Johnson, Phyllis, if you could
18 join Fred.

19 PHYLLIS CHELSEA; Sworn

20 EXAMINATION BY BRAD WICKS

21 Q Mrs. Chelsea, I know you came forward this
22 morning and asked to have an opportunity to say some things. I
23 understand that you're the wife of Andy Chelsea who testified
24 yesterday, is that correct?

25 A Yes, I am.

1 Q Okay, did you go to residential school,
2 yourself, Mrs. Chelsea?

3 A Yes, I did.

4 Q When was that?

5 A From about 1950 to 1960.

6 Q I wonder if you can tell us something about
7 your memories of your residential school experience?

8 A My memories about going to school there is,
9 I think the most painful one is just being left there the first
10 day and knowing that every year this was something that was
11 going to happen. Because that's how it was, is watching the
12 wagon and knowing that, that's where you're going to be for 10
13 months and at the age of seven.

14 Q When we spoke earlier you told me about
15 having your clothes taken away from you, I wonder if you can
16 share that with the Commissioners?

17 A The regular practice that was there for
18 everybody was that when you went there, your parents took
19 clothes for you, bought you new clothes and when you got there
20 those were taken away from you. And I remember ending up
21 somehow, probably because I was, not knowing how to get in there
22 and get what was proper or the proper size, I ended up with a
23 pair of shoes and were an inch too big. And they just took away
24 our clothes and that's how it was. And I remember learning how
25 to pray, how to go to church, even though it was really cold in

1 the church I went with my cousins to church every morning.

2 And what I remember is saying a prayer that one
3 day I'm going to wake up and those shoes are going to mended.
4 And Andy laughs about that when I talk about that, I never
5 talked about that for, oh, 20 years because I thought, boy how
6 dumb I was. But at seven you believe what people tell you and
7 they tell you that miracles happen. My shoes never were mended
8 but I remember going to communion every day and putting my shoe
9 one in front of the other to hide the bigger hole.

10 Q Mrs. Chelsea, I understand that you're,
11 something was done with your hair as well when you went to the
12 Mission, is that, can you tell us about that?

13 A I went there, I know that I didn't have
14 head lice, but it was also general practice that they, they took
15 away your hair and they cut it and I remember knowing that
16 there's nothing, there's nobody that change that, that's how it
17 was because that's what they did to you.

18 Q Okay.

19 A And I know also that I was taught and today
20 I still believe that when you go to the barber shop and people
21 cut your hair, that you take your hair and I still do that today
22 if I have my hair cut in town, I ask them for my hair so I can
23 take it home and burn it. Because that's how I was taught and
24 those things were immediately things that were stripped of the
25 way that I was brought up and didn't have support around and

1 just darn well learning how to survive at the Mission.

2 Q Now, did you ever see any instances of
3 abuse of any kind at the school?

4 A I saw a lot of abuse with a lot of people,
5 and generally those were with people that either didn't
6 understand or really, really stubborn. They, to me, were the
7 ones that got the worst of the beatings that I saw. And I went
8 to school with Andy and my brother, we were all in the same
9 grade.

10 Q Can you describe some of the kinds of
11 beatings you saw?

12 A What I saw then, every day that I wondered
13 how they would, how they could just not just do what Indians do
14 but I saw them, not bend and stand up to the nuns and the
15 priests that were wanting them to say or to read or to
16 understand things that I think now, that when you're brought up
17 Shuswap, you don't understand some of the things that you're
18 being directed to do. I saw Andy being, I guess they had a big
19 budget for rulers because they broke all the rulers and my
20 brother Gordie and Andy, that's what I remember. And I saw that
21 and today when I see Andy for how hard he is and how strong he
22 is, I saw, I saw him as a little boy and my brother just survive
23 in those daily beatings that I saw in class.

24 But I learned how to just pull within myself and
25 just do what I needed to do to survive there.

1 Q Would you see beatings everyday of people
2 in the school?

3 A Yes, I could say that I saw that everyday.

4 Q And where on their bodies would they be
5 beaten?

6 A What I saw, Andy and Gordie, through was
7 being pulled on the ears and getting the rulers on their backs
8 and on their hands. And for some of the newer kids that I saw,
9 that didn't understand the language, and didn't know how to say
10 yes or no, those are the ones that I realized in my mind, I
11 wonder why they have to do this because as they spoke, and
12 strapped us for not speaking our — for not knowing English, that
13 they were there, the nuns speaking in French.

14 And it didn't click in my mind but I knew that
15 something was really wrong with what they were doing with us.
16 And I think the major thing that I feel about, about the
17 physical abuse that I felt there was being strapped for speaking
18 my language. And I always had older family around me, cousins
19 that directed what I needed to do and, to me, I think I was
20 lucky in that way that they were there for me.

21 Q Yesterday, Mrs. Chelsea, we saw some
22 photographs of smiling faces of children at the residential
23 school of St. Joseph's Mission, from your recollection were
24 children happy at the school?

25 A There probably was times, yes, when we were

1 given the freedom to be together and to have privacy and talk of
2 home and family. But I think, all in all, there was a lot of
3 sadness that I saw, that today effects our worlds and the
4 families and that I see all the problems that go on, to me, are
5 indirectly from the way that things were for~~ous~~ at the
6 residential school.

7 Q Mrs. Chelsea, I understand that you may
8 wish to say something about the impact of the residential school
9 on your own situation and on the community, is there anything
10 you'd like to share with the Commissioners?

11 A For me, the things that were imposed that
12 took away from how I knew things were at home was the way that
13 things were totally directed and how you, how you sat, how you
14 prayed and how you made every move. Those were things that I
15 didn't experience at home, but at the moment that I got there I
16 knew that things were different, that no longer there was a
17 grandma or there was no more mom and dad there to support. You
18 either had to find a way or fight and the ones that I saw
19 physically were the ones that fought.

20 But for me I learned how to pull inside and pray
21 the way that I was taught and to know that far away somewhere
22 that I had a belief that my mom and dad cared about me. But for
23 the longest time as a teenager I watched that and I saw that and
24 I was bitter against my mom and dad for what I saw to be given
25 away and that, yes, I guess I'm not worthy, they just gave me

1 away. And mom and dad were just words, they didn't have any
2 meaning for me for the longest time. They told me that you're
3 going home with these people that are your family, but as a
4 teenager I came home to things that really changed where I saw
5 people were beginning to drink and my mom and dad going through
6 a lot of changes that weren't the best.

7 I learned how to come from shame, not introducing
8 my parents or even knowing that I was Shuswap. Today my job is
9 Shuswap language teacher and I feel like it's just blowing in
10 the wind trying to teach the language, it's not seen as
11 important anymore. And I feel and I see the struggle that there
12 is, if we're going to keep our language. When I think about
13 that, I guess because we're going through so much healing about
14 a whole lot of stuff, the way things were and the way things
15 are, things that been part of Alkali Lake, that our language is
16 not important anymore, those are the things that we're dwelling
17 on.

18 And I remember, I remember the day that I looked
19 for my cousin, I went out there and I yelled and yelled looking
20 for him, I knew that the wind couldn't hear me -- I knew that he
21 couldn't hear me. I sat there and I cried and yelled, looking
22 for him to answer, inside knowing that he could no longer could
23 hear me. Next day they found him, he had hung himself, and I
24 feel like that's the feeling that I have. Rushing off to town
25 everyday, wondering if that's making any kind of impact at all,

1 whether those are the important things. Inside I know it is but
2 I feel like there's not enough emphasis on teaching language in
3 this reserve. I think there's only about three or four people
4 that are Shuswap language teachers and I think in the next few
5 years, when we're all gone, there isn't going to be anymore and
6 I don't know, you go from day to day believing that you're doing
7 something good and not really knowing how far it's going to go,
8 that's how I feel about what I do.

