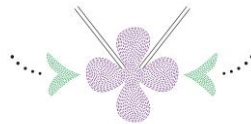


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process Part II
Institutional hearings on Government Services
Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire
Calgary, Alberta**



Part II Volume V

Friday June 1, 2018

Panel III: “Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing”

Nakuset, Montreal Native Women’s Shelter;

Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Alberta);

**Sandra Montour, Executive Director, Ganohkwasra Family
Assault Support Services (Ontario)**

**Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller & Commissioners
Michèle Audette, Brian Eyolfson & Qajaq Robinson**

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.

41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2

E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246

II

APPEARANCES

| | |
|---|--|
| Aboriginal Women's Action Network | Fay Blaney (Representative) MiKenze Jordan (Representative) |
| Assembly of First Nations | Julie McGregor (Legal Counsel) |
| Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs | Joëlle Pastora Sala (Legal Counsel) |
| Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society | Darrin Blain (Legal Counsel) |
| Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police | Ashley Smith (Legal Counsel) |
| Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales | Anny Bernier (Legal Counsel) |
| Eastern Door Indigenous Women's Association | Natalie D. Clifford (Legal Counsel) Cheryl Maloney (Representative) |
| Families for Justice | Suzan E. Fraser (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of Alberta | Nicole Pfeifer (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of British Columbia | Jean Walters (Legal Counsel) Emily Arthur (Representative) |
| Government of Canada | Anne Turley (Legal Counsel) Anne McConville (Legal Counsel) Sarah Churchill-Joly (Legal Counsel) Tania Tooke (Paralegal) Jennifer Clarke (Paralegal) |
| Government of Manitoba | Coral Lang (Legal Counsel) Kendra Jarvinen (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of New Brunswick | Maya Hamou (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of Newfoundland and Labrador | Denise Spencer (Legal Counsel) |

III

APPEARANCES

| | |
|--|---|
| Government of Northwest Territories | Karin Taylor (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of Nova Scotia | Sean Foreman (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of Ontario | Julian Roy (Legal Counsel) Catherine Rhineland (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of Saskatchewan | Barbara Mysko (Legal Counsel) |
| Government of Yukon | Fia Jampolsky (Legal Counsel) Hannah McDonald (Representative) Chantal Genier (Representative) |
| Independent First Nations | Sarah Beamish (Legal Counsel) Diane Maracle-Nadjiwan (Representative) |
| Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women | Sarah Beamish (Legal Counsel) |
| Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami | Elizabeth Zarpa (Legal Counsel) |
| MMIWG Manitoba Coalition | Catherine Dunn (Legal Counsel) Hilda Anderson-Pyrz (Representative) |
| Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak | Jessica Barlow (Legal Counsel) |
| Native Women's Association of Canada | Virginia Lomax (Legal Counsel) |
| Nishnawbe Aski Nation/Grand Council Treaty 3; Treaty Alliance Northern Ontario | Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Krystyn Ordyniec (Legal Counsel) Amanda Byrd (Law student) |

IV

APPEARANCES

Ontario Federation of
Indigenous Friendship Centres

Niki Hashie (Representative)

Pauktuutit, AnânuKatiget
Tumingit, Saturviit, Ottawa
Inuit Children's Centre, and
Manitoba Inuit Association

Beth Symes (Legal Counsel)

Regina Treaty Status Indian
Services, Inc

Erica Beaudin (Representative)

Saskatchewan Association of
Chiefs of Police

Katrina Swan (Legal Counsel)

Winnipeg Police Service

Kimberly Carswell
(Legal Counsel)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Truth-Gathering Process Part II Volume V

**Panel III: "Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing"
(continued)**

Chair: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Second Chair: Marie-Audrey Girard (Commission Counsel)

Witness: Nakuset, Montreal Native Women's Shelter

Counsel: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Witness: Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Alberta)

Counsel: Darrin Blain for Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society

**Witness: Sandra Montour, Executive Director, Ganohkwasra Family
Assault Support Services (Ontario)**

Counsel: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller & Commissioners
Michèle Audette, Brian Eyolfson & Qajaq Robinson

Grandmothers, Elders & Knowledge-keepers: Minnie Amidlak,
Cynthia Cardinal (National Family Advisory Circle - NFAC), Edmee
Comstock, Barbara Dumont-Hill (Government of Canada), Spike
Norton Eagle Speaker, Louise Haulli, Kathy Louis, Myrna Laplante
(NFAC), Gerald Meguinis, Melanie Morrison (NFAC), Bernie
Poitras, Sarah Nowrakudluk (NFAC), Gaylene Rain, Audrey Siegl,
Laureen "Blu" Waters, John Wesley, Alvine Wolfleg, Charlotte
Wolfrey (NFAC), Waasaanese (Government of Ontario)

Hammer Hill Drummers: Craig First Rider, Clarence Wolfleg Jr,
Norvin Eagle Speaker & Faron Cody Black Kettle

Clerk: Maryiam Khoury

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

VI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|-------------|
| Opening Ceremony | 1 |
| Opening Prayer | 2 |
| Drumming Ceremony | 3 |
| Ruling on Motion | 4 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Beamish | 7 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Beamish | 15 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Beamish | 56 |
| NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. Symes | 57 |
| NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. Beaudin | 85 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Beaudin | 91 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Beaudin | 96 |
| NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. Dunn | 101 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Dunn | 109 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Dunn | 111 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Ordyniec | 115 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Ordyniec | 122 |
| NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. Ordyniec | 125 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. Lomax | 127 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Pastora Sala | 141 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR Cross-Examined by Ms. Pastora Sala | 147 |
| NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. Zarpa | 160 |
| NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. Zarpa | 170 |

VII

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| NAKUSET , Cross-Examined by Ms. McGregor | 173 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. McGregor | 177 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR , Cross-Examined by Ms. McGregor | 187 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Fraser | 192 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Fraser | 204 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Cross-Examined by Ms. Cox | 214 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Questions by the Commissioners | 225 |
| SANRA MONTOUR , Questions by the Commissioners | 228 |
| NAKUSET , Questions by the Commissioners | 234 |
| NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR , Questions by the Commissioners | 237 |
| JOSIE NEPINAK , Re-Examination by Mr. Blain | 267 |
| SANDRA MONTOUR , Re-Examination by Ms. Big Canoe | 271 |
| NAKUSET , Re-Examination by Ms. Big Canoe | 273 |
| Closing Ceremonies | 279 |
| Closing Prayer | 307 |
| Closing Song | 309 |

IIX
LIST OF EXHIBITS

| NO. | DESCRIPTION | PAGE |
|---|--|-------------|
| Panel 3A: "Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing" | | |
| Witness: N/A | | |
| 52 | Written submissions by all Parties with standing re: Admitting documents into evidence, binder comprising 12 tabs | 5 |
| Exhibit submitted by parties with standing. | | |
| Panel 3B: "Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing" | | |
| Witness: Josie Nepinak | | |
| 53 | Reasons for Judgment (on voir dire), R v Barton, 2015 ABQB 159, March 10, 2015, Docket 120294731Q1, Edmonton Registry (13 pages) | 9 |
| 54 | "Cindy Gladue case sends a chilling message to indigenous women," by Sarah Hunt and Naomi Sayers, Globe and Mail, published March 25, 2015, updated April 23, 2017 (two pages) | 12 |
| 55 | "Family Violence Prevention Program: off-reserve call for proposals 2018-2019," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, date modified May 3, 2018 (four pages) | 214 |
| All exhibits submitted by Jennifer Cox, Commission Counsel. | | |

1 Calgary, Alberta

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, June 1, 2018 at 8:08 a.m.

3 --- **OPENING CEREMONIES**

4 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** -- Speaker family.

5 If I can say, this is my aunt and my uncle. In Blackfoot
6 country, amongst my people, we have two, three certain
7 families, and amongst each and every one of your nations,
8 you have one or two families that have been outstanding or
9 have travelled far away. I can honestly say that the Eagle
10 Speaker family, as my relatives, they have relatives all
11 over the place. Seattle, Vancouver, Ontario, different
12 places like that, and they're some of the forthright people
13 that would help with powwows and all of the like.

14 They're very, very special to us, and -- but
15 back at home here, Spike and Alvine, they're what we call in
16 Blackfoot, we call them *Iitskinaiksi*. They're -- they're
17 members of the Horn Society, and it's a very special society
18 to our people, and so, just like the lamp here, when we make
19 a smudge or when they start to pray, they make your words
20 stronger. And if I can say, Chief Commissioner, when --
21 when things get going today, when you're visiting your --
22 your kids or your family, whatever, outside of these
23 proceedings, you're a normal person, but when you speak in
24 here, your words become stronger.

25 I was very impressed yesterday by the

1 testimony that was getting put forward, and that was
2 something. And so when you call Spike and Alvine and our --
3 and our Elders here to make your words stronger, that's what
4 the prayer is about, is because today, your words are
5 stronger. Today, things go down on the docket and go down
6 on the documents that, here, will help us on what we're
7 trying to achieve. So thank you again for joining us.

8 But I'll ask the Elders to have us a prayer
9 and they -- they may stand, but you all, if -- if you stand
10 when you pray, go ahead and stand, but if you don't stand
11 when you pray, in Blackfoot country, we don't stand when we
12 pray, so... But this isn't like the Catholics, so at least
13 I'm not asking any of you to kneel down, so... All right,
14 here we go. (Speaking in Native language).

15 **MR. SPIKE EAGLE SPEAKER, MS. ALVINE EAGLE**
16 **SPEAKER, AND MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK:** (Speaking in Native
17 language).

18 --- OPENING PRAYER

19 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Hey. Thank you.
20 Touch your heart when the Elders finish praying. That means
21 you have -- you've accepted their prayer to your heart. So
22 anyways, I'm not going to tell you any jokes or things like
23 that, but I am going to talk about my brother here. This is
24 Skip, and he's going to sing a song for you all to start the
25 day. I'll let him pick the song. But there's a funny thing

1 about Skip. He's actually a Blood Indian. I'm from the
2 Blood Tribe, he's from Siksika, but he's actually a Blood
3 Indian.

4 You see, 200 years ago, when Indians used to
5 visit each other, there was a family that came to Siksika,
6 they had a little boy. His name was Wolf Lake (ph).
7 Anyways, he was about this age, and they spent the fall time
8 in Siksika Nation and little Wolf Lake made a friend with
9 another family in Siksika, so just the way it was in the old
10 days, they said, "We'll just let them play. We'll go home.
11 You guys can keep him for the winter." Anyways, little Wolf
12 Lake ended up getting registered on the band registry in
13 Siksika, and they assumed he was a member of Siksika Nation,
14 but he wasn't. He was actually a Blood Indian. So I'm
15 going to go sing with my brother, and then we'll begin.

16 --- DRUMMING CEREMONY

17 (APPLAUSE)

18 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Oh. Oh, okay. Oh,
19 we're taking the break. All right. Madam Commissioner, the
20 floor is yours, so again, enjoy yourself in Calgary and you
21 can go pay off your layaway clothes plans or whatever you
22 planned for today and you've got a few minutes.

23 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We'll just
24 take a five-minute break to settle in.

25 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Five-minute break and

1 then we're going to begin. Commissioners, take it easy on
2 the witnesses today, please.

3 (LAUGHTER)

4 --- Upon recessing at 8:18 a.m.

5 --- Upon reconvening at 8:25 a.m.

6 MS. JENNIFER COX: Chief Commissioner,
7 Commissioners. I believe that you would like to start this
8 morning.

9 --- RULING ON MOTION

10 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank
11 you. Good morning. This is our ruling on an oral motion
12 brought by the Director of Criminal Prosecutions for the
13 Province of Quebec.

14 The motion can be summarized as follows:
15 The Director seeks to admit into evidence at the hearing
16 this week a document that outlines Victims Services
17 available in the Province of Quebec. This document is not
18 part of an examination or cross-examination of a witness;
19 however, it is tendered at this hearing during
20 cross-examination to form part of our record, as there has
21 not been a witness called who can speak specifically to
22 Victims Services in Quebec this week.

23 Commission counsel opposes the admission of
24 the document, and the Commission counsel's argument can be
25 summarized as follows: that this is not the appropriate

1 time and manner in which to tender such evidence. But
2 Commission counsel does not oppose the -- or dispute the
3 relevancy and value of the document's contents.

4 Parties by way of written submissions say
5 that the document should not be admitted. Others have said
6 that we should be flexible in the interpretation of the
7 legal path and our terms of reference. Other parties have
8 taken no position. And those written submissions will be
9 marked as the next exhibit, Exhibit 52, please.

10 **--- EXHIBIT NO. 52:**

11 Written submissions by all Parties
12 with standing re: Admitting
13 documents into evidence, binder
14 comprising 12 tabs

15 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** The issue
16 on this motion is whether this is the correct time and
17 place to accept this evidence from the Director of Criminal
18 Prosecutions for the Province of Quebec. Counsel -- all
19 counsel in their submissions have referred us to the
20 following parts of the legal path: specifically Rules 8,
21 10, 30, and 33. Counsel have also referred to our Terms of
22 Reference, paragraph H, as well as the general
23 interpretation and provisions of our Terms of Reference.

24 For the record, we interpret all of these
25 provisions in a broad and flexible manner. It is

1 important, in our view, to remember the purpose of the
2 proceedings this week. We are gathered to hear evidence
3 from witnesses on defined subjects and to receive documents
4 relevant to their testimony.

5 In the context of these proceedings this
6 week, in our view, it is appropriate to exercise our
7 discretion to not accept the document tendered as an
8 exhibit. However, we do not intend to close the door on
9 the truth. In our opinion, it would be unfair to parties
10 and others to accept documents in an ad hoc fashion. There
11 must be clarity to the process.

12 We will advise parties and Commission
13 counsel of when and how we will receive documents and
14 relevant information, aside from those documents entered
15 into evidence at hearings, and we shall do so by way of a
16 practice direction within 14 days of today's date.

17 The motion brought by the director of
18 criminal prosecutions for the Province of Quebec is hereby
19 dismissed.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Chief
21 Commissioner, Commissioners. I just wanted to now formally
22 open us into cross-examination. There are -- there are 14
23 parties, including Commission counsel, that are seeking to
24 cross-examine witnesses. And just for the record, and for
25 those joining us online or watching today, the panel that

1 we are actually cross-examining on, it's the third panel
2 that was on shelters, safe houses and transition houses,
3 and we had three witnesses including Nakuset, Sandra
4 Montour and Josie Nepinak.

5 With that, I would like to call the first
6 party, the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal
7 Women, who will be represented by agent Sarah Beamish. You
8 will have 28 minutes on the clock, please. :

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** All right, good morning.
10 My name is Sarah Beamish, and I'm here acting as agent for
11 Lisa Weber, who is counsel for Institute for Advancement of
12 Aboriginal Women.

13 Good morning to the Commissioners, to the
14 Elders and to the Blackfoot people who are hosting us on
15 their territory.

16 Before I get into -- into Ms. Weber's
17 questions, I want to just warn those in the room and those
18 who are watching online that these questions include some
19 quite graphic content about violence against Indigenous
20 women, and so just please be aware of that.

21 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

22 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAMISH:**

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So, Ms. Nepinak, I would
24 like to talk with you more about the manifestation of
25 violence against Indigenous women. And to contextualize

1 that discussion, I'd like to talk with you about the
2 horrific case out of Alberta that you mentioned yesterday
3 involving Cindy Gladue, who bled to death as a result of an
4 11 centimetre injury to her vagina.

5 In March 2015, the individual accused of
6 murdering Ms. Gladue was acquitted following a trial by
7 jury, and it is the trial process that I want to focus on
8 today with the few minutes that we have.

9 So I believe you would have been provided
10 with a couple of documents, the first one being a decision
11 of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Do you have --

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

13 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I'll direct
14 your attention to that, and it's March 2015 reasons for
15 judgment of the Honourable Justice Graesser. Now, I
16 appreciate that you are not a lawyer, but I put this
17 document to you not for the purpose of providing any legal
18 opinion, but as a member of the public, as an Indigenous
19 woman, and as someone who works closely with female victims
20 of violence.

21 So do you recognize this document?

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I do.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Have you had an
24 opportunity to review it?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I have.

1 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I'd like to
2 mark this as an exhibit by consent.

3 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

4 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, during the
5 trial -- sorry.

6 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Court of
7 Queen's Bench of Alberta decision, Regina and Barton 2015
8 ABQB 159 is the next exhibit, 53, please.

9 **--- EXHIBIT NO. 53:**

10 Reasons for Judgment (on voir
11 dire), R v Barton, 2015 ABQB 159,
12 March 10, 2015, Docket
13 120294731Q1, Edmonton Registry (13
14 pages)

15 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** I think -- good morning
16 to the Commission. I think that it's worth noting that
17 it's not the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, it's a
18 decision, and specifically a voir dire, as to the
19 admissibility of the severed body parts of Ms. Gladue as
20 evidence.

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yes, thank you.

22 So during the trial, an application was made
23 to tender as evidence Ms. Gladue's preserved pelvis and
24 reproductive organs. The presiding Justice allowed this
25 application, resulting in the presentation of Ms. Gladue's

1 body tissue in the courtroom, which was apparently a first
2 in Canada's judicial history.

3 Within this decision, the position of the
4 Crown and the defence are summarized. At paragraph 3 of
5 the decision, Judge Graesser confirms that it was the Crown
6 that sought to introduce Ms. Gladue's pelvis as evidence,
7 and we see at paragraph 7 of the decision that the defence
8 opposed this application and that photographs of Ms.
9 Gladue's injured body parts were available to be
10 considered, and that an expert witness had provided
11 testimony about the nature of the injuries to Ms. Gladue.

12 I want to draw your attention to the points
13 on page 4 of the decision. So on this page, Justice
14 Graesser writes: (As Read)

15 The photographs are graphic and
16 unpleasant to view. The tissue is not
17 particularly recognizable as female
18 genitalia because of the manner in which
19 it has been preserved. The presentation
20 using the tissue was very respectful and
21 inoffensive, and the initial shock or
22 revulsion subsided very quickly. The
23 use of portions of a victim's body as
24 evidence at trial is novel.

25 After his analysis, the judge decided that

1 Ms. Gladue's actual body parts could be presented as
2 evidence in this trial.

3 So, Ms. Nepinak, my questions to you, would
4 you agree that the effect of introducing Cindy Gladue's
5 preserved pelvis into the courtroom, the manner in which it
6 was presented and discussed, dehumanized Ms. Gladue?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that
9 these actions were a violation of basic fundamental
10 Indigenous beliefs?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** If I were to tell you
13 that Ms. Gladue's mother was in court when her daughter's
14 preserved pelvis, including her reproductive organs, were
15 introduced and that she was not even aware that her
16 daughter's body parts were going to be presented in court
17 on the day in the manner that occurred, would you consider
18 these acts to be manifestations of violence against
19 Indigenous women?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, extremely, yes.

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** The fact that criminal
22 law rules of admissibility of evidence allow for this to
23 have happened, and by implication that it could happen
24 again now that a precedent has been set, is this also a
25 manifestation of violence against Indigenous women?

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Certainly, yes.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** I have also provided
3 another document, do you have that one before you? It's an
4 opinion article published by the Globe and Mail in March
5 2015 following the Court's decision in this case.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Can we please
8 mark this article as an exhibit on consent?

9 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** By
10 consent?

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yes.

12 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** The Cindy
13 Gladue Case Sends a Chilling Message to Indigenous Women
14 article to the Globe and Mail is Exhibit 54, please.

15 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Thank you.

16 **--- EXHIBIT NO. 54:**

17 "Cindy Gladue case sends a
18 chilling message to indigenous
19 women," by Sarah Hunt and Naomi
20 Sayers, Globe and Mail, published
21 March 25, 2015, updated April 23,
22 2017 (two pages)

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Ms. Nepinak, are you
24 familiar with this article?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I am.

1 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Can you talk about the
2 awareness in your province about this case, including this
3 issue about the introduction of Ms. Gladue's body parts
4 into evidence?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I would have to say that
6 this issue has been paramount in some of the advocacy work
7 that we have done provincially, and the horrific
8 way -- manner in which Ms. Gladue and her family and her
9 children have been violated by the very system.

10 The courts that are intended to protect her
11 have dehumanized her and have sent a message to -- to
12 Indigenous women, but to all women in general, that who you
13 are as a whole person does not matter, at least in the eyes
14 of -- of this case, where her body parts were cut out
15 to -- in a -- in a paper -- in a paper plate covered with a
16 napkin shown publicly without her family's knowledge or
17 consent is a horrific form of systemic abuse towards women.
18 And if this case goes forward, the precedent, again, no
19 woman is going to be immune to that in Canada. We're all
20 at risk.

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I'd like to just
22 read you a couple lines from this article that's before
23 you: (As Read)

24 The details of trial indicate how
25 mechanisms within the justice system can

1 be used to normalize violence against
2 Indigenous women. The jury has sent a
3 message that killing an Indigenous woman
4 is acceptable. How many more deaths
5 will it take before the system is
6 compelled to change?

7 Would you say that these lines from the
8 opinion piece are reflective of the reaction of women
9 across Canada --

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** -- to the way in which
12 Ms. Gladue's body parts were presented as evidence?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, yes.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** I will have just a few
15 more questions for you, Ms. Nepinak, but I would like to
16 give a chance to the other witnesses to add their thoughts
17 about the reaction to this evidence being used in court
18 this way.

19 **JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**

20 **Affirmed:**

21 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAMISH:**

22 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Maybe, Nakuset, you
23 could go first and then Ms. Montour.

24 **NAKUSET:** At Six Nations, we had a strong
25 reaction to this. The women had gathered in a protest.

1 I -- I believe it was a complete violation, exploitation of
2 women, of Indigenous women, an exploitation of Ms. Gladue's
3 body, a violation of our sacred -- sacred beliefs around how
4 we are to treat our -- our bodies after deceased. I believe
5 it was a complete violation of our beliefs. There was a
6 very strong reaction.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And, Nakuset, do
8 you have anything you want to add?

9 **NAKUSET:** It is so disrespectful on so many
10 levels, it's -- it's like I have no words. Like, the
11 system has to be better than this, and I think that the
12 community members, non-Indigenous, also need to step up
13 because, you know, what you had just read, you get a visual
14 of it. And just total disrespect. So I hope that
15 something better comes out of this, and I hope that the
16 people that were involved in this are held accountable.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Nepinak,
18 would you support the following recommendation to the
19 Commissioners: That all provincial and territorial Crown
20 prosecutors and provincial and superior court judges
21 complete mandatory training on the human response to sexual
22 assault victimization, including a component addressing the
23 unique circumstances pertaining to Indigenous victims, with
24 such educational programs to be developed in consultation
25 with the appropriate Indigenous representatives or

1 agencies?

2 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And would you
4 support this recommendation to the Commissioners, that
5 government agencies such as Crown prosecutions in the
6 provinces and territories conduct mandatory reviews of
7 existing processes and procedures with a view to reducing
8 systemic discrimination and prejudicial policies which may
9 violate the rights and beliefs of Indigenous peoples?

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour,
12 would you also support those recommendations?

13 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And, Nakuset, would you
15 also support those recommendations?

16 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. All right. I
18 will close off the questioning on that -- on that awful
19 story. And I'd like to ask you all another question now.

20 So I'll start with -- with you again,
21 Ms. Nepinak. Are there Indigenous women on your shelter
22 waiting lists who are getting lost in the shuffle and
23 ending up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute
24 this directly to the absence of sufficient funding?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Could you repeat that,

1 please? I -- I just didn't hear it quite clearly.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sure.

3 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** And sorry, just a note
4 for the audio-visual people. I think we're having a hard
5 time hearing up here.

6 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

7 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** I know that Josie and I
8 are having a hard time hearing. So if there's anything
9 that can be done from the technology perspective -- I know
10 we can put our earphones on, but we're just having a hard
11 time hearing compared to yesterday.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Do you want
13 me -- should I speak this close to the microphone?

14 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** We'll leave it in the
15 good hands of the tech people. Go ahead, Sarah.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. So to ask
17 you again, Josie, are there Indigenous women on your
18 shelter waiting list getting lost in the shuffle and ending
19 up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute this
20 directly to the absence of sufficient funding?

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. At -- at
22 any given time, we have 32 beds, and of the 32 beds, we
23 have seven bedrooms. So you can imagine some of the
24 bedrooms have five -- five beds. And -- and it depends on
25 the makeup of the family that come into the lodge. If

1 there's a large family, then that takes up two rooms. And
2 so for the women who are unable to come into the shelter
3 and we have to turn them away or refer them to
4 other -- other agencies, then quite often they make that
5 choice not to go. And, yes, we have heard of instances
6 where they have fallen through the cracks, and that
7 unfortunately, some of them have passed away.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I'd like to
9 give the other two witnesses also a chance to respond to
10 that same question. Ms. Montour, can you answer that
11 question, as well?

12 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes. That -- I -- I
13 believe that is true. When people come and they're
14 on -- and they're on -- put on a waiting list, they
15 disappear. And I don't know what happens to them. We
16 don't know what happens to them. They could be missing,
17 and they could be murdered. So I believe that that
18 definitely is true.

19 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And Nakuset?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, ask the question again?

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sure. Are there any
22 Indigenous women on your shelter waiting list getting lost
23 in the shuffle and ending up missing or murdered, and if
24 so, can you attribute this directly to the absence of
25 sufficient funding?

1 **NAKUSET:** Okay. So at the Native Women's
2 Shelter, we also have outreach services. So the women that
3 can't get into the shelter can call Jessica, our Iskwei
4 worker, or Tilly (ph), our outreach worker, or David Crane,
5 who works at Cabot Square. He's our outreach worker who
6 works with men and women.

7 But I think it's two things. I think it's
8 lack of funding and lack of "I don't care" because, you
9 know, Jessica can work with a woman who has been violently
10 raped, kidnapped, and she brings them to the police. And
11 then they tell her, "Well, it's going to take, you know,
12 um, two months before you get processed." Where is she
13 going to be in two months? You can't guarantee she's going
14 to come back in two months. The population that we work
15 with are usually homeless.

16 And what we are asking for is we want our
17 own Indigenous -- either, like, a liaison officer or
18 someone who works in sex crimes that can -- we can call
19 them immediately. You know what else they do in Montreal?
20 If you get raped, they send you all the way across town.
21 They only have one centre where they'll process it. And
22 the whole system is so -- mmm -- difficult. They don't
23 want to interview the women if they, you know, had
24 something to drink. So they have to wait until she's
25 sober. That could take a while. They won't allow Jessica

1 to sit with them, but Jessica is a warrior, so she makes
2 sure that she's there to do it.

3 It's like the system is made up so that we
4 fail. And if we don't create our own programs, then
5 everything will continue. So, yes, lack of funding,
6 because it took us two years to get money for the Iskweu
7 project, but also lack of "I really don't care."

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

9 **NAKUSET:** Does that make sense? Lack of "I
10 don't care."

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So those are all
12 the questions that I have on behalf of this party. So
13 I -- we can maybe move on to --

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. And
15 so -- sorry. We'll stop the time here so it can be
16 recorded. Just -- Commissioners, so you're aware, the
17 Independent First Nation which Sarah is counsel for has
18 23.5 minutes. However, on -- on consent, there's no
19 objections from any parties in the room that Mr. Darrin
20 Blain is going to give his 19 minutes, as well, to the
21 Independent First Nation. And I'm sorry. I just got the
22 notes, and I haven't done the math yet. So ...

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So I'm just waiting for
24 the clock to be set. Okay.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, yes. And I was

1 just --

2 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- doing quick math.

4 Sorry. It took me --

5 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Sure.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Oh, and,

7 Ms. Registrar, please confirm I do have the correct time,

8 which would be 32.5 minutes before we start the clock?

9 Yes? So the Independent First Nation -- Nations will have

10 32.5 minutes. And so the clock will reset.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 42.5 minutes?

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sorry. 42. I'm

13 sorry. 42.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. Okay.

15 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: And just before you get

16 going, Ms. Beamish, for the sound people, it's -- I think

17 it's sounding better up here, and I think the problem has

18 been resolved. Thank you.

19 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: All right. So hello

20 again. I'm now representing Independent First Nations,

21 which is a group of 12 --

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: One -- one second.

23 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Sorry.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just want to get

25 to the 30 seconds. You've got an extra 30 seconds.

1 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Oh, okay. Sure. I'd
2 love my extra 30 seconds. Thank you.

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you.

4 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. All right. So
5 I'm now representing the Independent First Nations in
6 Ontario, and this is a group of 12 unaffiliated
7 Hodinohso:ni and Anishinaabe and Oji-Cree nations. And
8 each of these nations has lost women to violence, most
9 recently, 23-year-old April Carpenter.

10 So I have many questions for all of you, and
11 for the sake of time, at some points I might direct this
12 question to just one or the other of you, but I think that
13 all of you would have strong answers to any of them. So if
14 you have a really burning point you want to add to someone's
15 answer, you can feel free to indicate that to me. And for
16 brevity and given the focus of this Inquiry, I will often
17 refer to Indigenous women in these questions, but I
18 encourage you to think also about the other people who use
19 your shelters, in particular two-spirit people. And if
20 there's something that you feel you need to add, given those
21 thoughts, please do so.

22 Now, at a few points in my questioning, I --
23 I might like to refer to the UN Declaration on the Rights of
24 Indigenous Peoples, or the UNDRIP, which sets out the
25 minimum standards for survival, dignity, and well-being of

1 Indigenous Peoples. Are each of you familiar with the
2 UNDRIP and comfortable with me referring to it?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

5 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

6 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you. So my
7 first question is for Ms. Montour, about the issue of
8 security. You spoke about security risks to shelter staff,
9 and the need for adequate staffing levels at shelters. I'm
10 wondering what other things shelters need to ensure the
11 security of the staff and the people who are using the
12 shelter? And I'm thinking about both equipment-type things,
13 like cameras or fortified doors, and things like training
14 guards, things like that. Can you speak more about -- about
15 what's necessary to keep people safe in these shelters?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. Definitely
17 a secure infrastructure. An alarm on the door; a buzzer on
18 the door allowing people to come in or, you know, allowing
19 people out; cameras, a secure camera system; staff should
20 also have a panic button, I'll be wearing a panic button,
21 especially if staff are single staff, which most staff are.
22 They should be wearing their panic buttons. There should
23 definitely be training on, you know, de-escalating (ph)
24 high-risk situations. How to do that through talking, and
25 how to de-escalate high-risk cases. There should be

1 training specific on a lock-zone, how to -- and -- how to --
2 how to work with individuals who are medicated or perhaps
3 injecting Naloxone if they have to, or using the smelling --
4 the stuff that you -- through -- put through the nasals.

5 Definitely training on any kind of -- there
6 should also be, like, a safety -- staff should also have,
7 like, a training, or the policy should be set for really
8 high-risk cases. So how to -- for example, for staff, how
9 to monitor each other when they leave the parking lot.
10 Perhaps, it's even setting up with your victim services or
11 your police services, eyes-on, or some sort of an alert
12 button that'll, through satellite, can track the staff.

13 Sometimes staff get threatened. And so in
14 those situations, like a partner might threaten that staff,
15 the partner that might be -- they know the -- their partner
16 is in the shelter, so they might threaten that staff. So
17 that staff could -- could have that panic button that
18 through satellite, the police could track if -- when this
19 person is going home, things like that.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Safety planning, a lot
22 of safety planning with staff around even going home, and
23 not to let anybody pull you off the road, and where -- and
24 how you're going to plan if you -- if somebody does. Where
25 are you going to stop? The houses you're going to stop on

1 the way home. So really, extensive safety planning with
2 staff.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Right.

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** To keep safe.

5 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. It sounds like
6 this can be a dangerous role.

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** It is a very dangerous
8 role, it can be for sure.

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. Would you say that
10 Indigenous shelters typically receive adequate funding to
11 ensure that they can meet all these security needs?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No, they don't get
13 adequate funding.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you recommend that
17 governments guarantee specific funding for essential
18 security needs at -- at shelters, safehouses, and
19 transitional housing?

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I'd also like to
22 ask you about -- about maintenance and operations at
23 shelters -- Indigenous shelters. Would you say that the
24 typical Indigenous shelter space is in a good state of
25 repair, or is it common for such shelters to have unmet

1 maintenance needs?

2 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** So as you're asking that
3 question, I think of the ministry funded shelters, and I
4 think of the INAC funded shelters and the AHWS funded
5 shelters. And -- and, I think, amongst our Ontario
6 shelters, we tend to think that the ministry funded shelters
7 are more -- are more secure because there is infrastructure
8 dollars that we can regularly apply for to up -- upkeep our
9 shelters in terms of maintenance and -- and infrastructure.
10 Whereas, with INAC funded shelters, that isn't there.
11 However, there is programs through Canada Mortgage and
12 Housing, CMHC, that we can apply for. But that is -- I've
13 -- I've, kind of, heard that that -- that is not as
14 reliable. I guess, that isn't there as -- as regularly as
15 the ministry infrastructure funding. So I don't -- it
16 depends on who you get funding for -- from, that, I think,
17 the state of your building, I really do. It's unfortunate
18 that it's that way, but it really does depend on who your --
19 one of your -- primary funding comes from.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So would you
21 recommend that governments ensure equitable, sufficient, and
22 dedicated funding for basic maintenance standards in all
23 Indigenous shelters?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So my next

1 questions are for Nakuset. And they're about data. So
2 all -- all three of you yesterday, in your -- in your
3 testimony and materials had talked about shelter staff
4 collecting data and statistics related to the people who use
5 shelters. I think this is a very important function, and
6 I'd like to better understand some of the challenges in this
7 area and how shelters could be better supported.

8 So, Nakuset, would you agree that high-
9 quality data collection by shelters is important for
10 tracking, understanding, healing, and preventing violence
11 against Indigenous women?

12 **NAKUSET:** Yes. At the shelter, when we
13 collect data, there's probably a, maybe, 12 to 14-page
14 intake that we do. So it's -- it's everything. It's really
15 wholistic. We have a healing plan for each woman to find
16 out how we can best serve them.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in your
18 experience, do the shelter staff doing this data-related
19 work, in your shelter and in other shelters that you're
20 aware of, do they generally have special education or
21 training in data collection and management?

22 **NAKUSET:** Well, in Quebec, through Quebec
23 Native Women, there's a program called the *promotion de non-*
24 *violence*, and she coordinates all the Native women's
25 shelters in Quebec, and I don't know, maybe eight or nine

1 years ago, we actually created a tool-kit from every single
2 shelter on their intakes, on their healing plans. That was,
3 you know, with the medicine wheel, and that is how
4 we -- we work together, is to share our own tools. And we
5 keep it in the office, and then whenever our staff, you
6 know, a woman comes in with a particular issue, we have a
7 multitude of papers to refer to, to best help her.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. In your
9 experience, do shelters generally have adequate data
10 management systems or software to support in this work?

11 **NAKUSET:** I -- in Quebec, there's only two
12 shelters that are off reserve. I know the ones that are on
13 reserve have less funding. And I don't know exactly what
14 their databases are like. I think that if you're off
15 shelter [sic], you have better access to different
16 programming. So money is always an issue.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So it sounds to me, from
18 your answer, that there's certainly no -- no guarantee that
19 shelters would have adequate software and tools for this?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. It's -- that's -- I can only
21 speak for what I know. And at our shelter, we do have
22 databases. I've been there for 20 years. I think we got a
23 new system in, probably, five years ago; otherwise, it was
24 pretty much just paperwork, files, but no computer software.
25 Now, we can just type in a woman's name and we have a very

1 clear picture of how many times she used the shelter in the
2 last, I think, five to seven years.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I'm glad to hear
4 that. In your experience, does shelters and shelter staff
5 have adequate opportunities and means to collaborate with
6 one another and learn from one another's experiences with
7 data collection and management?

8 **NAKUSET:** No.

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you
10 recommend that -- that governments ensure that shelters
11 receive -- all shelters receive adequate training, funding,
12 and tools to support high-quality data collection and
13 management?

14 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. The thing is that,
15 when a woman comes in and she's in crisis, you're wanting to
16 help her. You're not necessarily wanting to collect data on
17 her. So we sort of go with what the presenting issue is,
18 and then later on, you know, we do the collection of
19 information, and, you know -- and when we're full, it gets
20 rough. So if there is a certain funding where they can
21 bring someone else in to -- I'd like to say on a quiet day,
22 but, you know, we're open 24/7. I'm not exactly sure.
23 Maybe three o'clock in the morning might be quiet, but I
24 don't know how many staff are going to be around. We don't
25 -- we always have staff at the shelter, but not the full

1 staff at three.

2 So I think that's also another -- it's
3 another problem. I understand that we need the data in
4 order to get more funding, that our governments really like
5 to see numbers, but we are more interested in helping and
6 supporting each individual that walks through our doors.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Actually, my next
8 question is about staff, and it's for you, Ms. Nepinak.
9 Would you say that trauma and burnout are significant issues
10 for Indigenous shelter staff?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. Quite --
12 quite often, we have staff who -- who have the lived
13 experiences coupled with the education to -- to do the work,
14 and there is a lot of precarious trauma that happens as
15 well. I think with -- with Indigenous staff, we're all
16 staff that work in the shelter, is we wear our hearts on our
17 sleeve, and -- and so everyone that comes into the healing
18 lodge is -- is considered a family member. And so with
19 that, we -- why -- why we do case management and we do
20 safety planning and -- and we do the referrals and child
21 support, et cetera, et cetera, we -- we -- we embrace that
22 woman wholly and we -- we try to work with her and treat her
23 as one of our family members.

24 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So that is -- there is a
25 high burnout rate?

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And -- and acknowledging
3 that, you know, most shelter staff are there because they
4 -- they love the people and care about the work, would you
5 say that -- that these issues of trauma and burnout
6 nevertheless affect the quality of services that -- that
7 shelters can provide to the people using them?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. Absolutely
9 does happen, and we see more frequent illnesses, perhaps
10 some depression as well. And quite often, women who work in
11 the shelter are looking after other family members at home
12 as well, so there's very little time for these women to --
13 to do their own self-care and their nurturing. And so at
14 our lodge, we have our -- our Elders program is part of our
15 -- part of our program to look after staff as well, where
16 they have access to ceremony and -- and cultural -- cultural
17 healing as well -- as well as an employee assistance
18 program. And I think it's important for any manager to
19 recognize when staff are burning out and to -- and to pay
20 attention to that and to offer some alternatives to -- to
21 maybe taking a day off, to having them do other duties.
22 That care is so critical.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And would you say,
24 based on what you know of -- of other shelters, would you
25 say that most Indigenous shelter staff would have adequate

1 funding to allow them to -- to get supports like counseling,
2 Elder support, ceremony, that kind of thing, or are there
3 major gaps in that area?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** There are some huge gaps
5 in that area, and no, there is not enough funding to do
6 that. These women are our fire-keepers in the community,
7 and so we need to ensure that they are -- that they are
8 healthy emotionally and -- and physically and
9 psychologically because they -- they take on so much of the
10 -- of the -- the trauma that the women are coming in with.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And so would you
12 support a recommendation that funding for those types of
13 services be considered an important part of overall staffing
14 funding in shelters?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. My next
17 question is also about shelter staff, and it's for you
18 again, Nakuset. So yesterday, you spoke about -- about the
19 problem of many Indigenous shelter staff receiving much
20 lower salaries than -- than shelter staff in -- in non-
21 Indigenous shelters. You don't need to go into specifics,
22 but can you talk roughly about the -- the -- this sort of
23 difference that we're talking about here?

24 **NAKUSET:** I was having a conversation with my
25 clinical co-ordinator and we were talking about how much we

1 pay our addictions worker, and then we talked about another
2 addictions centre that paid \$25 more.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Per hour?

4 **NAKUSET:** Yes, they're shocked. You know,
5 you kind of think you're in the wrong business, but I love
6 my job and I would never leave it, but it's crazy how much
7 other people get. If you look at what executive directors
8 make in the city, like, I'm on the bottom. But, you know,
9 again, I don't do it for the money and I do it because it's
10 an honour to do the work. However, I think that we need to
11 be -- we, the shelter workers across Canada, the Indigenous
12 ones especially, because of colonization and everything that
13 we've been through, that the government should be putting us
14 on a priority list. You know, they talk about
15 reconciliation, and then they don't give us as much money.
16 They talk about, you know, the Aboriginal Healing
17 Foundation, and then after, you know, whatever, was it eight
18 years, they cut it. You know, it's like we just start the
19 healing and then it stops, the funding. So I think that
20 would be a great priority for the government to really
21 support the ones that are doing the work.

22 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So on that note, would
23 you -- would -- was it -- is it fair to say that, within the
24 shelter system, Indigenous shelters tend to employ more
25 Indigenous staff and non-Indigenous -- mainstream shelters

1 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Just the whole shelter
2 system as you know it. Or you can't speak to this question,
3 or...

4 **NAKUSET:** I -- okay. So like I said, in
5 Quebec, there's, you know, a couple of shelters that I know,
6 there's about 12 or 14 Aboriginal Native women's shelters.
7 When they're on-reserve, they're always staffed by
8 Indigenous people. I'm off-reserve. I would have to ask
9 Maison Missinak how many non-Indigenous staff they have. I
10 mean, I know the two women in charge are both Indigenous.
11 You know, we've been around for, you know, 30 years, we
12 haven't always been Indigenous, but we want to hire our own
13 people. We just also need to have those that have the --
14 the proper qualifications.

15 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. Okay. So I guess,
16 taking -- taking into account your answer that -- that, for
17 the on-reserve Indigenous shelters, those staff would
18 generally be Indigenous employees, would you say that it's
19 your impression that the -- the pay difference between
20 Indigenous shelter staff and mainstream shelter staff would
21 be an issue of -- would be something that is
22 disproportionately hurting Indigenous staff? If I
23 understand that correctly?

24 **NAKUSET:** Yes, thanks. Are you saying the
25 non-Indigenous shelters are getting paid more than the

1 Indigenous shelters?

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah.

3 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, yeah.

4 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I know that you
5 -- you can't give a legal opinion here, but would you say
6 that the pay difference in the shelter system between the
7 Indigenous shelters and the mainstream shelters is one that
8 should be viewed as an issue of potential discrimination
9 against Indigenous people?

10 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. At the same time, I think
11 it's pretty much across the board in every position, right?
12 But yeah, when I hear about what other directors are making,
13 I'm always shocked. I'm like, "What?" What? Sorry.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. I mean, I -- we
15 certainly don't want to give the impression that any shelter
16 staff anywhere are probably getting paid what they deserve
17 but -- but -- okay. Thank you.

18 So I'd like to move on to talking about child
19 welfare, and I'll ask my questions to you, Ms. Montour. So
20 you spoke yesterday about the shelter staff's duty to report
21 child protection concerns as being a major barrier to
22 Indigenous women accessing shelter services, and you
23 described that one unintended consequence of the duty to
24 report is that sometimes women won't actually seek out the
25 help that they need because they're scared of a -- of a

1 Child Services intervention in their lives.

2 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

3 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: So in your role, would
4 you say that you frequently see the impacts of the child
5 welfare system on Indigenous children and families?