9 And those things, to me, are the biggest impact
10 that I feel from the residential school, losing the language and
11 having families torn apart. And if this hearing is what they're
12 going to, that honestly and that something truly will happen,
13 then I guess it's good. I see so many things, so many violence
14 going on, to me I know it's directly involved with the way that
15 a lot of Native people grew up, taken the identity, telling them
16 that they're not good enough and that who they are and how they
17 pray, what they eat, is all not good, those things, the things
18 that are no longer there.

19 Today you see everybody rushing off to
20 McDonald's and it's kind of like the main, main focus today.
21 Somehow the sense of loss in life and that this place called
22 Alkali Lake is, again, is what they say in the movies,
23 artificial. And I know how we come together and how we deal
24 with all the things that have happened, it's our language and
25 who we are, Shuswap people will be there years from now. But I

1 | see in Alkali Lake there's a loss of family, so many things that
2 | have happened that people don't even acknowledge family anymore.
3 | So many things have happened through all the things that make us
4 | who we are here, and I guess sitting and talking about it is one
5 | way to become stronger, acknowledge one another's family. I
6 | think we're too busy trying to live or going to the government
7 | and how we deal with one another and all the different programs
8 | that's imposed on reserves today that just tears away from the
9 | solidness that we have when we were true families a long time
10 | ago. I have family here that we don't even acknowledge one
11 | another anymore and I don't have family here anymore.

12 | But I guess when I look at that, I had family
13 | after I sobered up and my parents, mom sobered up and my brother
14 | and my sister sobered up, I knew what family was for 13 years
15 | before they died. And if the government is ever going to pay
16 | for tearing away the family, I don't know what that's going to
17 | look like, looks pretty impossible from what I see and how I
18 | feel.

19 | Andy and I have been together for 34 years and
20 | indirectly I have been there and I've seen and I've witnessed
21 | all the bitterness of how things were, the residential school
22 | and the way that Andy was treated, I seen that and I feel it and
23 | all the beatings that I've gone through, I've had to learn how
24 | to deal with and let go of those things, there's still scars I
25 | carry inside. And I say well, that happened to him, so maybe

1 that's why I'm here and I'm the one that's getting beat up, I
2 see that but I know when I look past that, that Andy has a lot
3 of strength and his strengths are from being out there, doing
4 what he likes doing, working with the horses and being out there
5 on the land. Seems like we're at a time where we're fighting to
6 survive and build something good for our children, our
7 grandchildren.

8 But I feel like there's going to be a loss,
9 because I feel like it's going to be without the language, I
10 only have six students in Grade 11 and 12 in town that I work
11 with in the Shuswap language, those aren't priorities anymore.

12 Q Is there anything else you'd like to say?

13 A Pardon?

14 Q Is there anything else you'd like to say?

15 A I think that I see that any individual
16 growth or community growth that has to happen, has to happen
17 individually. And I guess getting together like this or for me
18 with Alkali people is a way to go past all the things of what we
19 lost at the residential school and all the effects of how the
20 community has been over the last 30 years and those choices we
21 have to make ourselves on how we're going to go about that.
22 That sometimes we have to reach out and go on, I guess that's
23 what we're doing here is reaching out, trusting the government
24 and trusting people that somehow things are going to be made, made
25 correct or dealt with.

1 But I know that some of the strengths that I get
2 is from going out and being with people who want to hear and
3 listen to ways that they can help themselves, to me those are
4 where my strengths are, so people who believe in it. But at
5 Alkali Lake I think we've gone through so much hell, hurting one
6 another that it's hard to turn to one another for help. So to
7 me what I see and what I'm doing here is something that's really
8 irregular to come here and to talk openly and honestly with
9 people. Because I don't feel like, I don't feel like I have the
10 support and the strength here to always be coming from my best,
11 it's too much that has happened here.

12 But I'm glad that Freddy and different people are
13 willing to be there, do the circles that have to happen, things
14 that have to happen here. I told Andy, no, I don't want to go
15 down there, I told him I don't, I don't feel the support and I
16 don't think there's anybody, Alkali Lake cares one way or the
17 other about my life. I think it's really sad it's the way
18 things are but that's how it is, it's too much in-fighting in
19 Alkali Lake, too much things that need to come together here.
20 So I stay away, find other ways to hold things together for me,
21 and for me right now it's being with those young people in town
22 that I work with.

23 Q Mrs. Chelsea, I don't have anything else to
24 ask you but the Commissioners may have some questions for you
25 before you step down. But in the meantime I'd like to thank you

1 very much for coming forward and telling us your story.

2 A Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: My sincere thanks for your
4 sharing. One of the questions it raises in my mind and it's
5 just a general question and I say it tentatively. I think
6 perhaps it ties in with something that's been undermined or
7 underscored several times over the last few days, and that's the
8 need for resources, more resources and no one said better
9 resources but maybe also better resources, more resources. And
10 within that very broad kind of need, in terms of sustaining,
11 assuring and developing the healing process is the question of
12 burnout and whether or not people are attentive to burnout,
13 burnout on the part of staff, resources, through the workers of
14 all kinds of whatever kind when working with the individual,
15 with his or her family.

16 Burnout on the part of the individual who's in
17 recovery, there has, there are cycles to growth, there's cycles
18 to recovery, especially which one has to learn to respect, to
19 watch for and allow so that burnout doesn't occur. And I use
20 burnout as a very broad term, the facets of burnout are you get
21 overwhelmed by the sheer amount of change, you forget to look
22 back to see where you've come from, little things start to
23 happen. You see only or get absorbed and taken by all that what
24 remains to be done, and once again forget to look back and no
25 one shows us how to look back, no one reminds us how to look

1 back to see where we've come from. Or to look down and see how
2 far up the side of the mountain we have climbed, so taken is
3 everyone become by the effort and the, how absorbing that effort
4 is.

5 I'm not, don't take me as being presumptuous,
6 Mrs. Chelsea, I can remember not too many years ago and then
7 many years ago when in Alberta, where I'm from, in the '50s
8 there was nothing. You would go home at night and sometimes
9 fall asleep crying in black rage and despair in the human sense
10 because there was nothing, just nothing. And then once things
11 started to happen in the '70s and into the '80s and there began
12 to be something, Native organizations, political and service
13 organizations, then the healing programs, training programs came
14 first. You know, healing programs, counseling, addictions
15 counseling came first and that led into, broaden into a
16 substance abuse counseling and that in turn at the same time led
17 into, we got to work with the families and so family therapy
18 became a thing and then community development was always a
19 thing.

20 Well as that was happening and the political
21 stuff was happening in my generation, my generation being those
22 who are in their 60's now, I'll never see 66 again. We would
23 stop to blue sky, to take a look, to how far have we come and
24 where do we have to go and are we in the right direction. If we
25 need to keep going and of course we needed to keep going and we

1 often had trouble saying to ourselves or concluding for
2 ourselves, this is the right direction to keep going. And
3 especially just back in the late '60s, early '70s, when we
4 hadn't discovered Elders yet, no one had begun that journey back
5 to the Elders. And then of course our world transformed which
6 that nice word that Bob used this morning, the Elders brought to
7 all of us, transformative energy and the beginnings of
8 transformation.