6 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

7 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And would you agree that
8 even where there are legitimate protection concerns,
9 intervention by a child welfare agency in the lives of
10 Indigenous families is inherently harmful?

11 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can't say that across
12 the board. I can't say that for -- for all those cases. I
13 can't say that, no.

14 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay.

15 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can say that our hope
16 with those collaboration agreements is that -- that
17 we -- we're working together for the betterment of that
18 family. What happens is child protection, their focus is
19 the child, but the shelter, our focus is the family. So
20 that's why we often bump heads.

21 But if we follow those collaboration
22 agreements, they are meant to make a smooth transition for
23 the betterment of the family, but often that does not
24 happen.

25 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Would you say that it's

1 a mistake to consider the wellbeing of the child as a
2 separate thing from the wellbeing of the child's family?
3 That these things are related?

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I think they're
5 related. It's hard for me to think like that because
6 I'm -- my philosophy on life and just how I was raised,
7 it's about the family. So it's -- that's a different -- to
8 me that's a different way of viewing the family.

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So going back to what
10 you had said yesterday about women sometimes not seeking
11 the care that they need because of this risk, would you say
12 that when Indigenous women do not get the help that they
13 need because they're concerned about child welfare
14 intervention, that the duty report -- the duty to report
15 then actually has the perverse effect of putting Indigenous
16 children in the very danger that it's meant to protect them
17 from?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely it can, if
19 she's not -- if she's hesitant to come forward and she
20 chooses just to remain in that -- in that lifestyle because
21 she's afraid of her children being apprehended, definitely.

22 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And you also
23 testified yesterday that you believe the child welfare
24 system needs a lot of work. I believe those are the words
25 that you used?

1 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that
3 this work should include a review of these kinds of
4 unintended harmful effects of the duty to report, and
5 perhaps appropriate reforms to the relevant legislation to
6 reduce those effects?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay, thank you. Now,
9 Ms. Montour, I'd like to ask you about something that was
10 in the Needs Assessment Report, and I can't recall what
11 exhibit that was, I'm sorry. It was about language, the
12 topic of Indigenous languages comes up numerous times in
13 that report.

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

15 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And I'm sure most of us
16 in this room know that a major impact of colonization has
17 been that -- particularly from residential schools, that
18 many Indigenous people do not speak their language and
19 struggle to learn it. Could you briefly explain why your
20 report highlights language learning in the context of
21 healing and violence prevention?

22 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Because most people
23 that come to shelter or to our services are searching.
24 They've been hurt, they've been traumatized, and they're
25 searching for healing. And the language is who we are, so

1 helping people to overcome -- and perhaps that language was
2 stolen from them and they weren't given the opportunity
3 because of colonization and oppression, to -- to learn that
4 language, and so the language becomes a vehicle for them to
5 accept who they are as (speaking in Native language) people
6 or the original people, so the language is part of -- the
7 language is our identity.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And would you say that
9 language learning is not only a healing tool for individual
10 women, but also for families, communities and nations?

11 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So with that in
13 mind, would you recommend that violence related services
14 and strategies for Indigenous people include consideration
15 of language learning and funding for it?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Wholeheartedly, yes.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And there was
18 another thing in the Needs Assessment Report that I also
19 want to ask you about. At page 29 it discussed some
20 different elements of cultural practice in shelter
21 services.

22 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** One of these elements
24 that was listed there was connection to the land.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

1 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And I'd like to explore
2 a little bit more about why this connection to land is
3 important when we consider shelter services. So would you
4 agree that Indigenous peoples, broadly speaking, have
5 distinctive sacred and reciprocal relationships with their
6 homelands?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. And I can -- I
8 come back to teaching as Haudenosaunee women, what we do is
9 we -- we save the umbilical cord what our babes are born
10 and we bury that in the land, and we bury that at home, and
11 what that is so our babies don't go too far from us, they
12 stay close to the land. But not to mention, our relatives
13 are in the land, all our -- our -- when people come to us
14 and they talk about not having any relatives and being
15 alone in the world, we point to them the land. We point to
16 them the trees that know them, the medicines that they
17 have. We -- we point to all the relatives that they have
18 in the land according to our teachings, and so -- and I
19 think that's in there also, specifically for the north.

20 The north have this amazing connection to
21 the land that I absolutely respect from my colleagues that
22 work in the north, and they -- they teach on the land and
23 they have that connection to the land. But I think across
24 the board as the (speaking in Native language) people are
25 the original people, we have that connection to the land,

1 so it's important.

2 It's important to introduce that to our
3 shelter folks who are coming from a place of trauma, of
4 loss, of grief that is overwhelming, that we point them to
5 where they can become stable.

6 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So knowing that
7 systemic disregard for, and disruption of the relationship
8 between Indigenous peoples and their homelands has been a
9 major part of colonization, would you say that the damage
10 to this people/land relationship has been a major driver of
11 violence against Indigenous women and children?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

13 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And would you
14 agree that restoring and strengthening these relationships
15 between peoples and their homelands is a critical part of
16 healing Indigenous families, communities and nations?

17 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

18 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, knowing that there
19 may be good reason that Indigenous women and children leave
20 their community and seek crisis services elsewhere, would
21 that -- knowing that sometimes that might be the right
22 thing to do, would you agree that when Indigenous women and
23 children are forced to leave their homelands because they
24 cannot live safely within their own nation's territories
25 because there's not -- there are not adequate services

1 there, that that displacement itself is an additional form
2 of violence?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, it is.

4 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Do you recommend that a
5 core guiding principle of policy decision related to crisis
6 services for Indigenous people should be respect for their
7 relationship with their homelands, including through
8 reducing situations where they would be forced to leave
9 those homelands to escape violence?

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour, I
12 have a couple questions for you now about privacy.

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yesterday, you
15 had -- you had talked about how sometimes Indigenous women
16 make the choice to go to mainstream shelters rather than
17 Indigenous shelters because they're concerned about
18 confidentiality?

19 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that the
21 decision to go to a mainstream shelter will often for them
22 then represent a trade off whereby they're forced to choose
23 between protecting their privacy and receiving culturally
24 appropriate services?

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

1 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree then
2 that the improvement of shelter services to Indigenous
3 women should have two approaches: One being increasing the
4 number of Indigenous shelters; and the other being
5 improving the cultural appropriateness of the services
6 they're receiving in mainstream shelters?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely, yes.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Nakuset, I have a
9 couple questions for you now. Yesterday you talked about
10 some of the issues that -- that homeless Indigenous people
11 encounter, especially with police and being ticketed for
12 various things that they're trying to do just to stay safe
13 and survive, and you talked in particular about their use
14 of the subway system --

15 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** -- to stay at night.
17 Would you recommend that the municipal laws that are the
18 basis for all of these tickets around stuff, that these
19 municipal laws that are essentially penalizing severe
20 poverty and homelessness be reviewed through that lens?

21 **NAKUSET:** Yes, and not only, you know, make
22 a recommendation, we actually sent in a letter
23 to -- there's a minister of homelessness in Montreal, Serge
24 Lareault, and we wrote how it's discriminatory, the way
25 that they are ticketing Indigenous people.

1 Today, on the front cover of the Gazette,
2 there's a picture of an Inuk woman that has \$25,000 worth
3 of tickets that she will never be able to pay off, and she
4 is saying I am basically a slave now. I am work -- trying
5 to work this off. It is totally demoralizing. And we keep
6 advocating, you know -- I mean, it was Christopher Curtis
7 that wrote the article, and this is what I'm talking about,
8 good allies, because I'm outraged. Maybe the rest of the
9 people who read this article, our allies, will be outraged,
10 and then maybe they'll start making changes because,
11 honestly, \$25,000? How -- basically, she's got to work the
12 rest of her life off.

13 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm. So would you
14 maybe recommend, then, that we don't just look forward at
15 preventing this from happening in the future, but we also
16 look back at -- at -- at these penalties that might need to
17 be forgiven?

18 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And that's what we're
19 trying to do. You know what they do in Montreal? Like,
20 honestly, Cabot Square is an area where Indigenous people
21 have always come to because there's really no urban
22 reserve. That's the place they go to. And they get these
23 tickets that say, "You are not allowed to step into Cabot
24 Square." And we had a situation where one of the -- the
25 clients of the shelter that I've known since I walked in

1 the door, they -- the community had made a mural of three
2 Inuit women. She was one of them.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm.

4 **NAKUSET:** She -- she couldn't walk into the
5 park to see her own mural. She had to go from across the
6 street and look at it. And that is wrong on so many
7 levels.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you say that this
9 is another kind of colonial displacement of Indigenous
10 people?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yes. And -- and punishment. This
12 is the only place that she feels comfortable, and she's not
13 allowed to. She has to sit across the street and watch her
14 friends.

15 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you. So,
16 Ms. Nepinak, I have a few questions for you now.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Okay.

18 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** You spoke a few times
19 yesterday about colonization as the fundamental source of
20 the violence, the systematic violence, that we see against
21 Indigenous women and children.

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, Article 7 of UNDRIP
24 also draws a similar -- a similar link. And it says
25 that -- it draws a link between Indigenous peoples' right

1 to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty, and
2 security of the person, and then Indigenous peoples'
3 collective right to live in freedom, peace, and security as
4 distinct peoples. Would you agree that efforts to ending
5 violence against Indigenous women must be grounded in a
6 decolonial approach that aims to free Indigenous peoples
7 from the imposition of foreign cultural, political, legal,
8 economic, and social systems?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

10 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And Article 23 of
11 the UNDRIP talks about that Indigenous peoples has -- have
12 the right to determine and develop priorities and
13 strategies for exercising their right to development, and
14 in particular, they have the right to be actively involved
15 in developing and determining health, housing, and other
16 economic and social programs affecting them, and as far as
17 possible, to administer these programs through their own
18 institutions.

19 So would you agree that -- that the
20 decolonial approach would include ensuring that Indigenous
21 people -- and include women -- exercise increasing control
22 and self-determination with respect to the design, funding,
23 and delivery of programs for their peoples?

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And Article 4 of UNDRIP

1 states that Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right
2 to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or
3 self-government in matters that are related to their
4 internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for
5 financing these autonomous functions. Would you agree that
6 the shift to greater self-determination for Indigenous
7 peoples must be accompanied by a shift to greater
8 Indigenous control of the funds and resources necessary to
9 ensure safety, dignity, justice, and wellness for
10 Indigenous peoples?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour, I'd
13 like to ask you about something else that was in the needs
14 assessment report. There was a reference in that report to
15 spiritual abuse. Could you briefly explain what that term
16 means in the context of Indigenous people?

17 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Often what we do at
18 Ganohkwasra is we -- we ask about spiritual abuse, we
19 assess that. And we -- and, of course, many people don't
20 understand what that means. So we talk about any threats
21 for -- for people to use bad medicine, for example, would
22 be something that we would consider as spiritual abuse.
23 Any shaming of any of their belief system, any of their
24 religious -- so if they go to long house, if they are
25 supported or if they are shamed, they'll talk about that.

1 Or if they go to church, if they're supported or shamed by
2 family members or -- so that -- I guess that's what we mean
3 is any -- any threats or fears of people using bad medicine
4 or any -- anything like that on them or -- because
5 sometimes people will actually control people by
6 threatening to use bad medicine on them or their family or
7 their children.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So was it
9 mentioned in the report because this is one reason that
10 Indigenous people sometimes seek shelter services?

11 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in -- in your
13 experience in the field, do mainstream shelters adequately
14 recognize and -- and address this issue of spiritual abuse?

15 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** No, they don't.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you say
17 that mainstream shelters are -- are a place where spiritual
18 abuse is ever perpetuated against Indigenous people?

19 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** It's possible that could
20 happen, just because they don't understand. But with
21 the -- the shelter standards that we have given -- and many
22 of the mainstream shelters are trying to incorporate the
23 shelter -- Indigenous shelter standards. There is a list
24 there for them to -- even to refer their Indigenous
25 residents to a traditional knowledge holder or an Elder to

1 help them.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you
3 recommend that more attention, programming, and funding be
4 directed to this issue of spiritual abuse across the
5 shelter system?

6 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Definitely.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And I have
8 another question for you as -- as a woman who belongs to a
9 matriarchal culture. On -- on page 24 of the needs
10 assessment report, it states that one characteristic of
11 Indigenous women who use shelters is patriarchal domination
12 within their home.

13 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Is it fair to say that
15 in the context of Indigenous communities across Canada,
16 patriarchal domination is a widespread impact of
17 colonization?

18 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Definitely. It's
19 a -- it's a value that came in that wasn't -- that was the
20 settler's values. It wasn't our values. And through
21 colonization, it was -- it was imposed on our people to the
22 place where four or five generations later, the idea of the
23 matriarchal society is very foreign to many of our people.
24 And so -- which was our traditional ways. So I definitely
25 believe that that has come in as a form of colonization and

1 is -- is present in many families today, and -- and can be
2 very harmful, in fact.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm. So would you say
4 that strategies for reducing violence against Indigenous
5 women must then address patriarchy as a key driver of that
6 violence?

7 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes. I would say that,
8 but also as a Hodinöhsö:ni women -- woman, I would also say
9 that we -- what we need to do is we all need to look at our
10 power, our privilege, and to be aware of how that can be
11 abusive in -- in any way. So I think that whether it's
12 patriarchal or -- or again, I talked yesterday about our
13 traditional teachings, about that duality of the good and
14 the bad twin is in everybody. So I think we all need to
15 look at that.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

17 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Definitely patriarchal,
18 yes. If it's -- if it's off balance, it definitely needs
19 to be looked at.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Nakuset, I have a
21 question for you. You spoke yesterday about sometimes
22 being forced to shape your shelter programming in certain
23 ways in order to access funding for them.

24 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And did I understand you

1 correctly that this sometimes includes compromising with
2 respect to the cultural integrity of your programming? The
3 cultural appropriateness of your programming? I'm thinking
4 of you spoke about -- about Elders not being
5 properly -- properly approached and -- and recognized.

6 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. It's a loaded question.
7 I'm just thinking about all the different programs that we
8 have to sort of tweak in order to fit into the right box.
9 And that is an ongoing issue.

10 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. Now,
11 Article 8 of UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples and
12 individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced
13 assimilation, and that the state shall provide effective
14 mechanisms for the prevention and redress for any form of
15 forced assimilation or integration. Would you say that
16 the -- these tweaks and sacrifices that you make in your
17 programming in order to access funding are forms of forced
18 assimilation or integration?

19 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And would you recommend
21 that funding models and policies related to services for
22 Indigenous people be systematically reviewed and reformed
23 through an antiracist and decolonial lens?

24 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So we just have a

1 couple minutes left. I'd like to ask each of you very,
2 very quickly in a few words if you -- if you have a
3 response to this question. If you could each get enough
4 money to improve one thing about Indigenous shelter
5 services, what might that one thing be?

6 Do you want to go first, Ms. Nepinak?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I would -- oh, it's
8 hard to prioritize because there's such a high need in --
9 in -- in every aspect of the issue of violence, but I would
10 probably have to go with the children and -- and increase
11 services and supports for the little ones that are coming
12 into the shelter who are so traumatized and the broken
13 little spirits that come in, because you can often see this
14 in their -- in their eyes, and -- so increase supports for
15 children who are traumatized by violence.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in a sentence
17 or two, Ms. Montour, what might your one thing be?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would ensure that my
19 shelter is no longer single-staffed. I would hire enough so
20 that it -- at least double, maybe triple-staffed at --
21 during high-crisis times.

22 **NAKUSET:** Repeat the question again?

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** If you could get enough
24 funding to fix one problem with -- with your Indigenous
25 shelter, what might that one thing be?

1 **NAKUSET:** Funding. Give us unlimited money.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Unlimited money.

3 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

4 **(LAUGHTER)**

5 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. It's unlimited
6 money. All right.

7 And now I have one minute left and I'm going
8 to take up the challenge of our MC yesterday to say
9 something about the growing -- Indigenous people as the
10 fastest-growing part of the Canadian population. Would you
11 -- maybe I'll ask you, Ms. Nepinak. Would you agree that
12 there is a common stereotype among non-Indigenous Canadians
13 that Indigenous communities are a drain on our system, our
14 economic system?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, it's racism, is
16 what it is, and absolutely, there is. I -- I mean, you just
17 need to look at some of the news headlines across the
18 country and some of the comments that are made that --

19 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah, we -- yeah.

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- you know, that -- that
21 we -- we don't pay our taxes, that we -- all Indigenous
22 women are high-risk, et cetera, et cetera.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So there is a common...

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And so, sorry, with the

1 last ten seconds, I'm going to ask you, would you say that
2 because Indigenous people are actually the fastest-growing
3 part of the Canadian population, that it is an important and
4 excellent investment to be fixing these problems now?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. It -- we're
6 -- we're in a crisis. It needs to be fixed now.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you so much
8 to all of you for your answers today.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. --
10 thank you, Ms. Beamish. We -- so that we see the -- the
11 third party, through Mr. Darrin Blain had given assigned,
12 we're now moving to the fourth party, which is Ms. Beth
13 Symes on behalf of Pauktuutit.

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Oh, sorry,
15 and actually, before we call that, is it possible to have --
16 we've had a request for a five-minute break, so I'm sorry,
17 Ms. Symes. If we could just have a five-minute break, that
18 would -- thank you. Five minutes.

19 --- Upon recessing at 9:31 a.m.

20 --- Upon reconvening at 9:40 a.m.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Please set the time
22 for Pauktuutit and partner organizations for 37 minutes.

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Thank you. My name is Beth
24 Symes, and I represent Pauktuutit, Labrador Inuit Women's
25 Association, Saturviit, the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre,

1 and the Manitoba Inuit Association. And my focus today is
2 on Inuit women and girls.

3 And I -- I want to explain to you that these
4 questions that I ask, the areas I ask, come out of my
5 client's workshopping the issues -- issues for Inuit
6 women -- women and girls. And I have been invaluablely
7 assisted by the contributions of Charlotte Wolfrey and
8 Sarah Nowyakallak who sit on the Family Advisory Committee
9 and are here today and -- and have been helping me, and I
10 share their wisdoms.

11 I do want to acknowledge and thank you for
12 actually living out your care, your concern, for Indigenous
13 women. You do it every day, and my clients acknowledge
14 that and thank you.

15 **JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SYMES:**

17 So I'm going to begin with you, Josie, and
18 ask: Has Awo Taan ever had Inuit in your shelter, in your
19 services?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, we have.

21 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And, Sandra, has your
22 shelter -- you're on Six Nations land in Ontario, but also
23 speaking from the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, do you
24 have Inuit women in your shelters?

25 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes, we have.

1 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

2 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SYMES:**

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And, of course, Nakuset, I
4 know that you have Inuit women. In fact, there is no Inuit
5 women's shelter in Montreal, is there?

6 **NAKUSET:** No. 50 percent of our clientele
7 is Inuit. I know that there are other services like Chez
8 Doris that also partners with Makivik, and they have
9 special funding -- I think PAQ does -- *Projets Autochtones*
10 *du Québec* also gets money from them. So I think what
11 happens is other organizations get small bits of money to
12 address or service Inuit people. I believe the Open Door
13 also receives money, and the Native Friendship Centre.

14 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So in your service of both
15 Inuit and First Nations women, you'd agree with me that the
16 needs of Inuit women can be different than the needs of
17 First Nations women who come to your shelter?

18 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And that the way that
20 they -- the ideal way to receive the services that they
21 need can also be different?

22 **NAKUSET:** Say that again? The ideal way?

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** That the services are
24 delivered to Inuit women can be different than the way
25 services are delivered to First Nations women.

1 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I have Irene Qavavauq, who
2 works for me. She is Inuk, and she speaks the language, so
3 we make sure that we have the staff that can speak. I
4 mean, she doesn't have both dialects so sometimes it's
5 limited, but, I mean, it's better than my Inuktitut.

6 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And way better than mine.
7 Now, I just want to reference some data from the 2016
8 census that was, for the record, marked as Exhibit 21 in
9 the first panel in Quebec City. So it's in on the record,
10 and I'm just going to go to it. That census says that in
11 2016, there were 975 Inuit in Montreal, and that 63 percent
12 of them were women. Does that number seem a little bit low
13 to you?

14 **NAKUSET:** Totally low.

15 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you join with the
16 Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre in taking issue with those
17 numbers and concerned that the Inuit in urban centres have
18 been really undercounted, substantially undercounted?

19 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

20 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, you've been collecting
21 data -- I'm now going to focus the questions on Montreal
22 because I've got more information about that to ask you.
23 You've been collecting data electronically from five to
24 seven years. Can you tell us, Nakuset, where do the Inuit
25 women come from who come to your shelter? And by that, I

1 mean, where in Inuit Nunangat do they come from?

2 **NAKUSET:** I don't know exactly because, as
3 the executive director, I don't do the intakes. Nunavut
4 and Nunavik is where they come from. And like I said,
5 there is a -- a huge amount of Inuit population in -- in
6 Montreal.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay. And second question,
8 then. For the women, the Inuit women who come to your
9 shelter, do you track why they come? Just the presenting
10 reasons, and can you tell us about that?

11 **NAKUSET:** Well, we always do full intake, so
12 we find out why. But what I have come to see in the last,
13 you know, couple of years that I've been working is that
14 through the northern module, there's not enough health
15 services in -- in the community, so they come to Montreal.
16 And when they come to Montreal, they are just astounded
17 with, you know, the lower prices of everything, the amount
18 of housing, and they choose to stay in the city. But
19 because they don't speak French, because they don't have
20 the education in order to get a job, they fall through the
21 cracks, and they end up at the shelters.

22 So -- and we're lucky to have, you know, an
23 outreach worker at Cabot Square because he also sees a
24 large population of Inuit there, too. They used to have
25 Nunavik House right on Tupper Street, which is right by

1 Cabot Square, so that's why there's a -- a large population
2 around that area. Now, it's moved to Dorval. So -- but we
3 still see a large population, so we try to create a lot of
4 services for them. I'm not sure if I answered your
5 question.

6 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You did.

7 **NAKUSET:** Okay.

8 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Absolutely. So,
9 Commissioners, you'll remember that in the Montreal
10 hearing, Sarah Nowyakallak and her family told the story
11 about when their -- Sarah's older sister went missing in
12 Montreal, and the family came from -- from Nunavik. And
13 they were -- they were just lost as to how to link into the
14 services that -- that exist, right? Just -- just
15 completely lost how to -- part of it was language.

16 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

17 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Part of it was Montreal is,
18 like, many, many times bigger.

19 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

20 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And most importantly, the
21 different way of doing things.

22 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Right? And is that -- was
24 Sarah's description of -- of that, just being lost as to
25 how the system works, pretty common amongst Inuit women

1 that you serve?

2 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And, unfortunately,
3 working at the Native Women's Shelter I've seen a lot of
4 our Inuit women pass away. The streets, living on them, it
5 just -- it kills them. And we're always hoping that they
6 will come back to the shelter to sort of strengthen them so
7 they can decide where they want to go, if they want to
8 return to the community, if they want to stay here, if we
9 can give them the services, but that's also why we have the
10 Iskweu Project. So, I mean, if you ever see our logo, we
11 have an ulu on it. We want the women to see our poster and
12 to let them know that this is a way to navigate the city,
13 the city will eat you up, so these are the ways and these
14 are the organizations and these are the people that you can
15 call that are Indigenous that will help you.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So, Commissioners, this is
17 my first chance to ask questions about urban Inuit women,
18 so that's why I'm focussing on this. Maybe we should all
19 turn to Exhibit 38, that wonderful Housing Needs and
20 Preferences of Indigenous People Using Community Resources
21 in Montreal. If you've got it, maybe we could go through
22 it.

23 Nakuset, you helped develop the questions
24 for the survey?

25 **NAKUSET:** No.

1 MS. BETH SYMES: Your staff did?

2 NAKUSET: My -- yes, yes, my --

3 MS. BETH SYMES: Okay.

4 NAKUSET: Yeah, my -- I run the committee,
5 but, yes, Tilly, who works through the Native Women's
6 Shelter, was an integral part of this.

7 MS. BETH SYMES: When I say "you," perhaps I
8 mean sort of like the collective you, all right?

9 NAKUSET: Okay.

10 MS. BETH SYMES: I'll give you credit for
11 everything, but you're very honest and generous with your
12 staff. All right. And obviously you've read this report;
13 do you agree with its findings?

14 NAKUSET: Yes.

15 MS. BETH SYMES: It's your lived reality as
16 well, is it?

17 NAKUSET: Yes.

18 MS. BETH SYMES: And so the study shows
19 that -- it's about homelessness in Montreal amongst
20 Indigenous people?

21 NAKUSET: Yeah.

22 MS. BETH SYMES: And it shows, then, that of
23 the people surveyed, the Inuit women were considerably
24 younger than the Inuit men that were -- that were surveyed?

25 NAKUSET: M'hm.

1 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Inuit -- for women it was,
2 I think, around a median age of 38, whereas for men it was
3 around 45. And I'm just reading off those graphs.

4 **NAKUSET:** Okay.

5 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay. And 11 percent of
6 the Inuit women had been in Montreal for less than two
7 years?

8 **NAKUSET:** Okay.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** But an interesting
10 statistic is that 70 percent of the Inuit women had been in
11 Montreal for five years or more.

12 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

13 **MS. BETH SYMES:** As you said, they come
14 south maybe for a reason, but they stay --

15 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- the Inuit women stay.
17 And let's talk next about language. Sandra, you said
18 language is identity, it's who we are?

19 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

20 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And, Nakuset, would you
21 agree with me, again from the Inuit perspective, it's
22 really important, language is really important to be able
23 to communicate?

24 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely, that's why I have
25 staff that speak the language.

1 **MS. BETH SYMES:** But I'm thinking about the
2 Inuk woman, right?

3 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So if she's trying to tell
5 her story --

6 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- to the Montreal
8 police --

9 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- right?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

12 **MS. BETH SYMES:** It's incredibly important
13 that she's able to communicate what happened, its impact on
14 her, et cetera?

15 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. And I would go across the
16 board. Also at youth protection, at hospitals, everywhere.
17 They need to be able to speak their language and they get
18 lost in the communication.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And Montreal is a French
20 speaking city predominantly.

21 **NAKUSET:** M'hm, yeah.

22 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Yet I look at this study,
23 Exhibit 38, and I see that 13 percent of the women -- of
24 the Inuit women who were surveyed speak only Inuktitut?

25 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

1 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Could you answer yes or no,
2 sorry, it's just --

3 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- we're trying to create a
5 record.

6 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Thank you. And that 66
8 percent of the Inuit women surveyed speak no French
9 whatsoever?

10 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

11 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And it's pretty hard, would
12 you agree with me, it's very hard to communicate your
13 needs, your needs for services, if you speak no French?

14 **NAKUSET:** That's right.

15 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you agree with me
16 that it's really impossible to communicate your needs to
17 the service providers if you speak only Inuktitut?

18 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, in Happy Valley-Goose
20 Bay the Inquiry learned that although an Inuk family might
21 have spoken English, when it came to telling their story
22 about something that was deeply intimate, like sexual
23 violence --

24 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

25 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- or horrendous deaths,

1 et cetera, when they came to that part of the story they
2 switched to their language?

3 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you agree with me
5 that service providers, whether they are police or health
6 care or addictions services or child welfare services, have
7 to understand?

8 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Being able to speak in your
10 own language is essential to being able to communicate?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, they should all have
12 translators.

13 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Because I assume that in
14 Montreal there are few, if any, police speaking Inuktitut?

15 **NAKUSET:** There's none.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** In terms of emergency room
17 services, in hospitals, any Inuktitut nurses, doctors?

18 **NAKUSET:** I'm not sure. I know that the
19 Crees have Wasaya House, but -- I think that's what it's
20 called, or Wichia, (ph) I forget the name of it, but it's
21 at one of the children's hospital, like a special cultural
22 room, but there's nothing for -- for the Inuit population.

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when we go into mental
24 health services, whether it's for addiction or it's for
25 seeing a psychiatrist or a psychologist or even a

1 counsellor --

2 **NAKUSET:** Until.

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- that there are virtually
4 no services in Montreal for Inuktitut?

5 **NAKUSET:** No. No, I mean we have
6 psychologists that are Mohawk, like Suzy Goodleaf. You
7 know, we have Anike Seewee (ph). We have a couple of First
8 Nations, but none yet that are Inuit. But I believe
9 they're coming.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** That would be wonderful.

11 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

12 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when we look at the
13 statistics from Census Canada, Exhibit 21, Panel 1, Quebec
14 City, in the 2016, 99 percent of people -- of Inuit living
15 in Nunavik speak Inuktitut?

16 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

17 **MS. BETH SYMES:** 99 percent. And that 89
18 percent in Nunavut speak Inuktitut? This is -- this is
19 virtually everyone?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, it's beautiful.

21 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And so when they come
22 south, that's still their language?

23 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

24 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you -- you told
25 this wonderful story yesterday too, where you add on

1 culture to language, the story about the woman who was
2 identified as Cree, and when the -- when the intake person
3 says, but why didn't she tell me --

4 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

5 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- that she was Inuk --

6 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- your staff said because
8 you've got her child?

9 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And so the cultural and the
11 language intersect in a way such that nuances are lost in
12 the telling of the stories?

13 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And we also find that
14 with the Inuit men, that when they go to court and they
15 don't look at the judge because it's seen as disrespectful,
16 but then, you know, we are judged as, oh, you must be
17 guilty because you can't even look at us in the eye. So I
18 think that there needs to be training on all levels.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And let's go to Exhibit 38
20 and its findings. On page 1 the researchers say very
21 bluntly that Inuit are overrepresented amongst the homeless
22 in Montreal?

23 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry, Ms. Symes,
25 can you -- you said the exhibit name, can you just confirm

1 the title of that?

2 MS. BETH SYMES: Housing Needs and
3 Preferences of Indigenous People.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah.

5 MS. BETH SYMES: That's the one I ask
6 everyone to turn up.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

8 MS. BETH SYMES: I'm going to be using that
9 one. Now, if we go to page 11 of that report.

10 NAKUSET: Yeah.

11 MS. BETH SYMES: The researchers find the
12 following, and I just want to go through with -- them
13 because I think they're so important. That in Montreal the
14 Inuit are isolated by language --

15 NAKUSET: M'hm.

16 MS. BETH SYMES: -- do you agree?

17 NAKUSET: Yeah.

18 MS. BETH SYMES: They are less connected to
19 public services.

20 NAKUSET: Yeah.

21 MS. BETH SYMES: They are more vulnerable?

22 NAKUSET: Yeah.

23 MS. BETH SYMES: The Inuit are poor?

24 NAKUSET: Yes.

25 MS. BETH SYMES: They're less likely to live

1 in their own home?

2 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And this is true of
4 comparing them to other Indigenous people?

5 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

6 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So in Montreal, would you
7 agree with me that it -- Inuit, and in particular Inuit
8 women and girls, are at -- most at risk?

9 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. They are very, very high at
10 risk, and that's why we have, you know, such a large
11 population at the shelter.

12 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You've worked tirelessly
13 with your message about cultural -- cultural competence to
14 service providers.

15 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You've -- you've been, you
17 know, given the back of people's hand, and you've come back
18 for more. I sure want you on my side when I get into
19 trouble, I tell you. You're a fierce advocate, madam. You
20 -- you have tried this over and over again to try and sell
21 that you must -- that service providers must be culturally
22 competent, really, in order to do their job.

23 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

24 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay. This isn't a, it
25 would be nice if it is -- you actually can't provide

1 services of health, child welfare, et cetera, unless you are
2 culturally competent.

3 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And you spoke yesterday
5 about your frustration in -- in trying to educate the
6 police.

7 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

8 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And you're Pollyannaish that
9 this new major is going to make a difference. But there is
10 a huge gap, isn't there? A huge gap between provision of
11 police services and cultural competency?

12 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

13 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when you're doing the
14 cultural competency, I -- I understood, and please correct
15 me, that it was on behalf of Indigenous people. It was
16 cultural competency for all -- for all Indigenous people,
17 not just for First Nations, not just for Inuit; is that
18 correct?

19 **NAKUSET:** I'm sorry, what do you mean? I was
20 giving the training to non-Indigenous people on Indigenous
21 people, so First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

22 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So -- so my question is, the
23 course that you gave to non-Indigenous --

24 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

25 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- people --

1 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

2 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- was cultural competency
3 with respect to First Nations, yes?

4 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

5 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Métis?

6 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And Inuit?

8 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And how long was the
10 training? How many hours?

11 **NAKUSET:** Well, you know, we developed a
12 whole bunch of different things. I mean, we had the -- the
13 manual that was put into evidence there. And that -- had
14 they utilized it, it could be as long as they wanted it to
15 be. The training that we actually did was, I think they
16 gave us 2.5 hours. I think we negotiated 4.5 hours. Yeah,
17 they wouldn't even give us a whole day.

18 **MS. BETH SYMES:** I was really taken aback
19 when you said that the police officers laughed during the
20 presentation.

21 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. They were very, very
22 disrespectful. I mean, I was there as a helper, and I
23 actually had to walk around the blanket and tell people to
24 stop it. I was policing the police. I'm not very popular
25 with them by the way.

1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. BETH SYMES: That's not your role in
3 life, to be popular. And when an Inuit -- an Inuk woman
4 goes to the police, right --

5 NAKUSET: M'hm.

6 MS. BETH SYMES: -- you send a staff with
7 her, right?

8 NAKUSET: Always. They won't go.

9 MS. BETH SYMES: And if they went alone, they
10 wouldn't get the services that they deserve?

11 NAKUSET: They don't -- they won't go alone.
12 They won't. We have to have long conversations with them,
13 and -- and be by their side. And I remember even Jessica,
14 the Iskweu worker, she had to -- an Inuk woman had to give
15 testimony, and halfway through, she was just so overcome.
16 And Jessica said to the police officer, "Can -- can I just
17 take her outside for a cigarette?" And the police officer
18 was, like, "No, you can't." And Jessica really convinced
19 him. So just that break for her to
20 breathe --

21 MS. BETH SYMES: M'hm.

22 NAKUSET: -- to debrief a little bit, and
23 then to go back and finish. Like, because she wouldn't have
24 done it otherwise. So if we don't have, you know, these
25 specialized workers to -- to be by their side and to help

1 them just be treated like human beings, right, it's not
2 going to work.

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, we've talked -- you've
4 talked, actually, about police, you've talked about physical
5 healthcare --

6 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- you've talked about
8 mental healthcare and addiction. So I'm going to skip right
9 to child protection. In Batshaw, is that how you pronounce
10 it?

11 **NAKUSET:** Batshaw.

12 **MS. BETH SYMES:** In Batshaw then, for
13 Inuit --

14 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

15 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- Inuit women and their
16 children, have they received, to your knowledge, any
17 cultural training for Inuit?

18 **NAKUSET:** Well, I did training. So we did
19 training on, sort of, like Native 101. And then last year,
20 the network team, so Vicki Balldo and Elizabeth Fast,
21 Catherine Richardson, one of my staff, went in and did
22 another training. So we try and we put a lot of Inuit
23 content in it. So we have to advocate, and we have to be,
24 like, "Here's the training. You want the training? I bet
25 you'll like the training. You should really take the

1 training. You going to take the training yet?" So it's
2 almost like stalkers, right, friendly stalkers, but that's
3 what you have to do. You have to be relentless.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And has anyone told you that
5 you and the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre have the same
6 mission and the same drive to try and increase the cultural
7 competence of child protection workers?

8 **NAKUSET:** No. But it's the best compliment I
9 ever got.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You deserve it. When --
11 when an Inuk child is apprehended, taken away in Montreal,
12 is she placed in a on -- a non-Inuit setting?

13 **NAKUSET:** She is placed in a non-Inuit
14 setting. Yeah. It's -- it's pretty much the norm, which is
15 why we try to actively recruit Aboriginal families, Inuit
16 families. We've being doing it for years. I have people
17 who tell me, "Why are you working with the enemy?" I'm like
18 -- because I'll go to these places with Batshaw, and I'm,
19 like, "If I don't, we're not going to change." But most of
20 the children are placed with non -- and they separate the
21 children. If they have siblings, it is -- we just have
22 horror story after horror story about what happens.

23 And I just have to say, I've seen women,
24 Inuit women, that have let's say seven children, they take
25 the first child, and then when she's pregnant with the next

1 one, Youth Protection is at the hospital ready to take that
2 child. And then the third child, and then -- so they don't
3 even give her a chance to redeem herself. They just assume
4 that she's going to be a bad mother, which is why I started
5 the collaboration with Batshaw. You know, trying to get
6 them to follow it, it is -- is not as easy. But, you know,
7 at least you -- you got to, kind of, put a step forward. So
8 it's -- it -- and, you know, one particular mother, you
9 know, she's -- she's not with us anymore. It kills them.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when a child, an -- an
11 Inuk child is taken -- taken away, she's also taken away
12 from her extended family?

13 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Her aunties, her uncles --

15 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- or -- because they could
17 well be in Nunavik, right?

18 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Or Nunavut, or anywhere
20 else?

21 **NAKUSET:** Can I just say that there was a
22 particular case where this Inuit boy wanted to see his
23 cousin, and they didn't allow it. They -- he was, I think,
24 like, six or something, and he was already losing the
25 language. And our case workers were trying to say, "Can we

1 -- we'd like to put him in Inuit Inuktitut classes." And
2 they wouldn't permit it in -- in the -- in the -- in, like,
3 the care or the safety plan for him. They -- they wouldn't
4 do that. Like, when he returns, he's not going to be able
5 to speak anymore. You don't think that's a priority? "Oh,
6 no. It's not a priority." But we have to advocate on every
7 single level. And it's -- it's not easy. I mean, my staff
8 is amazing.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And -- and so when the
10 children are placed in -- in a non -- a non-Inuit foster
11 family, they, you've said, lost their language, but they
12 also lose their culture, right? There's no obligation on a
13 foster parent to continue the Inuit cultures and traditions
14 for them?

15 **NAKUSET:** And not only that, there are
16 biases. I can -- oh, my God. I have heard from colleagues,
17 because there's the Rising Sun Childcare Centre, sometimes
18 -- there was a mother that came in, so a white foster
19 mother, and she was discussing her child, and they're, like,
20 "Yeah, well, you know, he's kind of dirty, but, you know,
21 he's Inuk, so that makes sense, right?" What? So now, I'm
22 like, all right, so now, anyone who takes an Indigenous
23 child, we got to teach those parents. Like, I said, it's an
24 honour to have our children. If you're going to take our
25 children, you need to be fully trained. You need to earn

1 the right to have our children. They won't let me do those
2 interviews yet, but I would love to. I would love to be,
3 you know, have a team of us, to be, "You want to take one of
4 our children? Let's see if you're qualified."

5 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And then you said the
6 obvious thing, aging out of care. In -- in Quebec, when
7 does a -- a child age out of care?

8 **NAKUSET:** At 18.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So when a child -- when an
10 Inuk child ages out of care, she's on her own?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, unless she comes to the
12 shelter. Sometimes they come back. You know, sometimes
13 they're at the shelter as children and then they remember it
14 as a good place, and we're seeing a lot more of those girls
15 come back.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** But if she was taken into
17 care as a young child, she would have lost her language,
18 right?

19 **NAKUSET:** Sometimes.

20 **MS. BETH SYMES:** But it -- do you agree with
21 me it might be very difficult to go back to, let's say,
22 Nunavut?

23 **NAKUSET:** Yes. Yes, for sure.

24 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You agree.

25 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

1 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Any other part of Inuit
2 community?

3 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And are there any special
5 programs that Montreal offers for Inuit children who are
6 aging out of care?

7 **NAKUSET:** No.

8 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You were sort of laughing
9 earlier, but --

10 **NAKUSET:** No. No.

11 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- in amazement.

12 **NAKUSET:** You know, I have way too many
13 ideas. I would love to have the transitional, supportive
14 housing for those that are aging out of this system so they
15 can just be in something that's culturally appropriate.
16 They can have maybe up to two to three years there. I'm not
17 talking about the transitional house that I'm having for the
18 shelter, that something completely different. This is for,
19 hey, I've survived Youth Protection, I want to learn who I
20 am, I want to get the tools that I need so..

21 Because what happens is, they get out of the
22 system and they go right to the streets. They have the --
23 you know, there's a lot of predators, pimps that pick up the
24 girls at a young age and put them into, you know, the sex
25 trade. It's, you know, we have to protect them, and I've

1 been telling Batshaw for years that we need to do this, but
2 you know, it's always a money issue and then you have to
3 fill out the forms and I'm a little overextended.

4 **(LAUGHTER)**

5 **NAKUSET:** But I still have the dream.

6 **MS. BETH SYMES:** On page 10 of exhibit 38, it
7 says that more than 72 percent of Inuit women that were
8 surveyed did not wish to return to their own community.

9 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** They're -- they're -- the
11 Inuit women you serve are, despite the challenges of
12 homelessness and lack of services, want -- intend to stay in
13 Montreal, and we need to know that, don't we, for the
14 future?

15 **NAKUSET:** Well, yeah, because they may not
16 have -- they may not have housing, they may not -- there
17 might have been a conflict within the family that is not
18 resolved. They came here, if they go back to that conflict,
19 you know. I see the women come and go, and -- and they want
20 to be with their family, but because of the dynamics, it's
21 not really the best thing to be around their family. So,
22 you know, there's -- it's the dream. The dream is to be in
23 Montreal and to have it all, and we don't see that happening
24 for our women. You know, we end up being a statistic, and I
25 am totally against that.

1 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And I notice in sharp
2 contrast that, on the same page of Exhibit 38, that 45
3 percent of the Inuit men who were surveyed would like to or
4 plan to or dream of returning home. It's a sharp contrast,
5 do you agree?

6 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. Yeah.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And might that be related to
8 why they came to Montreal in the first place?

9 **NAKUSET:** I'm not exactly sure if I know the
10 answer to that.

11 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And that hasn't been -- that
12 would be an interesting thing to survey, wouldn't it?

13 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14 **MS. BETH SYMES:** The 2016 Census, again, for
15 the record, Exhibit 21, in Quebec City, panel number 1.
16 Census Canada, for -- said in 2016, if you look at the
17 period, the -- the last ten years, 2006 to 2016, the number
18 of Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat grew by 61.9 percent.
19 Does that surprise you?

20 **NAKUSET:** Sorry, I can't wrap my head around
21 that one. Say that again? The number of --

22 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** If we
23 could just stop the time for a minute? Ms. Symes, I -- I
24 just want to acknowledge that that document hasn't been put
25 before her, so maybe if you could rephrase the question a

1 little, like --

2 MS. BETH SYMES: Get me to -- let -- let me
3 do it in a shorthand way then. Statistics Canada 2016,
4 records for everyone to see that in the ten-year period,
5 from 2006 to 2016, the number of Inuit living outside Inuit
6 Nunangat rose by 61.9 percent.