9 And still there were times we would sit and ask
10 ourselves what will it ever be like 10 years from now, 20 years
11 from now, 30 years from now. And many times we would, my
12 generation would say, I still don't know what I'm going to be
13 able to tell my grandchildren. Now 10 years ago, five years
14 ago, we began to understand more deep and we could see better
15 and further down the road that, yes, now I have things to tell
16 my grandchildren. So I guess I'm making more of a comment than
17 a question and I use the word 'burnout' and the attentiveness to
18 burnout.

19 And one final thing, the language is central and
20 will always be central and it is the carrier of just about
21 everything and when you lose the language, don't learn the
22 language. Like myself, I don't speak Cree, my mother's Cree,
23 raised in a Cree speaking village, didn't learn to speak Cree
24 for some mysterious reason. I know that if there's something I
25 do not have and will never have, but that's no excuse for not

1 doing something about the language. And people, that's hard
2 work and people give up on that or don't want to become involved
3 in that or and in some communities the language has already
4 died, whereas in others and this is the good news, it's starting
5 to spark in communities around the development, the recovery and
6 the development of the language.

7 The best example I know, best model I know on a
8 national basis right now are the Inuit people, Indians are
9 always reluctant to, you know, get involved with the Inuit.
10 There's that ages old thing about Inuit up there and the real
11 people being down here. But the Inuit sort of ignored the rest
12 of Canada and sort of like the bumblebee who, according to laws
13 of physics doesn't know how to fly but the bee doesn't know that
14 and goes ahead and flies anyway. Well Inuit weren't supposed to
15 be able to do all kinds of things but they didn't know that,
16 they went ahead and did it anyway. And one of the things, the
17 marvelous things, electronics and communications, computers and
18 developing their language to keep pace with the technology that
19 over night came bombing into their culture.

20 They're a model of what, under piling up fast,
21 accumulating odds that seemed to be destined to destroy everyone
22 and particular the culture and the language, they said hold on
23 a minute, and they're overcoming it and in a smart way. It is
24 discouraging that many, many of our people are not really
25 interested in the language. But that's no excuse and I'm just

1 saying that there's good news and you got to stop once and a
2 while and take stock. I'm kind of glad I'm getting old, you
3 know, I really am, I often wish I had my 20 year old male body
4 again, but and I have got an order in for a set of, new set of
5 knees, but they're having trouble somewhere locating a pair I
6 guess.

7 But seriously, what I'm glad about is I've burned
8 out three times, seriously, in my working career, you would have
9 thought I'd have caught on the first time but I didn't. And
10 the second time I didn't catch on, after the third time I caught
11 on, and I'm glad I've caught on. Don't perceive me of being
12 presumptuous, I can get talking and never stop and I'll stop
13 there. I'm glad I had the opportunity and privilege of hearing
14 you, thank you.

15 A There was one more thing that I think I
16 just wanted to bring up that I realize and I see is that knowing
17 that through all the hard times and the ways that we're there at
18 the Mission, that I've gotten a whole lot stronger from becoming
19 aware of them and knowing that there are strengths I have
20 because I've survived that. And I've made peace with my mom and
21 my dad and how things were, how I thought they were to me, I
22 know that's not how it was. But still today is apparent that
23 there's challenges about how I feel about language and whether
24 we're still going have that a few years from now.

25 And indirectly, again, the affects of what's

1 | happened immediately to my family is I feel like that some of
2 | that goes back to the residential school and how life was and
3 | how the effects have been to individuals and families, that are
4 | a part of this reserve. And that indirectly that my family has
5 | survived again, in going through the sexual abuse that happened
6 | to my grand -- to grandchildren recently. And to me that if
7 | there is a whole lot within our community, I guess that I don't
8 | know anything about for the way people are and the way people
9 | have been to my family is that healing needs to be there to
10 | happen for people.

11 | But that indirectly to me, again we're surviving
12 | that, we're being more aware and that there's just no end to the
13 | growth, I guess, in knowing that I'm there yet still today as a
14 | grandma, telling them that they're special. And I just wanted
15 | to add that.

16 | COMMISSIONER JOHN: Phyllis, Edward John.
17 | Phyllis, in my own lifetime I've had heros and when I was young
18 | I had different heros and as I grow older I have new heros. And
19 | two of those are you and your husband, for the kinds of things
20 | that you've done. And I want to read to you, what you've been
21 | saying this morning is really gone to a deep part in me. And
22 | this here is dated 1958, Ottawa, and it's called 'Residential
23 | Education for Indian Acculturation'. I guess the Department of
24 | Indian Affairs brought together Oblate principals and perhaps
25 | teachers and others. And the background and objectives reads,

1 "Ever since the first permanent European
2 settlement in Canada, efforts have been made to
3 school the children of the Aborigines in ways
4 of, in the ways of the newcomers. Both Church
5 and State felt it was their responsibility to
6 christianize as well as civilize the poor
7 ignorant dwellers of the North American forests.
8 The religious conversion did take place and
9 quite successfully as evidenced by the fact that
10 98 per cent of the population legally considered
11 Indian belongs to one or another of the
12 Christian churches. The cultural transformation
13 usually referred to as education is still
14 lacking. True, our Indian fellow men do not
15 hunt with bow and arrow anymore, nor do they
16 travel exclusively by birch bark canoes and
17 snowshoes or dress in leather leggings. But
18 only 40 per cent of the adult population has
19 achieved literacy which is the first level of
20 our cultural standards. Relatively few use
21 English or French as an ordinary vehicle of
22 conversation."

23 So, see there was a plan in place for you and there was a plan
24 in place for Andy, there was a plan in place for Fred, there was
25 a plan in place for me. And that part of that plan was

1 residential school and to use that to achieve these objectives.

2 And this is not a comment I guess, it's more of
3 a, not a question, it's more of a comment. And I look back and
4 hear that pain that you have, and I try to think back to the
5 time when yourself and Andy and others started to bring the
6 community, try to sober them up. Try to sober up the community,
7 I heard my friend, Fred, yesterday, Monday, telling me about the
8 wine and how it was brought case by case, house to house. And
9 the sobering up started with a few, one or two or three or four
10 people, just a few people. And I think back that not everybody
11 one day just sobered up, it did happen over time and it did
12 include a few people who began the process.

13 And I think that there are going to be ups and
14 downs in that, in that process. And so I draw that issue and
15 put it back to the language that you were concerned about, the
16 language, those six or seven students you were talking about.
17 Maybe it is those six or seven students who one day will also
18 bring the language back, you know we live in a world of optimism
19 and we learn to live in a world of hope. And you think that,
20 you know there's a lot of outside pressures out there, the young
21 people, the teenagers have a lot of other things that they could
22 be doing. Like when we were teenagers, there's a lot of other
23 things that we could be doing.

24 But I also hear in those young people, I heard
25 one young lady yesterday talking about language and culture, how

1 | important that was to her. So I think there's a willingness
2 | there, the trick I guess is how to do that, how to make it
3 | happen. And we were sobering people up, what we did was we took
4 | them out of here, maybe not just here but in my village and
5 | other villages, put them into treatment centres. I listened to
6 | Cyril yesterday, Cyril Paul, he said he went to treatment five
7 | times and is still working through issues.