7 NAKUSET: So you saying when they're outside
8 of the community?

9 MS. BETH SYMES: Yes.

10 NAKUSET: Okay.

11 MS. BETH SYMES: And that they're coming to
12 major urban centres. Ottawa --

13 NAKUSET: Yeah.

14 MS. BETH SYMES: -- Montreal, Winnipeg --

15 NAKUSET: Yeah.

16 MS. BETH SYMES: -- Edmonton, et cetera.

17 NAKUSET: Yeah.

18 MS. BETH SYMES: Given that statistic, won't
19 the number of Inuit women seeking your services increase?

20 NAKUSET: Yeah.

21 MS. BETH SYMES: Increase dramatically?

22 NAKUSET: Sure.

23 MS. BETH SYMES: And are you equipped in
24 terms of resources?

25 NAKUSET: I'm trying.

1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. BETH SYMES: No, but if the number is
3 going up by 61.9, almost 62 percent --

4 NAKUSET: Yeah.

5 MS. BETH SYMES: -- if your caseload is
6 rising --

7 NAKUSET: Yeah.

8 MS. BETH SYMES: -- let's -- let's project
9 forward.

10 NAKUSET: Yeah.

11 MS. BETH SYMES: Sixty-two percent increase
12 in Inuit women. Are you equipped --

13 NAKUSET: No.

14 MS. BETH SYMES: -- resourced to do this?

15 NAKUSET: No. We're coming to you.

16 MS. BETH SYMES: And are the service
17 providers in Montreal equipped to competently serve, provide
18 services, to these Inuit women and children?

19 NAKUSET: No.

20 MS. BETH SYMES: Thank you.

21 NAKUSET: Thank you.

22 MS. BETH SYMES: Excuse me. I was taught how
23 to do this and I'd better not blow it. *Nukoomeek*. It means
24 thank you.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Thank

1 you. Just with an awareness of the time, I'm asking the
2 Commissioners if I might call one more of the parties that
3 have 19 minutes before we ask for a break. On that basis, I
4 would like to invite the Regina Treaty Status Indian
5 Services up, Ms. Erica Beaudin. Ms. Beaudin will have 19
6 minutes on the clock. Nineteen minutes on the clock.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Good morning. Oh. Am I
8 good? Hello. Can you hear? Good morning. A final thank
9 you to the Elders, drummers, and singers for their prayers
10 and songs we've heard this week. As well, once again, as a
11 citizen of Treaty 4, I acknowledge the continued welcome to
12 Treaty 7 and bring well wishes from our treaty area. My
13 name is Erica Beaudin and I'm the Executive Director of the
14 Regina Treaty Status Indian Services.

15 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

17 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Nakuset, *kinanâskomitin*,
18 and I apologize, I'm a horrible Cree speaker, for your
19 presentation yesterday morning. Your First Nation, the Lac
20 La Ronge Indian Band, sits on some of the most beautiful
21 land in all of this country. Your Chief, Tammy Cook-
22 Searson, is pretty fierce and definitely a role model for
23 all of us. I can see that you fit in well with your home
24 community.

25 This week, we have heard from victim services

1 on Monday. Many of our provinces have their victim services
2 within the police services. If we think of victim services
3 to include domestic violence or interpersonal violence or
4 any missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls'
5 positions, that's basically what I'm talking about. Now,
6 yesterday, you talked about having or needing a liaison
7 between the woman and police. In your experience, do you
8 believe that when governments decide to have police-based
9 victim services positions, that these positions aren't as
10 effective as the victim services or advocacy positions that
11 are community-based?

12 **NAKUSET:** Sorry, you want to ask that again?

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. Do you believe
14 that, when governments decide to have police-based victim
15 services, so the victim services are, like right in the
16 police services --

17 **NAKUSET:** Like in each station?

18 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Most of the time, in the
19 municipal police forces. That these positions aren't as
20 effective as victim services if they are in the community-
21 based organizations?

22 **NAKUSET:** They should be in the community
23 organizations. They shouldn't be at the police. I'm not
24 sure if I'm answering your question properly, but I know
25 that we -- if they were to give an office at the shelter

1 where we can process and get the expertise to do the
2 processing, that would actually work. It doesn't work when
3 they go to the police stations. I don't know if I'm
4 answering --

5 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. Do you believe
6 that police and governments continue to keep the power
7 balance when they have their victim services positions
8 report to them and their systems as opposed to first and
9 foremost accountable to the people that they are stating
10 that they're serving?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yes. And you ask really long
12 questions.

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** I apologize. Imagine
14 being one of my kids. They --

15 **(LAUGHTER)**

16 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** -- gloss over
17 immediately.

18 **(LAUGHTER)**

19 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** So my next question is
20 -- this week I posed a very similar question to the panel
21 on health services. It's often difficult to create
22 long-term programming for the women when as CBOs we are
23 juggling several grants and contribution agreements, and
24 many of those are only for months -- month-long initiatives
25 and definitely not past a year. You spoke of some of this

1 yesterday. Do you stand by that statement?

2 **NAKUSET:** The statement that we don't -- our
3 funding is too short?

4 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Yes, and just constant
5 juggling of several?

6 **NAKUSET:** Yes, absolutely.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** As well, have you
8 noticed the amount allowed for administration and staffing,
9 so the eligible expenditures that we get -- I'm also an
10 executive director of a service delivery agency -- the
11 amount that we're allowed every year seems to be decreasing
12 for administration and staffing, and then we're expected to
13 do more programming. So the money is going directly to
14 programming, however they don't acknowledge that you need
15 staff in order to do that, and then you have more
16 reporting.

17 The only -- and I had stated this, the only
18 more we're expected to do is reporting and more
19 programming. Would you say this has been your experience?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I would also like to say
21 that they have a tendency to cut down -- let's say I have
22 an outreach worker, back in the day it was her salary and
23 it was emergency funds and it was bus tickets, well, they
24 cut all that stuff out, so now I have to get additional
25 monies because when a woman is in crisis and she's outside

1 and she can't eat and she can't feed her children, the
2 shelter will pay for it because the government no longer
3 thinks that is important, but we know it is.

4 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Absolutely. For the
5 record, could you state what would be your best-case
6 scenario funding and reporting-wise for providing services
7 and programming for women?

8 **NAKUSET:** Oh, boy. I think funding needs to
9 be on par with other organizations. I think that we need
10 to be -- in order to retain the proper staff, we need to
11 have the right salaries.

12 I think in terms of reporting, it should be
13 based on their -- their healing plan as opposed to, you
14 know, out of the 50 clients how many are going to be drug
15 and alcohol free by the end of the year? We can't promise
16 that with one-year funding that anyone is going to be
17 alcohol and drug free. They have years of trauma to go
18 through, and that is setting us up to fail. So I think
19 that it needs to be what we think is -- you know, we need
20 to evaluate it and they need to trust us to know that we
21 know what we're doing.

22 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. Ms. Nakuset,
23 you spoke of reconciliation yesterday, there is a definite
24 push for us as Indigenous people to embrace the
25 government's initiatives of reconciliation. We know that

1 the truth part of truth and reconciliation is a very
2 difficult discussion to have. Do you believe that Canada
3 is ready for the truth of Indigenous peoples?

4 **NAKUSET:** I don't know if they're ready for
5 it, but they're going to get it.

6 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Both the positive and
7 the negative?

8 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

9 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** For those of us who live
10 in the city, other than having arts and cultural activities
11 to celebrate who we are, how do we participate in the truth
12 process for non-Indigenous people so that we may get to
13 reconciliation?

14 **NAKUSET:** The truth part, it needs to be in
15 all education levels. It needs to be -- okay, so
16 obviously -- oh, my goodness.

17 Not too long ago I was asked if I could do
18 something on reconciliation for a -- primary schools, so,
19 you know, kindergarten to grade 6. And they wanted to know
20 about the truth, and the truth is not so easy for this age
21 group to digest. So what I suggested was look at the 11
22 Nations, look at the beauty of each culture and have the
23 children do paintings and learn their stories and learn
24 their culture and the differences, and they did it.

25 That's -- you know, it has to be targeted to

1 each level, and, you know, that -- those 94
2 recommendations, they should be able to recite them at,
3 like, all the institutional levels. I'll go in and ask
4 them. Well, in a perfect world.

5 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** If we envision true
6 reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
7 in what is now Canada, what do you believe this will look
8 like in the funding of services for Indigenous women and
9 children?

10 **NAKUSET:** We would get more.

11 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you.

12 **NAKUSET:** Thank you.

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** You also spoke of
14 addictions treatment facilities for Indigenous women. You
15 stated that six weeks is not long enough. Do you believe
16 that an integrated women's treatment facility that
17 prioritizes trauma, PTSD, addictions, life skills that is
18 grounded in Indigenous culture, perhaps being as long of a
19 stay as six months, would you agree this would be more of a
20 long-term solution towards a healthy life than a six-week
21 addictions treatment facility?

22 **NAKUSET:** Yes, and on top of that they
23 should be able to keep their children with them. Because a
24 lot of the times if they know their kids are going to go
25 into care, well, they don't want to lose that connection.

1 So allowing them to have a child program in the same
2 facility is -- would be key.

3 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you once again,
4 Ms. Nakuset.

5 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

6 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Ms. Nepinak.

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

9 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** (Speaking in Native
10 language) for your presentation yesterday. I have not
11 visited the Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, however I'd
12 love to visit one day.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

14 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** In regards to the
15 continuum of services in a women's, children's, family's
16 case plan, how important is it to -- in providing
17 uninterrupted services to overall wellbeing?

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, the focus should
19 be on keeping family together and keeping mom and child
20 together, and so our service plan is really about doing
21 just that, and ensuring that the basic needs, for one, are
22 met, including food, clothing and shelter. But also a safe
23 and affordable home to go to with transitional supports and
24 longer term supports from -- from our outreach workers, as
25 well as our cultural connections in the community.

1 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. Yesterday
2 you spoke at length about the challenges with funding.
3 There are many ineligible expenditures that are in our
4 contribution agreements, however we know they are integral
5 to the wellbeing of our families. A quick example would be
6 nutrition, many of our contribution agreements don't
7 believe that eating is a good -- is part of the wellbeing
8 of serving Indigenous people, or they may give you 50 cents
9 for a meal.

10 In your discussions -- in your discussion
11 you commented the very practical issue such as
12 transportation and the example I gave, but I'm going to ask
13 you about knowledge keepers or Elder services. These are
14 integral to the wellbeing of our participants, correct?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

16 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Would it be your
17 recommendation that all contribution agreements allow for
18 increased eligibility to our knowledge keepers and Elders?

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Actually, I believe that
20 our contribution agreements or any contracts or grants that
21 we receive with government or municipal agencies should
22 include Elders as an essential service, not as a side if we
23 have additional money, but it should be part of the funding
24 structure.

25 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** In many of our

1 contribution agreements, of course for the safety and
2 wellbeing of our participants, it includes criminal records
3 checks, vulnerable sector checks, those types of things,
4 and our knowledge keepers have no issue with this. That's
5 on the safety part, but how do we get around sometimes our
6 funding agencies requiring us to validate or legitimize our
7 knowledge keepers or Elders as service providers?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I think that's -- that's
9 a role of the community, and I think that that also depends
10 on where the community is in terms of how that validation
11 happens to Elders. And I think it needs to be left to the
12 community to -- to monitor that, as well as to place the
13 values that are -- that are integral to who the Elders are,
14 but also a monitoring system to ensure that these are all
15 safe folks to do the work that they do.

16 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** All right. You spoke on
17 the war on Indigenous women.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

19 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Do you believe the
20 chronic under funding or not funding programs for the
21 safety of Indigenous women is a tactic of assimilation or
22 genocide of the governments?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely it is. I
24 think when we -- when we -- I mean, I gave the stat
25 yesterday about the shelters, and -- and how many

1 provincial shelters there are just here in Alberta, which
2 is more than the number of shelters across Canada for First
3 Nations women. I mean, the disparity is huge. And it
4 happens, not only in the shelters, but also in -- in the
5 various other areas that we have talked about in the last
6 couple of days.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. So where does
8 this leave reconciliation in this country, if there is a
9 belief, and I -- I have to say, I share it, because we work
10 with the people every single day. Where does this leave
11 reconciliation in this country then, if that is the part of
12 truth in government?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I -- I am not sure
14 that reconciliation has begun. I mean, talk is cheap,
15 right? I mean, we -- we've heard about the 97
16 recommendations, and I think it was Senator Sinclair who
17 said, "This is going to be a very difficult process, and
18 people are going to get really pissed off," he said, "When
19 these conversations start happening around reconciliation."
20 So I'm not sure that we have begun to do that. And I -- the
21 -- the province makes -- not the province, but certainly the
22 Federal Government also makes those promises where things
23 will change. But, like an abusive situation, unless there
24 is a behavioural change, it's not going to happen.

25 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** You also spoke of

1 normalized violence.

2 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** M'hm.

3 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** So in 2005, I'm just
4 anecdotally, I'm not submitting anything, which is now
5 already 13 years ago. I conducted a study in Saskatchewan
6 where when we first entered a community, both on and off
7 reserve, women stated that only three out of ten of them
8 experienced violence. After our education seminar, we sat
9 and we talked, then number jumped to ten out of ten.

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

11 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Do you believe very basic
12 education and then services after to support the woman, are
13 essential for healing for women?

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. I think it's
15 critical to -- to saving lives and to reducing the incidents
16 of violence in our communities across the country.

17 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you very much for
18 answering my questions.

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

20 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

21 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

22 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. Now, I'm
23 really going to butcher this, so please help me out.

24 *Niawen'kó:wa*, is Hodinohso:ni for thank you.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** *Niawen'kó:wa*.

1 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Oh.

2 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I was looking --
3 *Niawen'kó:wa.*

4 **(LAUGHTER)**

5 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** *Niawen'kó:wa.* Okay.
6 Thank you, Ms. Montour for your presentation yesterday.
7 Yesterday, you discussed how staff in our helping agencies
8 have to be everything from teachers to spiritual guides. I
9 can attest to this as well. In the absence of a monetary
10 windfall, with unlimited positions, how do we as EDs, or
11 executive directors, or board members support the technical
12 or cultural training, especially, because we basically don't
13 get any money for professional development for our staff, so
14 they can feel comfortable in all of those areas that they
15 end up providing for our people?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, I think, on the
17 reserve anyway, we have at Six Nations, we have -- we have
18 our resource centre, which is filled with our traditional
19 Chiefs and our faith keepers, and they help us. So they --
20 they'll come and help us any time we -- we ask for help. We
21 -- I've -- of course, I would never ask them to come and do
22 that for free. So that's, you know, I would pay them the
23 same -- the same cost I would pay, like, a psychologist.
24 There's no way I'm going to underpay them to come. We -- we
25 pay them very well for their time.

1 And -- so we, at this point in time, we were
2 very creative. I agree, I heard that word a few times. We
3 have to be creative. And what we did, because we -- we see
4 the need for a cultural resource person. So what we did is
5 we -- we did get on the -- the mini-proposals that I wrote
6 last year, I wrote over \$2 million of proposals last year.
7 It's all I did and brought that into Ganohkwasra. And I was
8 able to hire a cultural resource person who is -- his
9 numbers that he -- he helps every single unit. I mean, I
10 was even thinking I should have brought him here with me,
11 you know, as -- as I come out here. But he helps every
12 single unit. And from being at the Youth Lodge with the
13 kids, to being in a shelter, to going into groups. You
14 know, so he's all over the place. But it would be nice to
15 have him full-time. You know, we need people like this.
16 And paid well.

17 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M'hm.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Paid well for the
19 knowledge that he has. He's -- he's been raised in
20 immersion, and he's been raised in the culture. And he's
21 well respected in the community. And he needs to be paid
22 well. And so -- you know, it would be nice for every single
23 shelter to have a cultural resource person such as this.
24 You know, and not have to, you know, this person is only
25 here on a contract basis, unfortunately, as many of our good

1 programs are. That -- then -- then they're gone. And it's
2 just a tease for our people. But I really strongly believe
3 in the value, especially in this field, where people are
4 searching. The value of having that type of leadership and
5 that type of guidance for, not only our staff, but also our
6 -- our participants.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. How do you
8 believe that the voice of the people we serve, the women and
9 children, be included in the criteria as well as the
10 reporting for the funding of us as CBOs? And how do we all
11 remain accountable to the people we serve?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Can you repeat that?

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** How do you believe the
14 voice of the people, so the people to have a voice, be
15 included in criteria for -- so for criteria for -- criteria
16 for funding, as well as the reporting, how we report back as
17 to successes or determinants of success for our funding?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I like the narrative
19 approach. I really night -- like, the idea of -- rather
20 than, you know, writing the reports, I like the -- I like to
21 hear from the people themselves. Like, I say -- shared
22 yesterday, we do our own internal shelter review. And I get
23 to sit with the people myself.

24 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M'hm.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And -- and I get to hear

1 what their evaluation is of our shelter. You know, and --
2 and so I -- I -- I'd like to hear -- I appreciate the
3 narrative approach, the story telling. You know, the
4 numbers speak for themselves. If we have 300 in our
5 community attending community events, for us on -- on
6 reserve, that's a lot. And, you know, what funders tend to
7 do is they tend to say, "We want something different now."
8 We -- you've been doing that over and over again. But what
9 they don't get is, 300, that's successful. Why change
10 what's working? But -- so sometimes funders have a
11 different approach, you know.

12 And so -- and I -- I believe in sharing too.
13 We have Hodinohso:ni communities right around us. Oneida's
14 just down the road. Tyendinaga, Akwesasne, and I -- I --
15 what I try to do is, we try to partner with each other. And
16 we try to -- I want to know what's successful in their
17 territories so I can do it in mine. You know, so I really
18 like the idea of us taking the time to -- to network with
19 each other. That's really vital.

20 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M'hm.

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And support each other.
22 It -- we can't do this work alone, we just can't.

23 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. So thank you.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Thank
25 you, Ms. Beaudin.

1 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you to everyone on
2 the panel today.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** At this point, I
4 would like to request a 15-minute break.

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes.
6 We'll resume at 10:50.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

8 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Five zero.

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It's not lunch yet?

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No. I know.

11 --- Upon recessing at 10:36 a.m.

12 --- Upon reconvening at 10:58 a.m.

13 **NAKuset, Previously Affirmed:**

14 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

15 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** ... throughout Canada
16 are at risk.

17 **NAKuset:** Yes.

18 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that you
19 have little to no ability to have a say in how much funding
20 your shelter gets from year to year?

21 **NAKuset:** Yes.

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that the
23 funding that you do get, is a function of what you got the
24 year before, as opposed to the needs and services that the
25 Indigenous women who come to your shelter require?

1 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

2 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** You have been in the
3 area of shelters for 20 to 30 years?

4 **NAKUSET:** Me?

5 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Yes.

6 **NAKUSET:** Only 20. Since 1999.

7 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Only 20, okay.

8 **NAKUSET:** I'm not that old.

9 **(LAUGHTER)**

10 **NAKUSET:** Not that anyone else here is
11 either.

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Has anyone from the
13 funders come to you and said to you, "You are an expert in
14 shelters, what do we need to give you in terms of budget
15 lines, to help you do your work?"

16 **NAKUSET:** Never.

17 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Do you think that that
18 failure to ask you, and the other panel members, about your
19 input as experts in the area of shelters is a critical
20 error?

21 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say that
23 women, Indigenous women who come to your shelter for
24 protection for themselves and their children, quiet often
25 attract the bureaucracy of Child and Family Services?

1 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

2 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And is it fair to say
3 that, today, Indigenous women who come to protect themselves
4 and their children, as a result of coming to shelter, may in
5 fact, put themselves and their children at risk of being
6 separated?

7 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

8 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say that
9 the lives of Indigenous women should not be dictated by the
10 particular line -- on a budget line, in an application for
11 funding?

12 **NAKUSET:** Sorry. Am I -- again, I'm --

13 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Oh, sorry. That's a
14 combo --

15 **NAKUSET:** Is that a yes or no?

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say --

17 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

18 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- that the lives of
19 Indigenous women should not be a function of -- of budget
20 line on an application for funding?

21 **NAKUSET:** They shouldn't be a budget line.

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say that
23 in doing your work, you have to move those budget lines
24 around in order to pay your workers?

25 **NAKUSET:** You know, I don't know, and --

1 necessarily if it's to pay our workers, because I do have a
2 budget line for that. But there are other services that I
3 need that I have to move around. So, yeah, the other budget
4 categories that we have to -- you know, like I talked about
5 emergency funds for outreach, we don't have that in our
6 budget, so I have to find other things that we haven't spent
7 and put it over there so that we can.

8 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that the
9 complexity of Indigenous women -- women coming to shelter
10 today is much more complex than it was 20 years ago?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. I think that there's always
12 emerging issues that grow. So we've -- as soon as we see
13 them, then we address them, and then we have to create new
14 programs because of it.

15 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But these new programs
16 that you create are not a function of the funding that you
17 get?

18 **NAKUSET:** No.

19 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The main thing that you
20 get for funding is what you got the year before?

21 **NAKUSET:** Yes. Basically, a roof over our
22 head, food, and certain stuff.

23 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And whatever policy is
24 in place with respect to Indigenous culture, you don't get
25 asked those questions at the time of funding?

1 **NAKUSET:** No.

2 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And art therapy --

3 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

4 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- is not on your budget
5 line?

6 **NAKUSET:** No.

7 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But art therapy can save
8 the life of an Indigenous child or woman, by allowing them
9 to speak their voice about their trauma?

10 **NAKUSET:** Well, draw their voice.

11 But --

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Yes. Pardon me. And
13 when you testified about the cooperation, or lack of
14 cooperation by the police --

15 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- would it be fair to
17 say that whether police buy into the concept of shelters is
18 not an option but a mandate?

19 **NAKUSET:** It should be.

20 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And when the police
21 disrespect you and the work that you were trying to do, they
22 disrespect, across the nation, the lives of Indigenous women
23 and the lives of Indigenous children?

24 **NAKUSET:** Yes. And I'd even say Indigenous
25 men as well.

1 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. And without
2 beating this point to death, there is not enough funding for
3 shelters across the nation?

4 **NAKUSET:** No. There should be, though.

5 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And there is not enough
6 sustainable funding to allow you, in your work, to make the
7 lives of Indigenous women and children better over time?

8 **NAKUSET:** If I had the adequate funding, I
9 would probably be more at the shelter. But instead, I have
10 a tendency to be running around the city and trying to find
11 more monies, create new programs, so it definitely takes
12 away.

13 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And is there a
14 disconnect between the silos of money that you see for women
15 with addiction problems versus women in shelters versus
16 women with mental health issues?

17 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

18 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And yet, the women who
19 come to your shelter are not segregated by those individual
20 issues. They come with all of those issues?

21 **NAKUSET:** That's right.

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But they are funded
23 separately, as if they were separate human beings?

24 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

25 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And that is

1 fundamentally unfair?

2 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

3 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** I believe you said that
4 the system doesn't want to change?

5 **NAKUSET:** No.

6 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The system was there
7 before you came to the world of shelters?

8 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

9 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And who made that system
10 up, you have no idea?

11 **NAKUSET:** The government.

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Good point. But that
13 system runs, in your view, independently of the actual needs
14 of Indigenous women and children?

15 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And the lives of
17 Indigenous women and children should not depend on a
18 bureaucratic machine?

19 **NAKUSET:** No.

20 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Because the lives of
21 women and children of the Indigenous culture deserve the
22 very best that Canada can bring them?

23 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

24 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And whether that is by
25 province or by nation, they deserve every bit of funding

1 dollar that they receive and much more?

2 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I think we should get it by
3 province and by Canada as a nation. Yeah. I think we
4 should be double-dipping.

5 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And in terms of healing,
6 if you do not know your past, you cannot know your future.
7 That is to say -- and I'll just rephrase the question. If
8 you don't know your own culture and the story of your own
9 culture, it's difficult to move forward when you talk to
10 your own children about who they are?

11 **NAKUSET:** Okay. Well, now you're making a
12 personal -- I mean, I'm part of the Sixties Scoop, so I
13 don't know much about my own culture.

14 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Fair enough.

15 **NAKUSET:** But I am, you know, trying. So I
16 think that you have to, sort of, do your research. You
17 know, I mean, Lac La Ronge Indian Band has beautiful
18 websites, so I gave my kids, you know, Cree names. I didn't
19 call them "Bucket." I -- I, you know, I looked at the
20 website and I found appropriate names like Makisis (ph),
21 Mahikan (ph), and Kisstine (ph).

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Believe me, I -- I mean
23 no disrespect. What I'm saying is that Indigenous-led
24 shelters, provide that culture to --

25 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

1 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- their participants.

2 **NAKUSET:** We try. I think at the Native
3 Women's Shelter, you know, we -- there's 11 different
4 Nations, plus all the other communities that come across
5 Canada. So we have a really large group of people that
6 come. We can't cater to every one single culture, but we --
7 we do our best.

8 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. My next
9 questions are for Ms. Nepinak.

10 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

11 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Ms. Nepinak, how many
13 -- I -- I think in your evidence, you said that you receive
14 core funding for 32 beds from the province; is that fair?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Does that mean that
17 there are 32 Indigenous women who require the assistance of
18 a shelter?

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, there are many, many
20 Indigenous women in this province that require sheltering
21 that are turned away every day.

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Do you know where the
23 number 32 came from, in terms of how you get funding?

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, partially, it's --
25 it's on the size of the building, and partially, it's on the

1 need of the organization that is determined, again, by the
2 Province of Alberta. There are other emergency shelters
3 within the city -- within the City of Calgary, and so some
4 of those other shelters are -- are bigger than we are. They
5 may have 40 to some -- the other has 50 beds.

6 And they determine, well, we -- you had 27
7 beds, so we're going to invest this many millions of dollars
8 into family violence, and therefore we're going to -- you
9 know, you get a piece of that pie. And -- and they look at
10 what our numbers, our statistics, are, because we're, you
11 know, more than 90 percent capacity, you need extra beds.
12 So it's just recently that we got the extra core funding for
13 32 beds.

14 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Can you say how many
15 Indigenous women and children need help of your shelter
16 across the province today?

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Let's start with across
18 the province. Yesterday, I gave a statistic that, in 2015-
19 2016, one of the provincial bodies that release the stats
20 indicated that there was -- I -- I had my numbers somewhere
21 yesterday, but there were 16,385 women and children that
22 were turned away from shelters in the Province of Alberta.
23 And so if we factor the fact that 65 percent of the women
24 that are going into shelters are Indigenous, that number --
25 and I haven't done the math, but it's approximately, 10,000

1 women in 2015-2016, that were turned away from shelters.
2 Now, if we look at Awo Taan Healing Lodge, we -- we have
3 more than 600 women that are turned away each year from Awo
4 Taan Healing Lodge, women and children.

5 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** So province-wide, that
6 means that by being turned away, approximately 10,000
7 Indigenous women --

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

9 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- are at risk of being
10 murdered today.

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And what that means is
13 that the children of 10,000 Indigenous women will lose their
14 parent or parents as the result of a funding issue.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** As opposed to a
17 fundamental human right.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct.

19 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

20 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** My next questions are
21 for Ms. Montour.

22 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

23 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

24 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Ms. Montour, in your
25 evidence, if I heard you correctly, you stated that 95

1 percent of women who attend shelter have experienced sexual
2 assault.

3 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

4 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Are you funded to deal
5 with the trauma that your women have as a result of being
6 sexually assaulted?

7 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: We just received funding
8 in -- we just started our sexual assault program as of,
9 actually, we just opened it two weeks ago.

10 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Okay.

11 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: So we hadn't been prior.

12 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: All right. And what
13 percentage of women who attend your shelter have addiction
14 issues? Can you say?

15 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can't say. When I
16 talked about the 95 percent, I was referring to the whole
17 organization. Not just shelter, but our outreach services.

18 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Okay.

19 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Addictions, for -- I --
20 I would have to talk to my shelter staff. They would have a
21 better idea of that than I.

22 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: But it's fair to say
23 that many, many women who come to shelter have addiction
24 issues.

25 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: That's fair to say, yes.

1 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And it's very fair to
2 say that -- say that women who come to shelters have mental
3 health issues as a result of the trauma that they have
4 received outside of that shelter?

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

6 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And a woman who comes to
7 shelter with trauma often faces a new trauma in that Child
8 and Family Services may come and take her children.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

10 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

11 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The resources that were
12 available for shelters 30 years ago haven't changed that
13 much in 30 years, is that fair?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** For us, we work very
15 hard to increase our resources, and I think that, when you
16 think about the world of shelters, what I am -- am aware of
17 is that shelter, that concept of shelter, that concept came
18 from a -- middle-class, non-Native women, back in the '60s
19 and '70s. And then when we had our shelters, First Nations
20 people, Indigenous people, back in the '80s or '90s, a lot
21 of our shelters took on that concept, but we didn't. We
22 always were true to the values of our people as Hodinöhsö:ni
23 families, rather than just it being specific to women. I
24 think, throughout the years, we have increased our services
25 with our -- you know, our core funding has increased over

1 the years, depending on the government. Depending on the
2 time. I -- I also remember we had our second-stage housing,
3 we had workers there that were funded, and then the next
4 government came along and they took away those -- those
5 funds. So it depends on the government.

6 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And should the lives of
7 Indigenous women and children depend on who is in
8 government? For their protection?

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No.

10 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** I have one last
11 question, and that is in relation to culture. How important
12 is the ability to provide culturally appropriate services to
13 the women who come to your shelter?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** One hundred percent
15 important.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. Those are my
17 questions.

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** *Migwetch.*

19 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Good morning.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. Dunn.
21 I would like to invite Ms. Ordyniec on behalf of the
22 Northern Alliance for Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Treaty 3.
23 She will have 19 minutes.

24 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Morning. I'd like to
25 just begin by acknowledging the traditional territory of

1 Treaty 7 as well as the Métis Nation Region 3 and thank the
2 Blackfoot people for being so warm, welcoming, and kind
3 during this difficult week. I'd also like to thank the
4 panel members on behalf of both Nishnawbe Aski Nation as
5 well as Grand Council Treaty 3 for all the very important
6 work that you do.

7 The Northern Treaty Alliance is made up of 77
8 communities in northern Ontario and eastern -- eastern
9 Manitoba, and my first questions are going to be directed to
10 Ms. Montour.

11 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

12 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

13 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Ms. Montour, are you
14 familiar with the NAN and Treaty 3 territory?

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, I am.

16 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And could
17 you give us a little bit of your understanding of shelters
18 in the north?

19 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** What I do know about the
20 north is that they have -- there needs to be special
21 attention to the north. Because of the -- the prices are
22 incredibly high, travel to get -- for women to get into the
23 shelter, it costs not hundreds of dollars, but thousands of
24 dollars, because we're talking about a plane -- plane ride.
25 What I know about the north is they face, you know -- I

1 think I have challenges with our one police, they have
2 several police that they work with, not just one, and so
3 they have to try their best to educate those police.

4 What I think of the northern shelters is
5 they're -- they're single staffed, they're lucky to be
6 single staffed. That they have -- their director is
7 usually called a coordinator, even though that director
8 does the same work as I do, or that coordinator does
9 exactly the same work as I do.

10 That coordinator is on the phone, she's not
11 only doing what I'm doing, she's giving out meds, she's
12 taking shifts, she's doing all those things too. She's
13 working with the police. What I know about those northern
14 shelters is I have total utmost respect for them.

15 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you for your
16 answer. Would you agree, based on what you said, that safe
17 places for women to go, for young girls to go in the north,
18 is in a crisis situation?

19 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

20 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Are you
21 aware through your work with Aboriginal Shelters of
22 Ontario, if anyone that is responsible for funding these
23 shelters has gone to the north to see what the situation is
24 like?

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I'm not aware of that

1 at all.

2 MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC: Do you think that
3 that would be something that you would recommend?

4 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely.

5 MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC: Thank you. Are you
6 familiar with the Family Wellbeing Program?

7 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

8 MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC: One of the pillars of
9 that program is safe housing.

10 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

11 MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC: But it seems that
12 infrastructure is a barrier. Can you speak on that?

13 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: What I know about the
14 north is that, you know, for fly-in communities, that they
15 have -- it takes years to be able to bring in the material
16 for the fly-in communities in the north, and that often,
17 you know, infrastructure is -- is -- it's not easy to come
18 by, you know, it's -- because of the cold temperatures in
19 the winters, a lot of the -- by the time they get all the
20 materials in it's no good, so they're in constant state of
21 need for infrastructure, or they're being evacuated from
22 their communities because of various floods and various
23 weather conditions.

24 So I -- I am aware of the Family Wellbeing
25 Program and the safe -- the safe -- I guess it's a safe

1 housing component of it.

2 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Yesterday
3 you spoke about initiatives, Dorothy McKay in Big Trout and
4 Margaret Kisik (ph) in Fort Albany, and I wonder if you
5 could expand on how those initiatives should be extended to
6 other communities and how we could support that?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Those ladies are
8 beautiful ladies, I need to say. And with Dorothy, you
9 know, she's a very hard worker. She's fluent in her
10 language, as most of them are in their shelter. They speak
11 their language fluently, and rarely do they speak English,
12 as a matter of fact.

13 It's -- you know, she -- Dorothy actually
14 was once on our board of directors for ASO, and we always
15 so enjoyed her when she came to our meetings. And she
16 always spoke to us about the culture shock to come from her
17 community, a fly-in community, and the number of planes it
18 would take her to get to Toronto, to -- you know, and it
19 would take her a while to be able to settle into English,
20 right, but she would share with us the way things were in
21 her community.

22 And what we have done, and one thing that I
23 have actually applied for, is we applied to do a shelter
24 swap. And this was -- what we would like to do is we would
25 like to bring the north -- the northern shelters, some

1 workers, two workers, to the southern shelters and put them
2 on the floor with guidance and support.

3 We -- that was approved, but what we wanted
4 to do was do the opposite, is to take the southern
5 shelters, two from the southern shelters and send them to
6 the north because I'd love my staff to go and see what
7 Dorothy does and be trained by Dorothy. I'd love that.
8 That would enhance our learning so much. And Margaret.

9 So that -- I guess that was ASO's way of
10 trying to support our members and trying to overcome that
11 barrier between the north and the south so that we share
12 our resources and we honour each other's strengths. So it
13 was approved one way, but it wasn't approved the other way,
14 so -- I like that idea.

15 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** And you would agree
16 with me that you would recommend that that sort of
17 arrangement be funded as well as supported?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

19 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And as
20 we're speaking about the north and the visits from workers
21 in the north, what about the women in your shelters who
22 have come maybe from the north? Do you have -- do you have
23 women in your shelters?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** And what are the

1 specific -- the specific supports that they would need in
2 your -- in the more urban setting?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I know for them, I know
4 it's a culture shock. It's a culture shock for them to
5 come into the south, so I think that we have to be really
6 trying to help them with that culture shock to help them to
7 be safe in our communities.

8 A lot of times, you know, they will say,
9 wow, you have so much here, you know, you have so much
10 here, and -- and we do compared to the north, we really do.
11 But I know that one of the things that they have that a lot
12 of us in the south don't have, is they have their language
13 and we are very envious of that.

14 So, you know, in our territory we don't
15 have -- we don't have Ojibway speakers or we don't have
16 Cree speakers, but we do have Haudenosaunee speakers.
17 So -- but usually that's not a big issue, usually everybody
18 will speak English anyway. But we do, you know, we make
19 sure we have all the cultural -- what they need culturally.

20 We also have New Credit that's right next
21 door to us, right next door, that we do access the Ojibway
22 culture there, so sweats from there as well, to meet the
23 needs of anybody that's Ojibway.

24 **MS. KRYSZTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. I just
25 want to turn to the New Beginnings, the Standards for

1 Ontario Indigenous Shelters. And specifically Section 1.1
2 talks about access criteria.

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

4 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** I'll just read from
5 the standards: (As Read)

6 Shelter services are for all those who
7 identify as a person aged 16 years or
8 older and their dependents who are
9 experiencing, threatened by and/or
10 affected by violence or abuse of any
11 kind.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

13 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** And I -- you can
14 answer the question in respect of all shelters, however
15 especially with respect to the north. There's a 16-year
16 age standard, as we've read in here, and we've heard
17 testimony that young girls 10 and 11 years old are victims
18 to violence and human trafficking, so I'm wondering if you
19 can just speak on that?

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, I am aware of
21 some of the shelters from the -- from the Nan territory
22 that actually are being -- because of that issue, you know,
23 they're being forced to take in people younger than 16.
24 So -- and they do, you know, they do, they take in people
25 younger than 16. Of course, they're working with their

1 child welfare agencies too.

2 And -- and with us at Ganohkwasra, we have
3 our youth facility that we will -- will assess the
4 situation. Of course, we're working with child welfare at
5 that age as well, but we assess the situation. We might
6 keep them in the shelter for a period of time, but our goal
7 is to get them into the youth lodge, you know, so -- and,
8 of course, like I said, working closely with child welfare
9 with that age group for sure.

10 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank
11 you for the work that you've done.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Thank you.

13 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

14 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

15 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Ms. Nepinak, I would
16 just like to ask you one or two questions, if I could.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

18 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** You mentioned peer
19 support within -- within the lodge, and I wonder how you
20 facilitate and promote that, and if any of the clients have
21 become supports or workers in the shelter themselves?

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely, there
23 has been all of that, but we do have some programs that are
24 specific. For example, on our -- we have two programs,
25 which is our -- through our outreach program for Monday

1 night healing circle, and this for women that have been in
2 the shelter, and they -- and that is facilitated by an
3 Elder and a staff member. But we often have women in
4 the -- in the circle who lead, for example, what -- what
5 the discussion might be for the evening and give examples
6 of that and -- and engage other women to -- to talk about
7 that. And that usually begins by them speaking about their
8 own experiences around violence and how they dealt with it.

9 We have another program called Women's
10 Circle of Safety, and this is a peer support group of women
11 who come together and say, "Well, this is what I did. Have
12 you tried this? Have you thought about that? Why don't
13 I -- why don't I show you or why don't I -- this is
14 a -- here's some recommendations, here's some books to
15 read, or have you talked to so-and-so." Those kinds of
16 peer support happens a lot. And there's a lot of strength
17 that are -- and the friendships that are developed
18 as -- as -- as a result of that peer support while in the
19 shelter often is in the community, as well, where they will
20 get together. They'll -- you know, they'll babysit for one
21 another. They'll -- they'll even share groceries and share
22 family time together, and community and cultural time. So
23 the peer support and informal supports, I believe, are
24 very, very critical to -- to the development and to the
25 healing process of many of the women -- women and children

1 that we serve.

2 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. In -- in
3 respect of the -- the model that -- yeah, that your -- your
4 lodge is based on, how do you see that extending to
5 permanent housing?

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, our -- our
7 logo -- are -- are you referring to our logo and what it
8 means?

9 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Just -- just the way
10 that you run your shelter. Do you see any of those --

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, yeah. Absolutely.
12 And we are -- our -- our vision statement is "Nurturing
13 families living in peace." And so if we were -- and -- and
14 I would love to have a second stage. I mean, we -- there
15 has been discussion about that, as well, and how we would
16 extend that is by taking those core values that we have
17 developed at Awo Taan Healing Lodge through our staff,
18 through our governance, and through our policies and
19 procedures to align with -- with our core values as
20 Indigenous people, and then we carry those into a
21 transitional home and long-term housing.

22 Now, having said that, that has been an
23 issue for funders because funders don't understand that we
24 all have spirit, that we all have the need for -- to -- to
25 have the Elders in their lives, to have spirit and wisdom

1 be part of our growth and development. And -- and it also
2 means that we can keep a house around us if we're
3 spiritually strong.

4 **MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank
5 you for all of your work.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

7 **NAKuset, Previously Affirmed:**

8 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

9 **MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC:** Nakuset, I'd just
10 like to ask you one question. You identified allies, and
11 we've heard testimony throughout these hearings about the
12 importance of non-Indigenous allies to the work that you
13 do. And besides funding, if, you know -- besides if they
14 could give you everything you want, what are the things
15 that you need in terms of non-Indigenous allies?

16 **NAKuset:** I think that non-Indigenous allies
17 can also lobby, right? So I remember in -- in Montreal,
18 you know, I hosted a rally for Tina Fontaine, and there was
19 a lot of people that came, and a lot of them were
20 non-Indigenous. And I was, like, you should -- you should
21 also do something about this. I mean, we are here because
22 we are outraged, but you need to also go to your government
23 and say that change has to be made.

24 So I think that's what we need to do,
25 because sometimes our allies are taken more seriously than

1 the angry Indians that are, like -- you know, we got
2 another letter from her. Oh, wait. We got a letter from
3 this lovely non-Indigenous woman. Hey, maybe we should
4 listen to her. It's just a different perspective. And I
5 think there's power in that.

6 So I think people need to, you know, use
7 their -- their power if they want to, if they really
8 believe in, you know, helping the Indigenous population.
9 That's what they should do, as well.

10 **MS. KRYSYTN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank
11 you for all the work that you do, and thank you to the
12 Commission. Those are my questions.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you,
14 Ms. Ordyniec.

15 The Commission would like to invite up next
16 Ms. Virginia Lomax on behalf of Native Women's Association
17 of Canada. Ms. Lomax will have 19 minutes.

18 **MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** Good morning. I want
19 to first thank the Blackfoot nation, Treaty 7, and Métis
20 Region 3 for welcoming us to their territory today. I want
21 to recognize the sacred items in the room with us and the
22 Elders for their prayers. I'd also like to thank everybody
23 who has come here today to fight for Indigenous women and
24 girls and the two-spirit LGBTQ+ and gender-diverse people
25 in a good way today.

1 I'm going to start by saying that I
2 am -- I'm not completely comfortable cross-examining the
3 witnesses because you are all the solution. Your work is
4 the solution, and you fight the problem every day. You are
5 not the barrier to success or the problem, and you and your
6 work are the solution. And I wish I could be
7 cross-examining the barriers and the problems. But today
8 I'm not.

9 And so I'd like to give you my time today
10 instead. I have one question that I would like to ask each
11 of the witnesses, and you can take as much time or as
12 little time as you would like to answer.

13 You've all spoken about chronic underfunding
14 and a chronic lack of empathy and understanding from many
15 people, including those who make funding decisions. And
16 I'd like to give you my time. If you would like to ask
17 your own questions to these people on the record, are there
18 any questions or issues that you need answered or addressed
19 that aren't being answered or addressed that you would like
20 on the public record?

21 I don't mean to cause any harm by asking
22 this question. I just want to give you time for your truth.

23 **JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET, Previously**

24 **Affirmed:**

1 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. LOMAX:

2 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I -- I -- yeah. Thank
3 you for -- for the question. Can I start?

4 MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Please.

5 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Do you understand what
6 you're being asked?

7 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I believe I understand
8 what I'm being asked.

9 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: We just want to make sure
10 she understands what she's being asked.

11 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Can you tell me, then?

12 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: She can tell you again.

13 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Okay.