8 | So, to my way of thinking is to keep that alive,
9 | I am glad that you're teaching that. And I guess kind of an
10 | observer, making this comment from a distance, watching how
11 | things happen because I think sometimes, Joe is right, that when
12 | you're immersed and you're caught up right in this crucible of
13 | change, that it's really difficult to see how things are
14 | changing. And I make those comments, more out of hope and
15 | things that will change toward the way that the people want to
16 | see this change happen. Because there was a plan in place and
17 | that plan was to get rid of your language, that plan was to get
18 | rid of Indian in you.

19 | And it may be that we'll bump up against walls
20 | and it may be that like the sobering up, eventually when people
21 | dried out, they had to sober up. And I think to perhaps maybe,
22 | to think about the change and the language learning as something
23 | that, that takes place at many different places, one of which is
24 | in the home. And like sobering up, like the changes that took
25 | place, that did take place within the person, with one person,

1 | you were talking about one individual at a time.

2 | And maybe I'm just being optimistic as one
3 | individual, and maybe I'm putting out hope that I would like to
4 | see out there. But we have to hope, we have to be able to
5 | promise ourselves things for the future, promise ourselves
6 | things for our children and our grandchildren. And as we pass
7 | on our world to the young people, to the young children and to
8 | the grandchildren, we have to pass something on to them and part
9 | of that should be hope and part of that should be the struggle
10 | to continue to change what's going, what's happened here.

11 | Because somebody else did a very good job,
12 | somebody else had a very good plan for us and they did a very
13 | good job in what they were doing. And we're faced with that
14 | now, when we look back and see what went on and we're trying to
15 | look into the future to see how Shuswap would continue as a
16 | language into the future.

17 | So I do encourage you in your work that you're
18 | doing, with those six or seven students. Sometimes you maybe
19 | end up giving up hope or feel that it's, that the effort is not
20 | worthwhile. But you know when I look at this country and I look
21 | at the kind of resources they put behind teaching French and
22 | teaching English in the schools, because the country, the
23 | government puts in a lot of money to teach those young children.
24 | It starts in the family but when they get into school, they
25 | teach them to learn to speak English and to write English and

1 | there's a lot of teachers trained to do that. But what hasn't
2 | really happened properly in this country is the same resources
3 | for Aboriginal languages, like Shuswap or Carrier or Sekani or
4 | Gitxan, Cree, Inuit.

5 | So I just make those comments, I really don't
6 | have any questions of you, I was making merely an observation on
7 | my part. And again I thank you very much for your words.

8 | COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Phyllis, I have known you
9 | for many years and like Chief John, I too, have regarded you and
10 | Andy as heros and you deserve to be seen in that light. I think
11 | many people beyond this room think they know the Alkali Lake
12 | story, they've watched the videos on TV. And the two of you
13 | have the reputations, of course, of being pillars of strength.
14 | So, when this inquiry was announced, I have heard people say
15 | things such as, what do these people want, what do these people
16 | need. After all, isn't Alkali Lake something of a miracle
17 | community, after all, you know, aren't people like the Chelsea's
18 | in that community.

19 | I can only imagine how difficult it must be for
20 | people here, not just you and Andy, but including the two of you
21 | to lay your hearts bare, as it were. I'm not certain if Andy
22 | ever has been able to say some of the things before that he said
23 | yesterday. I have, as you know, heard some of your own thoughts
24 | in another setting, but today you have spoken very publicly and
25 | yesterday Andy did the same. And people perhaps can reflect on

1 | what you have said.

2 | In one sense, at least, this inquiry, I see, as
3 | something of a cry for help from the Alkali Lake community but
4 | not just for the Alkali Lake community. I think this community
5 | is saying that there really is a need still existing for help to
6 | deal with issues which for a number of reasons can't be resolved
7 | just within the community. That society in a broader sense
8 | really needs to step in and try to correct as best it can now be
9 | done, some of the terrible wrongs that happened in years past
10 | and the results of which still continue.

11 | I know that the evidence that we've heard here
12 | these past three days is being transcribed and when those
13 | transcripts are available, I would like to think that somebody
14 | could persuade persons such as Premier Clark, the Prime
15 | Minister, whoever he or she may be after the elections, to read
16 | if not all of the evidence that we have heard, the testimony of
17 | yourselves, you and Andy and Les Peters and perhaps, just
18 | perhaps some eyes could begin to be opened, and hearts also. If
19 | people would take the time to understand, rather than to say,
20 | what more do these people want and what more do these people
21 | need, haven't they got a lot of help already and don't they have
22 | people within the communities such as the Chelsea's who ought to
23 | be able to do anything that still needs to be done.

24 | CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you, Cunliffe Barnett,
25 | Phyllis on behalf of the community we'd like to thank you for

1 taking time to come down and give us your evidence, but also
2 take time to acknowledge you. I hear your pain, I hear your
3 hurt, I hear your loneliness, but we also need you to know that
4 it's your strength and guidance for the last 20, 25 years, that
5 have brought us to days like today. That in order to improve
6 the quality of our sobriety, that it means dealing with the
7 residential school issues, it means dealing with the abuse that
8 we've suffered in our own homes. And you need to know that
9 you've provided a light for our people and we honour you for
10 that and we thank you for that, Phyllis, we thank Andy, thank
11 you very much.

12 Thank you, Phyllis, we will now call our next
13 witness before the break, Maggie Hodgson.

14 MAGGIE HODGSON; Sworn

15 EXAMINATION BY RICHARD ROGERS

16 Q Ms. Hodgson, I'll be conducting your
17 interview this aft -- this morning actually, a bit ahead of
18 myself. I've been familiar with you for a number of years and
19 I have had a great understanding --

20 A Could I interrupt you, I forgot my glasses.

21 Q I guess she must need to do lipreading.

22 A Sorry about that.

23 Q Maggie, as I was stating, I've known you
24 personally for some years now and I've been able to see some of
25 the effects and the work that you've provided to the Native

1 communities. And the purpose that we hope to hear from you
2 today is from your experience and your knowledge of the programs
3 that are available today, to not only places such as Alkali Lake
4 here but to the greater community in Canada. So, perhaps the
5 best place for us to start would be if you could give us a
6 little bit of background about who you are and your involvement
7 with healing centres and whatnot.

8 A Okay, I've worked in this business in terms
9 community development for 27 years, I worked in the court system
10 for 10 years and within the community development and healing
11 for 17. I was the Director of Nechi Institute for 15 of the 17
12 years, I've worked nationally and internationally. I worked in
13 my own community, which is the Nadleh Whut'en Band up in Nautley
14 (phonetic), BC, I live in Edmonton. And I believe the what I
15 have to offer today comes out of being a wife and a mother and
16 an aunty within my community and within my family and my
17 experience within that context.

18 Q You described the Nechi Institute, could
19 you tell us just a little bit about that, because from what I
20 understand it is quite a famous institute and it's provided
21 quite a great deal of education and experience to not only
22 victims but also to potential counselors and so on.

23 A Nechi Institute was set up by a gentleman
24 by the name of Eric Shwitt (phonetic), in response to a need for
25 training in 1974 and training of counselors. And it's board and

1 staff are Aboriginal from across Canada, they provide
2 approximately 900 days of training per year throughout Canada.
3 There's also a department that conducts research in addictions
4 and recovery and wellness and another department that's involved
5 in health promotions with 1,500 communities across Canada and
6 around approximately 700,000 people that are involved in that
7 particular campaign.