14 MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Are there questions or
15 issues that you need answered or addressed that you're not
16 getting answers --

17 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

18 MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: -- that you would like
19 on the public record today?

20 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. Yes. You know,
21 with -- with respect to funding, you've all heard the story
22 about our chronic underfunding and the need to develop more
23 safe housing or safe housing models across the country, and
24 in particular, First Nations. I mean, the disparity is

1 huge, and the need to -- to fund -- it doesn't matter where
2 you are, whether you're in Calgary or whether you're in the
3 far North or -- or you're in the east. The funding should
4 be at parity, and the supports and the services, I'd like
5 to see, again, Elders as an essential component to any
6 funding model.

7 Increased supports for -- for women who are
8 transitioning from the north and into -- into southern
9 parts of the country, and -- and having safe places
10 for -- for the women so that they can have community
11 supports, whether they're outreach or community settlement
12 programs where they become acquainted with their new
13 community, their -- their grocery store, where the doctor's
14 office is, where the school is, where the recreational
15 facilities are, and where the cultural supports might be.
16 I think that's really important, as well.

17 I'd also like to say that with regards to
18 the justice system and fairness and respect and equity to
19 Indigenous women -- for example, I'd like to mention Judge
20 Queen's Bench Robert Graesser who, on the Cindy Gladue
21 case, conducted himself in an unacceptable way where he
22 referred to Ms. Gladue as, you know, for example, that
23 prostitute or that Native -- that Native girl, you know,
24 that kind of thing. And that I believe that he should be

1 reviewed by the Judicial Council of Canada. I'd like to
2 see that happen.

3 I'd also like to see folks like Judge Robin
4 Camp who said to the Indigenous girl, "Why couldn't you
5 keep your knees together?"

6 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** M'hm.

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so he has been
8 reinstated to practice law here in Alberta. And -- and the
9 recommendation would be we need to have more Indigenous
10 judges, both men and women, who have the lived experience,
11 but also are the lawyers, who -- who can represent us in a
12 fair and equitable way with respect and dignity in the
13 courthouses.

14 I have more, but I'm going to pass that
15 down now. *Migwetch.*

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Now, if -- for the
17 question and the time, I would like to say, I think, just
18 from the last person that came up, I would, like, definitely
19 agree that there needs to be more funding to our Northern
20 communities. They have special needs. Really, there should
21 be somebody here from the north speaking for themselves,
22 because the -- I'm probably not doing them any justice. I
23 do the best I can, but there needs to be more funding to the
24 north. You know, in -- in Ontario, there's shelters that
25 are funded by many, many ministries, and every shelter

1 should have that opportunity to be core funded by many
2 ministries, not just one.

3 So shelters should certainly be funded and we
4 should not be having waitlists, you know. Waitlists are --
5 they're not the answer. They're not the solution. Like I
6 said, we have a waitlist right now. I can tell you we have
7 a waitlist of 30 women, waiting for a counselor right now,
8 and 20 men, and -- and anywhere from 20 to 30 children are
9 waiting for counselors. That's not -- that's not good. So
10 we should be getting funded so that we don't have these
11 waitlists. We -- people are ready for counselling and
12 they're ready to -- for support and -- and -- and the
13 government needs to pay for that.

14 I strongly agree with the cultural resource
15 people. We, you know, we need -- we need our cultural
16 resource people, and they need to be properly funded, and
17 instead of, you know, I -- I spend so much of my time
18 looking for money, begging for money, applying for money,
19 writing reports, and then the -- those are only temporary
20 fundings. You know? They're just temporary money, then
21 they're gone in a year and the people are -- my community
22 say, you know, that's just a tease, you know? We're --
23 we're -- and they're complaining, you know, that -- that
24 service is gone. It's not a solution. You know, just these
25 temporary pockets of money that make us compete with each

1 other, by the way. And that -- that's not good practice,
2 either.

3 No shelter should be single-staffed. There
4 should be, you know, we're -- we're -- this is a high-risk
5 field. It's a high-risk business, you know. People are,
6 you know, there's certain -- there's things that can happen
7 in shelters that are very high-risk, so no shelter should be
8 single-staffed. It's -- there should be more funding that
9 allow us to properly staff our -- our floor so that we're
10 not putting our -- our -- the lives of our own people at
11 risk. Being in shelter, we're doing this work.

12 Definitely funding parity. I'm really --
13 it's very upsetting, you know. There was a question
14 somebody asked, how much your staff make. Well, we -- we
15 start our staff, up until last year, we started our staff at
16 35,000. That's how much we'd pay for our staff. We had
17 staff there for 20 years making \$35,000 a year. That's
18 discrimination. So we've been able to raise that to 40,000,
19 and I'm -- I'm very pleased with that, but I'm aware that
20 there's shelters out there that belong to our organization
21 that are making \$25,000. That's not right. Mainstream
22 shelters, they're making, 50, 60, 75,000, that's more than I
23 make, for frontline work. I can't say enough how passionate
24 I am, the unfairness, the injustice, and I can't help but
25 wonder, is this because we're an Indigenous women field,

1 that we get treated like this?

2 I also need to speak about -- the funding
3 needs to go to the shelters. Being on-reserve, like I said,
4 we have -- we're very lucky. We're -- have the support of
5 our amazing Chief Hill, amazing Chief and council. We have
6 the support of our Hodinohso:ni Confederacy. We're very
7 fortunate. But I am -- I'm aware that there's other on-
8 reserve shelters where the funding goes to their -- their
9 chief and council, who are predominantly male, and they take
10 their shelter funding and they use it to develop their roads
11 or they use it for something else, and it takes away from
12 the women in their community whose lives are -- whose -- who
13 -- who are dying. So I really want to speak strongly about
14 those shelters who are, you know, they're -- our own are
15 hurting us. And I -- and I'm -- and I'm not blaming that.
16 Just -- it's colonization, that's what it is. It's -- if
17 there's any anger in me, it's towards colonization. I know
18 how things are. So I think that money needs to go
19 specifically to the shelters and there needs to be some
20 accountability to ensure that it's going to the women and
21 the children and the families in the -- in the shelters.

22 Yeah. I -- I think I -- I think I got
23 everything there. Thank you.

24 **NAKUSET:** So if we could have more funding, I
25 would like to see more monies for -- and I'm going to talk

1 more about the community as a whole, not necessarily just
2 the shelter, because, you know, we're a women's shelter, but
3 we don't service men except through our outreach for Cabot
4 Square, but I think there needs to be almost like an
5 empowerment fund. So that we can find the strength in each
6 Indigenous individual and -- and help them develop that
7 strength.

8 I think we need more funding for education in
9 Quebec, because the schools, elementary and high school,
10 there's no -- okay, there's a teeny-tiny bit of Indigenous
11 education in the -- in the books, in the history books, but
12 it is -- it is really incredibly sad. I think that we need
13 to have more monies for the lawyers in terms of, again,
14 education. They have, you know, the Gladue reports that are
15 not being utilized by the lawyers. They find it too hard to
16 fill out, but it's the law, and they don't even abide to the
17 own law, so that's a problem. The racism in Montreal is
18 humongous. There needs to be more funding in, you know, a
19 racism team, the same thing with discrimination.

20 We need a wet shelter in Montreal. We need a
21 place where people that are under the influence, that aren't
22 able to access shelters because they drink, and have a safe
23 place where they have, you know, people working there, still
24 giving out small amounts of alcohol so that they don't go
25 into shock, and also have a component of addiction so that

1 when they're ready to start talking about it, but also to
2 keep them off the streets, because that's when the police
3 come and arrest them or the violence happens. So we've been
4 asking for that for four years, and now the City of Montreal
5 is like, okay, so we're going to do a study. And it's like,
6 I'm sorry, Canada already has ten studies. You need to do
7 another study? Stop studying it. Implement it now. And
8 they're not doing it, so again, they don't like me too much,
9 because this is how I talk to them. But it's going to
10 happen soon.

11 Education across the board, so -- and this is
12 also education for First Nations. We don't have enough.
13 You know, we want to educate our people so that they can be
14 the lawyers and doctors and psychologists and, you know, a
15 lot of the -- the funding restrictions, those that are part
16 of the Sixties Scoop, they don't have their status, they
17 can't get monies to go to school.

18 So programming for kids in care. So all of
19 those kids in the foster care system, there's all kinds of
20 programming we can do that -- that could be tailor-made. We
21 had a program called Ronathahi:io. Don't you have one
22 called that, too? Yeah. So it means -- yeah, or "the good
23 path." That's how I understood it. "The good path" in
24 Mohawk. And we wanted to make it like a Big Brother/Big
25 Sister program, so if we can match Indigenous community

1 members with the -- the children in care and they would
2 spend time with them -- time with them within a year and
3 give them that sort of cultural pride, even if it's not the
4 same nation, they would still have, sort of, empathy and
5 they would -- I'm pretty sure, you know, they would learn
6 the culture in order to teach a child about it. I think
7 that would be great. And we've already tried to apply it a
8 couple of years, but we only have a tiny bit of funding for
9 it, so.

10 And then institutional accountability, and I
11 actually talked about that checklist that the shelters do.
12 Well, let's do that for all of society. We go into every
13 single organization, we, like, "Checklist ladies here.
14 We're going to see, are you -- have you been, you know,
15 racist? You know, have you -- do you know your education?
16 Can you mention a couple of the TRCs?" Like, let's -- let's
17 force people to -- I don't know. I know "force", you don't
18 like that word, but let's hold people accountable. And, you
19 know, have the residents -- this is my favorite -- have the
20 residents review each service. You go to the hospital,
21 someone takes you aside, "How did you like your services?
22 Were you treated fairly? Were you treated in a -- were
23 they -- you know, were they kind to you? Did they speak to
24 you in a -- in a rude way?" You wouldn't believe the kind
25 of stuff that we hear. So that would be Youth Protection,

1 police, schools, Welfare. Sometimes I send -- you know, the
2 women go to Welfare and they're told, "Go to the Immigration
3 office." Really? So, yeah, there you go. There's my list.

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** One more thing, if I
5 can -- if I can ask, please? I would like to see a
6 national -- whether it's a forum or a national network of
7 Indigenous women's shelters across this country, whether
8 we're on the reserve or whether we're in an urban setting,
9 but there is a -- a huge gap in the fact, and there is a
10 lot of knowledge and information and sharing because we
11 don't get together. We -- I mean, this is a wonderful
12 opportunity for us to -- to talk and share about our
13 problems, but there's much more than that. I mean, I'm
14 very interested in the great work that both are doing, but
15 after the -- the end of the day, we may never see each
16 other again.

17 But there -- so there is a need to -- to
18 support and fund a gathering of -- of shelter directors or
19 shelters to come together and resource -- and -- and
20 further to that, even to talk about developing a -- a
21 database so that we can share information across the
22 country. You know, currently we use Outcome Tracker, and I
23 know that that can be used across the country, but it needs
24 to be revised to -- to include some of the questions
25 that -- in some of the areas that we're concerned about

1 today. And again, we have no money. I mean, just to set
2 that up, we -- it's five to seven thousand dollars, and
3 that was ten years ago. So today, it would be much more.
4 And then to maintain that and then to have people maintain
5 that. So on and on and on. But there is a way
6 for -- there is a need for us to -- to do more talking.

7 **MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** Thank you.

8 **NAKUSET:** Sorry. And travel monies so we
9 can do this, and as well as to have, like, women's wellness
10 conferences. Like, in the United States, that once we went
11 as the Native Women's Shelter, and then we couldn't find
12 the monies again to do it. But that's really great for the
13 staff to, you know, sort of get best practices. And also,
14 you know, if we have, like, more money, we can bring the
15 residents so they can also see. So, yeah. Funding, like,
16 a whole big chunk for, you know, travel so we can go and
17 visit other shelters. And, you know, let's go to Australia
18 and New Zealand as well and see what they're doing down
19 there. I mean, they're doing good work too, so ...

20 **MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** You still have 40
21 seconds.

22 **(LAUGHTER)**

23 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would like to see us
24 fund our retreats. We do -- we do amazing retreats at
25 Ganohkwasra. We work with the family. We do women

1 retreats. We do family retreats. I would like to see
2 those funded as a regular part of our core services that we
3 provide. I'd also like to see us for -- funded for
4 homelessness, as well. That's a whole different area. But
5 I know many shelters, we take -- we as Indigenous shelters,
6 we take them in, but in the mainstream, there's shelters
7 specific for homelessness. But there we are again,
8 stretching just because the need is there. We're doing it,
9 and we're not getting paid for it.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you,
11 Ms. Lomax. I would like the Commissioners' instruction on
12 this. It's now 10 to 12. We could call the next party.
13 They would have 23 minutes. Or we could break for lunch
14 and maybe come back a little early from lunch.

15 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** We'll
16 stop now, and we will resume at 1:50, one-five-zero.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry. I think
18 you're -- sorry.

19 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** You're
20 right. (Indiscernible).

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No, that's okay. So
22 we can resume at 12:50? So it's a one-hour lunch, resuming
23 at 12:50. Thank you.

24 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Rule 48 now means

1 that Mr. Blain and myself cannot be speaking to the
2 witnesses about the content of their evidence. That's not
3 a prohibition on talking to them. It's just we're not
4 allowed to talk to the content. It's the inverse of the
5 earlier part of the rule that was in place during the
6 examination-in-chief, and I just want the record to show
7 that. Thanks.

8 --- Upon recessing at 11:53 a.m.

9 --- Upon reconvening at 1:05 p.m.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We're going to get
11 started again, please.

12 Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, I would
13 like to invite the next party to come into
14 cross-examination, that will be the Assembly of Manitoba
15 Chiefs, Ms. Joelle Pastora Sala.

16 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** All
17 right.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And the AMC has 23.5
19 minutes. Let's give them a moment to give you your 30
20 seconds.

21 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Good afternoon,
22 Commissioners, Elders, family members, survivors. My name
23 is it Joelle Pastora Sala, I'm counsel to the Assembly of
24 Manitoba Chiefs. And before I begin my questioning I just
25 wanted to thank the Blackfoot Nation as well as the Métis

1 Nation of Alberta Region number 3 for hosting us this week.
2 I will likely have to leave right after my questioning
3 today, but I mean no disrespect. I have -- I have a flight
4 to catch.

5 Good afternoon, panel members, I want to
6 thank you all for your presentations, as well as for all of
7 your work. Just as counsel to NWAC, I -- I also feel
8 uncomfortable with the term "cross-examination," so what I
9 will be doing here today is respectfully asking you
10 questions. And just for clarification, there's a few
11 questions that I'd like to pick up on and areas of
12 questions, and so my questions may not seem like they make
13 much order because I'm kind of picking here and there from
14 what my colleagues have done.

15 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PASTORA SALA:**

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Ms. Montour, I'd
18 like to start with you. I'd like to begin by asking you
19 questions relating to the financial reporting requirements,
20 and again picking up on that theme. Can you outline the
21 types of information you have to provide in reporting?

22 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I can try, but my
23 financial person is the one that does it, but I can -- I
24 think I have a good sense of it.

25 One of the things that we always have to do

1 is we have to have our data, so they want to know the
2 number of safety plans that we use, that we did that month
3 or that quarter, the number of -- they ask a number of
4 specific statistic questions, so -- and that has to be
5 reported to our -- to our funder.

6 And, of course, they want to know any
7 variances, so any -- any surplus or any deficits. And they
8 want -- they want an explanation as to what the variance
9 was about, and they want to make sure that a certain
10 percentage is -- for example, under allocated admin, they
11 want that percentage always calculated into every -- every
12 report as well.

13 So basically you have your budget at the
14 beginning of your fiscal and then your -- that's divided
15 into your quarterly reports, and any variances within that
16 budget, they want to know details as to what that's about.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And that
18 information that you've just outlined, do you outline it in
19 a form or what -- what does it actually look like, what
20 you're producing?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Excel spreadsheet. And
22 then -- and then what we have to do is we usually have to
23 do it on a secure -- like a One Key it's called or
24 a -- like, it's a secure email with the Ministry. And
25 often what happens is those cells don't work and it

1 causes -- it's a lot of -- you know, it's a lot -- it's a
2 very tedious process and it's a lot of frustration for my
3 admin people, as well as I'm sure for their admin people
4 when things go wrong or when an agency does not have the
5 proper -- the proper data. Because sometimes -- that was
6 one of our problems, is our data, because we didn't have
7 money to update our computer software, we weren't able to
8 get these -- do these reports, so we had to spend money to
9 make sure our equipment was operating -- updated so we
10 could do these reports. That's for one funder.

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And then we -- you
13 know, we have our INAC funding as well, and
14 that's -- again, there's three or four or five or six
15 different funders that we have, so it's a lot -- it's a lot
16 of work for our funders -- or to do our reports.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And how long does
18 that take?

19 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** I have -- I have
20 employed two financial people. I have to employ two
21 financial people to -- and they -- and they -- they're not
22 only financial, they're HR, as well. So they're very, very
23 busy. It takes a long time. It takes them most of their
24 time doing the financial reports, and that's not even the
25 audit, right?

1 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** So how often is
2 this reporting or audit or gathering of information taking
3 place?

4 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Quarterly reports.

5 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And when you speak
6 about the frustration and challenges in reporting, what are
7 the consequences of those barriers that you have
8 identified?

9 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Well, if we -- if we're
10 in arrears in our reports, we could be put on the high
11 risk. We could be designated as a high-risk agency. We
12 could potentially lose our, you know -- so that's one of
13 the -- what the Ministry has done is they've -- they've
14 developed -- developed, like, this risk -- risk assessment
15 for the agencies. And so if we're in arrears in our
16 reports regularly, we -- we can go up in that risk. If
17 we're, you know -- if there's a -- if we're not reporting
18 properly, we can go up on that risk. I always -- you know,
19 we used to say that they hold us more accountable than they
20 do hospitals, and I believe that to be true, you know. So
21 we -- and then, of course, if -- if we're -- we're
22 designated as a medium or high-risk agency, that goes to
23 their board of directors, right? And so we, as an
24 organization -- we, you know -- we're basically said that
25 we're high risk, and that's not good for a funder -- you

1 know, for a funder to designate an agency as a medium or
2 high risk. We always want to be a low risk. So there's
3 definitely consequences for us not -- not doing these
4 reports on time.

5 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Does being a high-
6 risk agency affect whether or not you receive funding or
7 the amount that you receive?

8 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Well, we've never been a
9 high-risk agency, so I don't know. But I think it -- it
10 would definitely require a lot of Ministry intervention.
11 So a Ministry would have to come in and -- and work with
12 your -- you know, they'd have to make sure all
13 their -- their checklists are -- are in place. But I -- I
14 really do believe, you know, they've -- they do hold us
15 more accountable than, you know, than they would a
16 hospital. We kid around about that, but I really believe
17 that to be true. And even when they have -- when our
18 salaries were all -- there was a while back where the
19 Ministry had -- I forget the word, but we couldn't go up in
20 our salaries. Nobody could. And it wasn't because of the
21 shelters. It was because of the high-paying salaries of,
22 like, hospitals, and other -- other agencies, but we were
23 all put in that same category where even though the -- we
24 were the lowest salaried employees, we couldn't -- we
25 weren't able to have any kind of raises because there was

1 basically a cap on all the salaries when it wasn't because
2 of shelter workers. It was because of hospital staff,
3 hospital workers, but we were put in that same category.
4 So that's some of the challenges that we've dealt with in
5 Ontario.

6 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And in addition to
7 that barrier of a cap, I'm just wondering in terms of those
8 challenges and frustrations, would you ever -- would
9 funding ever be withheld from your shelter if you don't
10 fill out a form properly?

11 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** I think, yes,
12 definitely. Well, if we're not, you know -- and I -- I
13 have a lot of compassion for, like I said, those I -- my
14 sister INAC shelters who are solely funded by INAC or AHWS,
15 Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, because I know
16 they don't have the -- they don't have half these resources
17 that we have up here. And -- or even a quarter. And
18 their -- their -- their directors are busy on the floor,
19 tending to clients, putting out fires, cooking supper,
20 cleaning toilets, you know, and -- but -- and if they don't
21 have those reports done or they don't -- those proposals
22 done, then they won't get the funding, you know.
23 So -- but, meanwhile, they're busy taking care of the
24 actual people, the actual women in the shelter, the
25 children in the shelter. And they don't have -- they don't

1 have an assistant like I do. They don't have a financial
2 person like I do. They have to do it all. And so I just
3 have so much compassion for them because I know that as bad
4 as we're saying it is, you know, I just know that
5 it's -- it's way worse for them because they don't have the
6 support.

7 **JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**

8 **Affirmed:**

9 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PASTORA SALA:**

10 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you. This
11 is for both Nakuset and Ms. Nepinak. I'd like to pick up
12 on one of my colleagues', Ms. Beaudin's questions, relating
13 to also reporting and give you each an opportunity to share
14 what you would recommend for a reporting process. I
15 believe Ms. Montour had the opportunity to recommend what
16 she would envision, but I'd like to hear from you on that
17 point.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Okay. Well, we report
19 directly to the Province of Alberta, which is a little bit
20 different from the INAC-funded agencies. And we, as well,
21 provide quarterly reports. And it is -- that is financial
22 reports, as well as program reports. And it -- the -- the
23 financial reporting comes under what we call Schedule B,
24 and that is a template that is administered by all the
25 shelters across the province. So there's -- there is a

1 standardized form, as well as our program report form is
2 standardized, as well, although I have issues with
3 the -- with the report, the program report, as well as
4 around the financial because, again, I talk about the
5 cultural peace and having Elders as an essential service.
6 There is no line for that.