8 Q I understand that the institute is located
9 in Edmonton, is that correct?

10 A That's right.

11 Q I spoke to you earlier and you indicated to
12 me as well that you prefer to be addressed as Maggie, so I'll
13 continue on that line. Maggie, from your vast experience, could
14 you please give us your understanding of what is happening with
15 the Native communities in Canada and particular the problems
16 that the people are suffering?

17 A When I was first asked if I would do this,
18 I thought about where to start from and when I first started
19 with Nechi there was an old man, an Elder, and his name was Ed
20 Burnstick. And he said everything is related, because the
21 things that I'm going to say, it's going to appear that I'm
22 jumping around but it's all related to the core of reaffirming
23 and strengthening the spirit of our people and spirit of
24 Canadians. Because I don't know that we're separate from you
25 guys, with all due respect.

1 I've heard a fair amount of the evidence in this
2 last couple of days about the church and while they were the
3 messenger, I think the man that issued the message was the
4 Canadian government. An historian talked about that apparently
5 the first day and I wasn't here that morning. And I think that
6 that's really important because the impact of -- the social
7 impact of outlying ceremony had the potential of removing our
8 means to heal ourselves, I believe. And fortunately, those
9 ceremonies have been restored by many of our old people and also
10 have been restored by people fasting and being given those
11 ceremonies back through the grandfathers and grandmothers
12 speaking to us in the fast. So I think the ceremonies and the
13 language have been at a esc -- they have been restored at a
14 phenomenal rate very quickly and it may not seem quickly.

15 And those are the formal ceremonies, whether
16 that's drum dance or whether it's singing. But I think that one
17 of the teachings that is so simple, I think that it's
18 complicated, it is very complicated but it seems simple. It's
19 easy for psychologists or whoever to dismiss that teaching and
20 one of the teachings is that we have natural healing medicines
21 that don't cost anything. And one of them is using the wind
22 spirit of talking and laughing and singing and yelling and
23 crying and dancing. None of which costs money and all of which
24 have happened in the last couple of days, very naturally.

25 Q I think what you're referring to is that

1 we've had a number of healing ceremonies and so on that which
2 weren't necessarily picked up by the formal inquiry here. Would
3 that -- is that what you're referring to here?

4 A Yes, yes. And within the context of those
5 ceremonies, sometimes you think is very difficult and like one
6 of the things was talking and that's communicating. And I'll
7 talk about that, you know, I think in the early '70s we, to
8 '80s, we moved really fast into sobriety in many communities.
9 And we went through a period as a community of celebrating that
10 and saying, wow, you know, have we ever done a great job. And
11 I think that step is important, I think the Alkali Lake video is
12 important because it was a public statement of saying we're
13 celebrating.

14 Then the second step, after that initial
15 celebrating, whether it's an individual that sobers up or
16 whether it's community or Nation, becomes a challenging hard
17 work, challenging hard work from a perspective of going within
18 one's self in one's community. And Charlene talked about that
19 last night, Phyllis talked about that this morning. There are
20 many things that happened before sobriety and there are many
21 things that happen after sobriety, out of people's loss of being
22 able to relate. Hurtful things that become very difficult to
23 sort out between families, within individual families and with
24 one's self after sobriety. And sometimes it's a private process
25 and sometimes it's a family process and sometimes it's a

1 community process. And I think that individuals and families
2 and communities are going through that right now, I'm going
3 through it. I never drank but going into the effects of my own
4 continuing healing process.

5 We just did a study of 1,000 Aboriginal youth, 26
6 per cent of them were involved in ceremony, I think that's
7 awesome, you know, you can say well, Jesus, that's not very many
8 compared to how many kids we have in our community, and that was
9 in the Province of Alberta. So the thing that Joe is talking
10 about, about sitting and looking down the mountain, how far
11 we've come, that's really important but it's challenging when
12 you don't feel like you can take another step.

13 When communities, like Alkali or another
14 community I worked in, in Southern BC, have issues that come up
15 from residential school. I think that it is very hard for
16 people to share with their families and their communities, some
17 of their experiences which carried a lot of shame for them until
18 eventually they learn they weren't responsible for it, someone
19 perpetuated that action. And again, that's the first step, it's
20 a difficult step and the process of them healing is a long term
21 process, it's a long term process.

22 The other night Charlene was talking about now
23 it's time that we start dealing with our own internal
24 relationship problems. And in that other community I worked in,
25 they became quite angry with me at one point in the workshop

1 | because I said it's easy, not easy but it's the first step to
2 | deal with that priest or that nun. Because they don't live in
3 | this community anymore and they're out there someplace, but the
4 | person carries them in their heart because of the pain that that
5 | person caused.

6 | What do we do as a community, what would I do as
7 | a grandmother when I find out my son has been abusing his
8 | children, sexually abusing his children. Do I get outraged with
9 | him the same way, do I turn my back on him, do I turn my back on
10 | my brother if he's done that. How does that healing process
11 | happen? That's one of the challenges and in the healing in
12 | communities, there's a lot of you know the easy targets of
13 | abuses is sexual abuse, you know, easy targets of abuses is
14 | strapping, that kind of thing that has happened that are very,
15 | very deeply scarring.

16 | When we talk about families and that second step,
17 | I didn't — I went to boarding school and I gave the nuns as hard
18 | of a time as they gave me, so I don't — I enjoyed myself
19 | fighting with them. But my mom taught me, because my mom went
20 | to residential school she taught me to parent a certain way and
21 | I had a choice, like you know, I didn't know another way but
22 | there was other ways. And you know I can remember screaming at
23 | my oldest son, because he dumped a bag of puffed wheat upside
24 | down, he was two or three years old and he spread it through the
25 | whole house. And so, that second generation of parenting in

1 | restoring new relationships as we become healthier, and finding
2 | out how afraid my oldest son was of me, so we're going into
3 | second generation now and him being able to talk to me about
4 | that and my apologizing to him.

5 | So that second generation of parenting, I think
6 | that we have opportunities now, like where there's programs like
7 | Head Start, which can help people learn parenting, there's
8 | grandmothers that, I heard, I think it was Cyril the other day,
9 | he said you know I'm given this second chance to be a parent by
10 | being a grandparent. We are given second chances.

11 | Q So am I correct in understanding from what
12 | you're saying that one of the first steps to the healing process
13 | must be the internal makeup of the community itself? The
14 | ceremonial processes as well as the families?

15 | A Yes, but it's generational is the third
16 | point, it's generational. And the workshops that I've done on
17 | residential school, the most often said statement, the most
18 | often said statement for people who are really struggling to
19 | build balance in their life is my hope is for my grandchildren,
20 | my hope is for my grandchildren. So I don't know that this is
21 | a short term effort, you know, it's really a long term effort.

22 | So how can we support and restore and help that
23 | process of grandparents being able to fulfill their wish for
24 | their grandchildren? And in communities, there are many
25 | communities who have men circles, they don't cost anything,

1 | women circles don't cost anything and people's willingness to
2 | trust the thing that Phyllis was talking about, in that healing
3 | process often family members and community members don't trust
4 | one another so it's hard to get them to go and you're not going
5 | to get there unless you go, you know, like you're not going to
6 | be able to build that communication. So the internalized
7 | violence which is often perpetrated by women in communities is
8 | also a challenge in terms of the healing process, women as in
9 | spanking and yelling and being abusive and how it would kind of
10 | -- structures are put in place to deal with that.

11 | Then the external, and I'm going to speak a
12 | little bit to you, Commissioner Barnett. I think sometimes
13 | people like you who have worked with our communities try really
14 | hard to say how can I most effectively respond to situations
15 | that come before me in the court setting. And one of the
16 | situations that, I believe, that you were involved in was a
17 | particular priest who was charged and when he was convicted, one
18 | of the part of his order was that he had to apologize to his
19 | victims. And when we discussed implementing that process, when
20 | he was released from prison, Charlene and I and other people,
21 | you've heard over and over again from victims, you know, that
22 | it's one, they can't forget and two, they have trouble
23 | forgiving.

24 | And so for him to apologize, we really didn't
25 | know whether that would be helpful, I know you ordered it, you

1 know, and you're intention was good. So the process that was
2 used in that situation is that Freddy and the complainants and
3 the complainant's extended family and some of their therapists
4 were there and the tension in that room was immeasurable, when
5 we walked in, immeasurable. And Freddy, in his wisdom, we
6 started with the pipe and we planned on that, Freddy started to
7 sing and we sang and we sang and we sang until the tension went
8 down. We used a natural healing medicine and provided an
9 opportunity for the family members of the complainants and the
10 complainants to talk about how that experience had affected
11 them, how it affected their life and the choices that they had
12 made. And the particular priest talked about his own
13 experience.

14 We didn't ask him to apologize and he didn't
15 apologize, that would not have been helpful. So we'll all go to
16 jail. So, then after that, one of the things that we really
17 realized is the whole thing around grief and we did a grieving
18 ceremony for the men who weren't there who had died. And then
19 we went and had a sweat together. And so I think that what's
20 behind my feedback to you is how the Western system is really
21 set up in an adversarial system, like you guys sit over there
22 and the Crown prosecutor sits over there, everybody, really
23 symbolically reflects an adversarial process.

24 So this process of healing when, say if I have
25 abused my son and I'm from Alkali, do I go to court, is that a

1 choice that I want to use, are there other alternatives, and
2 there are other alternatives such as Canim Lake and their
3 healing and their intervention of working with perpetrators and
4 their families and partly the court system if necessary, Hallo
5 Water (phonetic), who have largely a non-adversarial system of
6 involving the family and care givers and supporting and
7 honouring relationship and supporting and honouring that process
8 of healing. So that second stage I was talking about in terms
9 of recovery, I think it's imperative that as communities that we
10 select carefully and not necessarily accept the adversarial
11 system that's set up by Western society.

12 Q Maggie, --

13 A And to do that with thought enough in
14 making sure that the people who work in that process are healthy
15 enough themselves, and I don't mean healed, I mean working
16 towards health. Go ahead.

17 Q Yes, unfortunately due to our time
18 restraints, I'm probably going to have to put some more pointed
19 questions to you because this three day inquiry is only a brief
20 glimpse of entirely drastic problem. And unfortunately I'm
21 going to have to speed all of us up here.

22 You've discussed and described for us that the
23 initial procedure to healing and to treating this problem is for
24 the individual communities to emphasize their own healing
25 mechanisms, to concentrate on their own people to understand one

1 another, in other words to perhaps internalize, if that's the
2 right way of describing it, and I think that that has been shown
3 here by this community throughout the three days that I have
4 been here.

5 However, do you see as someone who is extremely
6 experienced in this area, that there is going to be a greater
7 need for more counselors, therapists, training and if so, how
8 would you suggest that that can be accomplished?

9 A Different communities have chosen to use
10 the different funding formula then your limited 10 therapy
11 sessions. Like Alkali Lake, they contract with a therapist so
12 they can get more therapy within that contract amount and that's
13 one process. The other one is that there's Brighter Futures
14 funding and often communities are willing pay therapists \$55.00
15 an hour, my guess it's \$80.00 or \$100.00, whatever the
16 particular therapist charges. And yet, when it comes to
17 reimbursing Elders for ceremonies, the traditional means of
18 paying for that is tobacco. But I think it's a choice of
19 whether they use their Brighter Futures money to actually help
20 to restore ceremonies and actually reimburse their Elders for
21 their time and their wisdom, I think that's another thing.

22 The other one that I would say that would be key
23 is, and if you listen to Phyllis in a serious way, and the many
24 Phyllis' of the world, the serious need for a, an understanding
25 of employee assistance programs where you have people working at

1 the Band level who need social support. And modeling those
2 employee and family assistance programs from a management by
3 value of relationship basis instead of a management by objective
4 basis. So that the time and energy needs to go into people
5 being able to sweat during work hours, you know white people
6 will send their people to a business meeting, it's okay for them
7 to be gone to a business meeting for three hours, it should be
8 okay for them to be gone to a sweat lodge for three hours, if it
9 means that they're going to help heal.

10 So looking at social support for their
11 politicians and I'll just use Commissioner John, him and a
12 number of Chiefs went to a healing session for themselves as
13 Chiefs and being able to know and recognize that as much as
14 Commissioner John is a very strong and competent and capable
15 man, that time and energy needs to be given to support him and
16 support the care givers in their own development of their
17 wellness. Because they're often seen and care givers like
18 Phyllis are often seen as very strong and not needing as much to
19 receive as needing to give and so if we're going to continue on
20 in this journey.

21 I think special care and attention needs to be
22 given to our leadership and to our care givers with a
23 consciousness and actually counting that, you know for the
24 government we count things, you know we say 40 children were
25 taken out of care, do we ever say, last year we had 40 sweat

1 lodges for staff, you know, that doesn't count with the
2 government. Doesn't make any difference whether it counts with
3 them or not or does it help us in our healing process.

4 I think it's reframing the symbolism of what's
5 perceived as healing, I think that's what's important.

6 Q A very pointed question, do you feel that
7 the provincial or federal governments are providing enough
8 financial or other forms of support for the problems that we've
9 heard over the past three days?

10 A I think it depends on what perspective of
11 that, and I'll just use housing. I don't think there's enough
12 adequate, because within -- everything is related, housing is
13 certainly an issue, you know. Everything is related, education
14 is certainly an issue and definitely. But in other areas, when
15 there is -- I'll just use Brighter Futures as an example because
16 it's probably the biggest new pot of money that there is
17 available in Canada and that looks at early intervention. It's
18 been some of the leadership's choice or a poor choices, poor
19 choices of how those resources are used, some leadership, I have
20 to qualify that, some leadership's choices, on how that
21 resources are used to effectively better support the early
22 intervention and support our families, that weakens even the
23 little bit that's there, you know.

24 So, to lay it all on the government, with all due
25 respect, I don't know whether I can do that, I think that there

1 certainly does need to be more money put into prevention, 60 per
2 cent of our population is below the age of 15. More resources
3 need to be put into prevention, that our choices that we make as
4 First Nations and Metis people in Canada, I think we have to
5 visit that very carefully.

6 Q Maggie, I have no further questions,
7 however, I really wish to thank you for your testimony, we
8 understand that you have traveled far to be here and again we
9 recognize that. At this point, of course, I would leave any
10 further comment or potential questions from the Commissioners to
11 you.

12 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Thank you very much, Maggie,
13 for being with us today, thank you. We're going to take a very
14 brief five minute washroom break, we want to wrap up by noon
15 time, so we need to keep on schedule, so we're just going to
16 take five minutes.

17 --- MEETING RECESSED AT 11:05 AM

18 --- MEETING RESUMED AT 11:15 AM

19 CHARLENE BELLEAU: Can you grab a seat please, the
20 ones of you standing in the back visiting, Lyle Gardiner.

21 CHARLENE BELLEAU; Sworn

22 EXAMINATION BY RICHARD ROGERS

23 Q Mr. Commissioners, we present our final
24 witness to you of this morning and as well of our inquiry,

1 Charlene Belleau, who all people here are extremely familiar
2 with. We will not necessarily ask questions of Charlene, as she
3 knows what her mandate is here this morning. Failing an
4 opportunity to make any further comment, on behalf of the three
5 lawyers who have assisted you at this inquiry, we wish to offer
6 you our thanks and appreciation for your patience and time, as
7 well as understanding, as with Maggie, your travel distances.

8 We also look forward to hearing from you in your
9 reports, which will be scheduled for next month and we're hoping
10 that in some way or capacity that should our services be
11 required again, we are but a phone call away. Charlene.

12 A Thank you. In my role this morning I
13 wanted to just provide a brief overview on my personal
14 involvement in different organizations to deal with residential
15 school over the last, at least 10 years that I've been involved.
16 Just in terms of history of the Province of British Columbia, we
17 have 14 residential schools that existed, run by the Catholic,
18 Anglican and the United Churches, from the 18 — late 1800's to
19 as recent as 1982.

20 The first criminal cases disclosing sexual abuse
21 started in 1985 in St. George's Residential School in Lytton,
22 BC. From the disclosures in Lytton, we began hearing evidence
23 and there were convictions of three Oblates at the St. Joseph's
24 Mission Residential School in Williams Lake, Father McIntee,
25 Brother Doughty, Bishop O'Connor, have all been convicted and

1 currently one is under appeal.

2 In terms of the sense of justice that individuals
3 may feel, I think they may be varied, in terms of the response
4 to the sentences to what has happened through those criminal
5 court cases. Probably one of the most meaningful things that
6 ever happened, in my own view, was a part of a probation order
7 with Father McIntee where at some point he was to come back to
8 our communities to reconcile with our men. That was an order by
9 Cunliffe Barnett when he was the presiding judge at that point.
10 So he has gone to serve his time, but it was now time for him to
11 come back to the community and face the men in our community.

12 It was a painful process, at the same time it
13 provided an opportunity for healing of those men, for those men
14 to confront this man that had abused them in residential school.
15 But again it was important for us to include ceremony as part of
16 that healing, we started with a pipe ceremony morning and we
17 ended with a sweat lodge ceremony that night, to cleanse
18 ourselves, to release ourselves, so that McIntee could go on
19 with his life and we could try and move on with our lives in the
20 community.

21 I would like to say that the response on behalf
22 of the Oblates or the government or anybody has been just as
23 positive as that one experience. But unfortunately, through the
24 years that I've been involved with the project in trying to deal
25 with residential schools, it's an uphill battle with governments

1 and churches to acknowledge their responsibility in the abuse
2 and the neglect that our children have suffered.

3 I can remember as early as 1989 after disclosures
4 in Williams Lake, calling on the governments to provide
5 resources for the healing of our people, the pain and the hurt
6 that they were going through. I remember traveling to Ottawa to
7 visit and meet with the Papal An uncia, I don't even remember if
8 that's his right title because I don't know the structure in the
9 Hierarchy of the church.

10 But I remember meeting with him because he was
11 just appoint to represent the Vatican in Canada at that point.
12 We must have spent a couple of hours together and unfortunately
13 the meeting wasn't very helpful because at that point we were
14 wanting the church to somehow accept responsibility and to walk
15 with us to try and help our people. And I guess I remember
16 walking away from that meeting with a lot of frustration because
17 some of the little things that were really hurtful, I remember
18 him saying, how could these people have remembered the abuse
19 after 25 years and I thought, my God, when you're sexually
20 abused as a child, six, eight, 10 years old, it certainly
21 something that you don't forget. You know, so the denial of the
22 church at the highest levels was there, I could see it right at
23 the onset.

24 There were efforts in 1993 to meet with Arch
25 Bishop Exner, AFN Vice Chief, Wendy Grant, came to that same

1 meeting, again I think we have always tried to meet the church
2 to try to talk about what it is we needed and the kind of
3 support and resources we needed. Again, some of the issues that
4 got in the way of the church's response at that meeting is that
5 we were too political with what was happening, it was getting
6 too politicized, it was too publicized. But again, when I
7 reflect on what it is that has been happening, I don't know what
8 other options we have, because we've tried I think in a very
9 good way to try and have the church, the state and the
10 government to sit with us and talk about this and try and
11 resolve the issue together.

12 The level of frustration by our people is
13 building as we try to compromise, as we try to talk, as we try
14 and resolve the whole situation in a cooperative way. I think
15 a lot of efforts have been made by our people to document, to
16 understand for ourselves what our pain has been. In 1991 we
17 released a research document through the Cariboo Tribal Council
18 that talked about the impact of residential schools. We
19 released that report in the first National Conference on
20 Residential Schools in the same year.

21 During these periods of time, both provincial and
22 national organizations have continuously called for an inquiry.
23 We thought in our minds if we could only have the same
24 opportunities that non-Native students did, through the Mt.
25 Cashel inquiry, through compensation that they've received from

1 governments. The boys of Alfred, Ontario, were non-Native
2 students that were abused in those institutions, Jericho Hill,
3 here in the province. I think all that we're asking is to be
4 treated equally.

5 We would think that the times in 1997, the times
6 have changed where we don't experience the racism, the
7 discrimination, those kind of things where they would give us a
8 voice but today we're still waiting to be heard by governments
9 and by churches.

10 Again, I want to just close in saying that I have
11 really enjoyed the opportunity to bring this inquiry together.
12 To me, the stories that you've heard over the last two or three
13 days, have been very painful and when you multiply or triple
14 those stories, just within the community, within the Shuswap
15 Nation, within the Province of BC and across the country, we
16 have a lot of children and a lot of people that are still
17 suffering. Those people deserve to be heard, those people
18 deserve to be validated, those people deserve counseling,
19 resources, those people deserve to be compensated for their
20 losses.

21 I'm really grateful and I know that even as this
22 inquiry is held, it may never have the government mandates or
23 the legal authorities, but again to me, that's not important.
24 I don't need the government's blessing to do something that I
25 believe is my right to self-governance. If we could validate

1 our people through this process, if we could do something with
2 their stories to get resources for the healing of our families
3 and of our community, then we will have achieved something for
4 our people.

5 In closing I just want to say that I know that
6 this issue will never die, that in order for us to have strong
7 people for the self-government process, in order for there to be
8 successful treaty negotiations between the provincial and
9 federal governments. That will mean those governments
10 acknowledging their history with residential schools, both
11 provincially and federally. I want to make sure that people
12 know and understand that this inquiry will at least open the
13 doors and make sure that governments and church are put on
14 notice, whether it's for the last time because I find myself
15 really being frustrated, really getting impatient. At the same
16 time trying to draw on the strength and the courage of the sage
17 and sweet grass, to try and be patient with governments and
18 churches.

19 I don't know, you know, whether the governments
20 understand the depth of this problem, the churches, whether they
21 understand the depth of what we're dealing with here. To me in
22 my mind it's not surprising that we have situations like Oka,
23 that we have situations like Gustafson Lake. Our people are
24 externalizing their anger from the abuse that they have
25 suffered, they're not tolerating any longer the abuse by non-

1 Native people.

2 I certainly hope we don't ever get to that point
3 in our lives again, where we have to stand on the line for our
4 rights. And I think that we're just asking to make sure that
5 what our residential school experience has been is heard by the
6 people that need to hear those experiences. That we're
7 validated as people, as human beings, we need to make sure that
8 the resources are available to our people to go through a
9 healing process.

10 You heard about the suicides, the suicide
11 attempts, I haven't come across a victim in the whole time that
12 I've been working with the residential school project that
13 hasn't thought of suicide while they're waiting for court. When
14 I think of those people just feeling so hopeless and so
15 helpless, I just think in my mind where did the governments or
16 the churches ever have the nerve to do that to our children, to
17 our people. I guess I rely on our ceremonies, our songs, our
18 drums, to help to give us the courage and strength to continue
19 to seek justice for our people. Thank you very much.

20 Q I think that the Commissioners might have
21 some questions.

22 COMMISSIONER COUTOURE: Again, my personal sincere
23 thanks for this, privilege of listening and thinking and
24 reacting and responding. I don't have any specific questions,
25 I recognize and seeing I recognize the patterns, the attitudes

1 that you pointed to. So much of right now, like 1997, is in a
2 sense like it was 30 years ago, you know, instead of trying to
3 beat Indian Affairs in one year, you took a 20 year or develop
4 the 20 year perspective and you planned accordingly, that
5 doesn't remove from the urgency of some things.

6 This testimony and all of the others, every
7 single one them, they were important that they be given, in my
8 view, each one presented an aspect or an emphasis that is
9 essential towards developing or forming in one's mind an updated
10 picture of the total thing in all it's dimensions and all it's
11 complexity, in order to somehow arrive at a report. I was
12 wondering about that report and it somehow would reflect this
13 experience of the last three days, which in turn reflects the
14 experience of the people, the community, here and across the
15 nation, it's all of that. Maybe one of the things of the report
16 is that it can provide maybe some key working definitions, to
17 talk sort of in a social science kind of way for a minute.

18 Nothing more useful than a good distinction, as
19 an old professor use to say, or a good definition. We've
20 touched on many things that require definition, better
21 definition, sharper definition, because in 1997 as this inquiry,
22 as it's unfolded, has indicated at least to me is our vision is
23 sharper, our understanding is greater, our sensitivity is
24 better, our hunches are stronger, our dreams are bigger and more
25 frequent. So there's, you know, a whole upside that's

1 optimistic in a real practical and realistic way as we go forth
2 as brothers and sisters.

3 I'm reminded of a, one of the key predictions
4 amongst the Cree and I think most Tribes have this prediction or
5 prophecy as we sometimes say, that runs essentially like this,
6 that one day the white brother will come to the red brother for
7 teaching. In the early years I thought that was kind of
8 presumptuous and then secondly, well if it's true how is that
9 going to happen and now I'm, I and others are starting to think
10 well this is how it's happening, it's unfolding and it's being
11 realized now. I kind of resent the time line, I do resent the
12 time line, step outside we'll finish this right now.

13 COMMISSIONER BARNETT: Charlene, I have no
14 questions, no real comments, other than to say thank you, thank
15 you very much for the opportunity to have been here for the past
16 few days and to listen to you and the others from this
17 community. And I just hope that when this process is finished
18 it will result, at least, in a little of what you want to
19 accomplish. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER JOHN: I guess I'd like to thank
21 counsel for the work that you've done here in preparing the
22 witnesses and bringing forward the stories that we've heard in
23 the last two and a half days. And that in itself, those
24 stories, the individuals, about human dignity, about the heart
25 of each and every one of us, each and every one of people who

1 | came before us, being exposed in a real way and to hear that,
2 | that hope, to hear that pain, to hear that anger, to hear that
3 | frustration, yet and all of it directed towards healing. And I
4 | think this process in itself has been, in my view, hopefully one
5 | of which the communities and individuals and families within the
6 | community are understanding in a deeper way what each one and
7 | each family and each -- that the community is coming through.
8 | I think it can do nothing but provide greater strength to the
9 | community, to the families in the community and to the
10 | individuals within this village, within this community.

11 | And that's, to me, it's not something that can be
12 | written down in a report, it's something that individuals will
13 | come here who have spoken, like Andy. I've known Andy a long
14 | time, I've never known him to speak with the compassion that I
15 | heard him speak with yesterday and the depth of which he was
16 | able to bring, the depth to which he had to go find some of the
17 | pain that he's lived with all this time and every one of the
18 | individuals who have come forward have said the same thing. And
19 | it's something that, that feeling you can never reflect in the
20 | paper, in a report, in documents, you can never feel that. But
21 | I think it's something that the community should feel, that
22 | there should be this vibrancy, something in your community,
23 | something in your hearts that you can celebrate.

24 | You know the young man with the artwork here, you
25 | know the symbols of the cross, the colours which are dark, you

1 know, that period that he's gone through. Maybe sometime down
2 the road we'll see colours where they're brighter and happier,
3 to balance out this tremendously big period of darkness that he
4 has gone through. And I think that's, we've gone to the depths
5 of hell, I guess you can put it, and we have no way now to go
6 but up and we should feel good about that. And every community
7 in this country, in this province and in this country, will look
8 to this community as they did in the '70s, to see how this
9 community comes together as a community.

10 And then I heard Phyllis this morning and I heard
11 what she said, and that's true, and I think you know my own
12 sense it is true, about being out there sometimes and you feel
13 like you're alone and nobody's there to share that dream, that
14 vision. But as we, I think communities, as individuals, we move
15 at different paces and at different levels and at some point in
16 time we may start moving at the same pace and be at the same
17 place. Then all the jobs, collectively, of people in this
18 village will be easier, I believe, and I always hope, I always
19 hope for the young people.

20 You know, as our young children grow up to be
21 young men and women and they start having children, they're
22 going to have hope too and I think we need to ensure that we
23 always pass that hope onto them and those dreams and those
24 visions about our songs and about our ceremonies.

25 And I just want to conclude by thanking all of

1 the witnesses who have appeared before us and the cooks who
2 have, Erin the bull cook, I call him, got to be a good friend of
3 mine in the last couple of days, not because I like eating but
4 because I think he's done a very good job in providing us with
5 meals, and all of those who have made all of our jobs easier.
6 One of my Elders said to me recently, not to me but to our
7 meeting in our village, and one of those kind of individuals
8 we've been resisting all of these things because he's very much
9 a strong Catholic, believe in the Catholic Church and it's ways.
10 But he said you know, to me and it came as a real surprise to
11 me, that he would come forward.

12 He said, you know, I've been doing a lot of
13 thinking about this healing we've been talking about, I've come
14 to realize and to the conclusion that this healing is going to
15 take place on the land, on our lands and it'll take place with
16 our songs and with our drums. And I think I understand his
17 picture, I didn't really understand it then, I understood, I
18 took his words down and I understand more deeply what he was
19 saying, so your songs and your ceremonies and your drums, the
20 Indian way will get us through that.

21 And I agree with Charlene that, although we look
22 to government, we look to them for answers sometimes, the
23 answers will come from our own communities. They may provide
24 the resources, they may help facilitate in someways, but the
25 answers at the end of the day, we have to live with it will come


1 within. So, I think, I have a good sense of what this community
2 is going through and where you are now and I have nothing but
3 admiration for the people here. Thank you.

4 CHARLENE BELLEAU: We're going to formally close
5 the inquiry at this point with a closing prayer, closing drum
6 song, Fred.

7 (CLOSING DRUM SONG)

8 --- MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:45 AM

I hereby swear that the foregoing
transcript is true and accurate to the
best of my skill and ability.


Catherine Schaefer Court Reporter