7 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So that -- and then the
9 other piece around program report is some of the questions
10 that are asked during the exit process of women who are in
11 the shelter. So there are namely three questions. One is
12 how -- do you feel safer now that you've been in the
13 shelter; are you able to provide safety for yourself and
14 for your children. Where -- another question might be,
15 were all of your cultural needs met.

16 Now, with that question, particularly around
17 cultural needs, as I indicated, 65 percent of the women
18 going into shelters in this province are Indigenous women.
19 So most women -- and when you're in a shelter, there is
20 that power -- power differential, right? And -- and she
21 wants to protect herself and her children, so naturally
22 she's going to say "yes." So the data that's actually going
23 back to the Province of Alberta is -- is not accurate, as
24 well, because what they come back and say, "Well, 99

1 percent of the women that you're serving through the
2 shelters are saying yes, that their cultural needs are
3 met." Rather, if they had asked the question around "do you
4 have access to the medicines, the Elders, the cultural role
5 models, to a trauma-informed counsellor, those kinds of
6 questions would be richer in terms of capturing the -- the
7 true experiences of -- of Indigenous women and children.
8 So there are issues with reporting, absolutely.

9 And I've advocated for -- for many years
10 to -- to have that -- to have that changed. And, of
11 course, I'm one voice. In Alberta, the majority of
12 shelters in this province are non-Indigenous. And so you
13 get one little brown face in there, and they don't listen
14 to us very well, you know? So our voices are drowned out
15 pretty quickly and watered down.

16 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It's very -- it's very
18 challenging.

19 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Nakuset, do you
20 have anything to add in terms of process you would
21 recommend?

22 **NAKUSET:** Okay. So Native Women's Shelter,
23 the -- we get funded through PSOC just for operations, but
24 I also have funding agreements with the Secretary des

1 affaires Autochtones, yes, DC, Employment Services, blah,
2 blah. And so I don't know the whole acronym. Ville
3 duMarial, the Burrow at Ville-Marie, Health Canada, INAC,
4 and Justice Canada. So --

5 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And do they all
6 require reporting and different --

7 **NAKUSET:** All recesses --

8 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** -- reporting?

9 **NAKUSET:** They all require reporting. They
10 all require financial reports, plus written reports, all at
11 different dates, different -- like, I think for Health
12 Canada, it's, like, three times a year. Everyone else is
13 about four times a year. We have to actually have a list
14 on the wall to say when is this due so we can let the staff
15 know, which reminds me that I have to find out if my -- if
16 my Iskweu worker did her report because I've got a
17 notification.

18 So once you hand in the report, then they
19 look at them, and then they decide whether or not they're
20 going to pay you their next installment. I have some, like
21 Justice Canada, where you have to ask for money ahead of
22 time. So they don't pay you unless you ask them to pay
23 you. Like, why? Why don't you just -- anyway. Whatever.
24 So we have to remind Justice Canada to, hey, can you give

1 us the next installment so we can pay our -- our worker?

2 The -- the hard thing is that sometimes you
3 do it all, and you still don't get paid. So I have a
4 contribution agreement with Health Canada. I signed it on
5 April the 1st. I'm still waiting for monies. I mean, I'll
6 get monies 'till September, but I am still giving those
7 services, so you have to be -- you know, I'm not going to
8 let -- I can't say to the women, sorry, we're not going to
9 have our psychologist in because Health Canada didn't pay
10 us. I'll find other ways to make sure that they still get
11 the services, and sometimes I tell psychologists, listen,
12 the money is coming soon. Can you -- can you just wait?
13 Still give the services? And it's incredibly difficult,
14 because let me tell you, if it was the other way around, if
15 I do everything by the book and still don't get paid, that
16 would be unacceptable. If they asked me to -- like, I'm --
17 it's like I'm being penalized even though I did everything.
18 You understand what I'm saying?

19 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Yeah.

20 **NAKUSET:** You're looking at me weird.

21 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** No, I'm -- I'm --
22 I'm not meaning to look at you weird. I'm -- I guess I'm
23 just hoping to hear from you in terms of what you would
24 recommend for a process.

25 **NAKUSET:** With each of them?

1 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Or just -- just
2 generally, if you have any thoughts on -- on a recommended
3 process.

4 **NAKUSET:** Wow. I think that they -- the
5 funding agencies that I mentioned should be -- it should be
6 reflective. What they expect from me, they should also
7 expect from themselves. If I hand everything in in a timely
8 fashion, with the written reports, the financial reports,
9 then I should get paid for that. They should not be like,
10 oh, well, I went on vacation, and then it was on somebody
11 else's desk, and it wasn't processed properly, and yeah, by
12 the end of summer you'll get it. That kind of thing.

13 They -- we are not treated equally in what
14 they ask and then what we produce and then they sort of are
15 like, well, you just wait. I mean, I have horror stories
16 where it's a year that I haven't gotten paid. A year. But
17 I still give those services, so that's why I said, we have
18 to be, you know, super creative. And thank God that we can
19 see a lot of community support in donations, because really,
20 that has helped us to -- to give these essential services.

21 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you. Ms.
22 Montour, coming back to you, over the course of the last
23 week and even today, we've heard a lot about culturally
24 appropriate services. When we look at culturally
25 appropriate services, is it conceivable that there are

1 differences between and within nations and regions?

2 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely, yes.

3 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And you have
4 identified -- or you have testified about a nationally
5 imposed directive to access the funding, agreed?

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** A nationally imposed ...

7 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Well, by your
8 funders, an imposed system to access the funding.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

10 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** One consequence of
11 the -- this imposition of a directive on how to access the
12 funding, is it that you are unable to provide the services
13 that you -- or that would be culturally appropriate within
14 your nation for the individuals you serve?

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I'm not sure I
16 understand your question.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Is one of the
18 consequences of the imposed way that they -- or information
19 that they require from you, is one of the consequences of
20 the -- not only the ways and the process but also what
21 they're providing you funding for, that you are unable to
22 provide the culturally appropriate services that are
23 culturally appropriate for your nation and the individuals
24 you serve?

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I still don't

1 understand. I'm sorry.

2 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** If you --
3 Counsel, if you could break it down step by step, please,
4 sort of reframe the question?

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Sorry. I can't.

6 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** That's okay. So
7 you -- you -- you indicated that the process that has been
8 identified to access the service is something that has been
9 imposed upon your shelter, correct?

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And you agreed that
12 what is culturally appropriate may change within regions and
13 nations.

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Correct.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** So is one of the
16 consequences of having an imposed system for accessing the
17 funding that you are unable to -- to do what is culturally
18 appropriate within your nation that you -- your -- the
19 clients you serve or the individuals you serve would define
20 as culturally appropriate?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That we're unable to do
22 it? For all the nations, do you mean?

23 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** That you serve.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That we serve.

25 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Individuals.

1 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No. We -- we -- I think
2 for us, we -- we -- we do our best to always go back to our
3 basics, and where we started was in 1980s and we did in our
4 -- our original needs assessment, and we heard from our
5 community in the 1980s. They wanted to be serviced by our
6 own people and they wanted services in their own way. So
7 any kind of funding that we get, we always do that. We go
8 back to our own -- our own culture and our own traditions
9 and our own teachings. And I -- and I find that if we do
10 that, we are -- we are always okay.

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Can I ask, earlier,
12 Ms. Montour, in answering Ms. Dunn's question, you stated
13 that the concept of shelter was imposed.

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, yes.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** On --

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** I'm wondering, how
18 would you define the shelter or -- or maybe that's not even
19 the right word, but how would you define it from your
20 perspective in your nation?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Okay. Well, we do the
22 best we can to -- we work with the whole family. Like,
23 that's how we want to do family violence prevention work.
24 It involves the children, the women, the men. We learned a
25 long time ago, long time ago, that if we were just going to

1 work with the women and the children, the women are going
2 nowhere without their men. So we had to include the men.
3 As a matter of fact, our men's program started as just a
4 pilot project way back in 1990, I believe. We've had the
5 men's program, and back then, we used to get our hands
6 slapped by our sister shelters all the time because we were
7 working with men.

8 But we just stayed true to our values. We
9 stayed true to the, you know, to our traditions of our
10 people, that it's not -- this problem is not just about
11 women. It is about, you know, we would hear from children.
12 Children would sometimes say, you know what, I'm -- I'm okay
13 with my dad, I'm afraid of my mom. We heard that. You
14 know, we -- so we were looking and we were hearing things
15 about sexual abuse a long time ago. We were hearing that
16 sometimes it wasn't the men that were sexually abusing. We
17 were hearing that sometimes it was the women, too. So we
18 were -- we've been speaking those truths for 30 years.
19 People have not wanted to hear it, but we've -- you know
20 what.

21 So we -- we went back to our original
22 teachings and we talked about that duality and we talked
23 about that good-mindedness and that not-good-mindedness and
24 that we are all susceptible to it, whether we're a child, a
25 teen, an Elder, a -- a woman, a man, you know, whatever.

1 We're all susceptible to that not-so-good mind, and that we
2 all have a responsibility. So I believe we -- we operate
3 our shelter the way we need to at Six Nations.

4 Mind you, we don't open it up to all men. I
5 have to be clear with that. It is just for Six Nations men
6 and New Credit men. So it's not for all men to come to. We
7 did that just so we can maintain some level of safety for
8 the women, too. So it's not for -- open to every man out
9 there, but it -- mind you, we -- we have a population of
10 over 13,000 people, so we -- so I guarantee you right now,
11 there's at least -- there's at least four men in our shelter
12 right now. And also -- as well as women. So that -- that's
13 the way we operate our -- our program. It's more of a
14 family. They call it, like, a family shelter.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Okay.

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That's where I hear
17 people calling it, but we don't call it that. It's just our
18 shelter.

19 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** All three of you
20 have referenced the many types of services that you provide
21 in your shelter. I'm wondering if each of you could share
22 information on the importance that you see in providing a
23 variety of services within one space. Maybe I'll start with
24 you, Ms. Nepinak.

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Certainly there can be

1 challenges around it. I mean, the whole concept of -- if I
2 can just go back to that a little bit, around -- around
3 sheltering is, from my perspective, at least, as a healing
4 lodge. And within that healing lodge, we have the sacred
5 space, and within this space, and that is to service the
6 families that come into the shelter. And so as -- as a
7 result of families coming in, there is a -- the -- the needs
8 become identified, clearer and clearer, through our intake
9 process. For example, mom may have -- and we have seen
10 this, mom may have stage 4 cancer. You know, we had one
11 incident where we had a -- a grandmother who came in with
12 her two granddaughters, who were 14 and 16, from another
13 province, and -- and she was very, very ill, and --
14 ambulance had to come and get her, you know, to the
15 hospital. And -- and so the child support workers then kick
16 in, and work with the -- the youth. And took the kids over
17 to the hospital to see grandma, and -- and they were there
18 to nurture and hug the kids as, obviously, they were very
19 upset. And then to transport them back to the lodge. And
20 we wanted to give this grand -- the grandmother the dignity
21 of being able to make the decisions about her
22 granddaughters.

23 I mean, policy would tell us otherwise that
24 when there are children in the shelter that are abandoned
25 for whatever reason, is that we would call Child Welfare.

1 We didn't call Child Welfare. We brought in extra staff
2 to -- to stay with -- with the youth, the girls who were 14
3 and 16. Had we called Child Welfare, we know for certain
4 that those girls would have ran. And they would have been
5 on the streets, et cetera, et cetera. We know the story.
6 But, I think, it's -- it's very important to -- to create
7 that environment and that atmosphere that -- to the hope --
8 hopefully, as much as we can possibility to the individual
9 needs of that family. That -- that is critically important.
10 Did I answer your question? Or did I --

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Yes.

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I did. Okay.

13 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** I -- I notice I'm
16 over time. I'm wondering if the -- Ms. Montour and Nakuset
17 have the opportunity to answer the question, or if -- if I
18 should --

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do you want to?

20 **NAKUSET:** I can. So we have a lot of
21 different, I guess, specialized staff because every time we
22 see an issue, we want to make sure that we have a -- a
23 qualified person to address that issue. So, you know, we
24 make sure that when we hire addictions workers that they
25 actually have a background working in -- in addictions. We

1 try to match the -- the service with the most appropriate
2 person because we have to help the people that come through
3 our doors, who we choose to help. And -- and every year the
4 -- the issues are changing. And we -- we keep growing
5 because nobody else is doing it. So we step up to the
6 plate.

7 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

8 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We just -- we have a --
9 a variety of services in a -- in a space. And I think
10 what's important is that we all know our role and
11 responsibility.

12 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** It's a really big,
14 really big -- those two words mean a lot for any
15 Hodinohso:ni community, to know our roles and
16 responsibilities. And I find that we're really good at --
17 we get things done. If we -- as long as we know what our
18 role is and our responsibility, we're -- we're -- we got
19 back to being very, like, living in the longhouse. We --
20 everybody knows what they're supposed to do and what their
21 role is, and it gets done.

22 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you, all.
23 Thank you.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms.
25 Pastora Sala. The Commissioners would like to invite up the

1 next counsel, Ms. Elizabeth Zarpa, on behalf of ITK. Ms.
2 Zarpa will have 19 minutes, please.

3 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Hi. Good afternoon.
4 My name is Elizabeth Zarpa. I'm counsel with the Inuit
5 Tapiriit Kanatami. I want to say thank you to the Blackfoot
6 Nation and the Métis of Treaty 7 for allowing me to be here
7 on their land.

8 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

9 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ZARPA:**

10 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** So I wanted to delve
11 into this, and also thank you, everybody, for your time, and
12 your expertise, and your wisdom, and lived experience. And
13 I'm -- I'm going to gear my question predominately towards
14 Nakuset. So I'm -- I know before, you mentioned, this is a
15 touchy subject with regards to the experience of, sort of,
16 Inuit women having their children taken away and, "It kills
17 them."

18 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

19 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Did you -- in that
20 experience, in what you've seen from, say, an Inuk coming
21 down to Montreal, and her child is taken away, what is the
22 process from start to finish, in terms of if you wanted to
23 emphasize the main points that she has to endure.

24 **NAKUSET:** Sorry. Say that again? When an --
25 when and Inuk woman comes to the city, now is she pregnant

1 before or -- already? It -- it gets really complicated
2 because sometimes they come to the city and then they become
3 pregnant, and it may not be a healthy relationship. And
4 then they have to figure out what their going to do. So,
5 unfortunately, what happens a lot, is they give birth to the
6 baby and then they leave the hospital. And these babies go
7 into Youth Protection right away. So I know -- is that
8 helpful? Or you don't want to hear that?

9 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** From that point --

10 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

11 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** -- when they -- they go
12 into Youth Protection --

13 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

14 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** -- say -- say, the
15 mother wants support in that process. Does she have access
16 to civil law, common law, any type of support that's
17 understanding of where she comes from and the experiences
18 she's enduring?

19 **NAKUSET:** You -- you're making it a very
20 individual case. And it's hard for me to say exactly
21 because first, she has to want to fight to have that child
22 back and then she has to access the services. So if she's
23 at the Native Women's Shelter, and we know that she's
24 pregnant, and we know the social worker is going to try to
25 take that baby, then we can begin the process where our

1 family care worker starts talking with the social worker,
2 they're creating a plan, they're following through on the
3 plan, and then she gets to keep the child at the shelter
4 with the mom. And then we have outreach services so
5 that -- that she can, you know, find an apartment and -- and
6 be supported for as long as she wants to be supported.

7 So -- but if she doesn't come to the shelter,
8 then, you know, a lot of these kids go to -- to families.
9 And I know one particular Mohawk woman, named Barbara
10 McDonald (ph) from Kanasatake, and she has received all
11 kinds of children, it's unbelievable how this woman can take
12 on so many. But she just does it with such love. You know,
13 I remember she would come to a meeting and she'd have three,
14 like, infants with her. And she'd be, like, you know, "It's
15 an honour to work with these babies." You know, she's
16 doesn't know how long she's going to keep them. You know,
17 maybe the mother is going to try to -- to, you know, have a
18 relationship, and -- and fight the system. But she is all
19 for that. I mean, she wants to support these babies, she
20 wants to support the mothers. And that's awesome that, you
21 know, some of our people are trying to help, but we're, sort
22 of, the minority in that. I -- I don't know if I -- do you
23 have another question? I
24 don't -- I'm not sure if I'm answering it.

25 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** So I wanted to, sort

1 of, get into the experience of -- thank you for providing
2 that information, in your seeing these things occurs within
3 the shelter. Is it a common occurrence that Inuit women
4 usually don't get their children back?

5 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

6 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Or do they get them
7 back?

8 **NAKUSET:** It is not the norm to get your
9 children back. I was just at Youth Protection. I was
10 explaining that. They make it so hard for us to get our
11 kids back. They -- we have to jump through hoops, and then
12 more hoops, and then more hoops. And I'm, you know, working
13 again with Youth Protection and I'm going to be creating,
14 like, a new program that they're doing for the Black
15 community. And I was saying, "Why aren't you doing this for
16 the Indigenous community? There are more kids in care and,
17 you know, you said you're going to follow the TRCs. Why
18 aren't you doing this?" I have to, like -- I have to almost
19 bully people into actually doing the work. But I'll do it.

20 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** All right. And would
21 you support the idea of a recommendation that the Province
22 of Quebec create an inquiry into Inuit children being
23 apprehended by Child Protection?

24 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

25 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Thank you. I

1 wanted to go, also, into the experience of different reason
2 around why Inuit go to, say, Montreal. You highlighted that
3 they travel there from Nunavut, but I would assume that it's
4 predominately from Nunavik?

5 **NAKUSET:** It could be. I'm -- I'm not
6 exactly --

7 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. And are some of
8 the reasons to go down for, like, to go to university, or to
9 go to college? You mentioned earlier, "To live the dream,
10 where things are not as expensive."

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

12 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And they go to
13 hospitals, mental health --

14 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

15 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And do you think that
16 there would be the same level of Inuit in homeless shelters
17 in Montreal, if there was equitable access to their own
18 hospitals in their own territories, their own mental health
19 centres, their own educational institutions, within their
20 own homes?

21 **NAKUSET:** If they had in their own
22 communities, they wouldn't come down.

23 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Great.

24 **NAKUSET:** They love their communities, and
25 they're proud of them, and, yeah.

1 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. And -- and this
2 was a part of the -- the exhibit, I think it was Exhibit 38,
3 on housing needs and preferences of Indigenous people using
4 community resources in Montreal, page 1.

5 **NAKUSET:** Page 1. Do I have that? Sorry.

6 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Are you okay?

7 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

8 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. So it outlines
9 that Indigenous people, particularly Inuit, are
10 overrepresented among homeless people in Montreal, and on
11 March 24th, 2015, about 10 percent of the 3,016 homeless
12 persons who were surveyed were Indigenous, while they
13 represent only .6 percent of Montreal's overall population.
14 Of this 10 percent, about 40 percent were Inuit, while Inuit
15 represent only 10 percent of the Indigenous population in
16 Montreal.

17 Now, I wanted to understand whether in this
18 experience of having a high number of Inuit coming to
19 Montreal, and this level of homelessness, if there's any
20 consultation or any type of agreement with, like, the
21 Nunavik Government or the Nunavut Government to somehow
22 bridge the gaps?

23 **NAKUSET:** I would not know the
24 question -- or the answer to that.

25 I just wanted to mention something that I

1 haven't yet. In Quebec, when they're MedEvac'd, when the
2 children are taken from the community to come to Montreal,
3 the government doesn't think it's important to include the
4 parent, so the children come by themselves. And a lot of
5 them are super young and don't even speak English, and they
6 show up at the hospital and they're crying for their
7 mothers.

8 And this happens, it's been going on for 10,
9 15 years, the Gazette wrote an article about it, the
10 government said, yeah, we should probably do something
11 about it. They haven't done anything about it. So I'm
12 thinking, okay, that's going to be the next thing I do.

13 There's just so many -- and, you know,
14 separating the mother and the child, or the family and
15 child, it's been happening forever and it continues, so I
16 just wanted to throw that out there, I just wanted to put
17 that on the record.

18 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And are these
19 children, when they come down, are they put into the
20 Nunavik house, or do they stay in the hospital?

21 **NAKUSET:** No, this is like a regular
22 hospital. It's like the children's hospital. And, like,
23 the doctors can't communicate with the children, you know,
24 they have to bring in an interpreter, and they're saying,
25 what is she crying about? She's saying she wants her mom.

1 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Thank you for
2 highlighting those things, I appreciate that. And so if
3 there's an individual who comes from Nunavik and they're
4 homeless and they decide, okay, this is the point in my
5 life I want to go back to my territory, are there -- flying
6 from Montreal to, say, Kuujjuak or Aupaluk or Iqaluit,
7 those flights are in the thousands of dollars.

8 **NAKUSET:** M'hm, m'hm.

9 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Are there programs
10 available for individuals, whether it's by the regional
11 government systems or the province that you're aware of,
12 where if they want to go home and they're homeless, that's
13 available?

14 **NAKUSET:** The Open Door, which is a day
15 shelter in Montreal, is working with Makivik, and they are
16 able to negotiate flights through Air Inuit to bring them
17 back to their community. But I know that even that has
18 been difficult if they don't have their identification
19 because they're homeless, and they can't get on that plane.

20 It's -- you know, I know the staff there,
21 they go over and above to try to -- to get those documents
22 to support the people that want to go back to the
23 community, to actually drive them to the airport. Like,
24 there are people that are -- that are doing some of that
25 work.

1 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Great. And are you
2 familiar, or do you know of any sort of Inuit shelters
3 specific in Nunavik or Nunavut for individuals, say, who
4 are homeless, they take a flight back, if that's available
5 to them? If they wanted to go to into a healing lodge in
6 their own home?

7 **NAKUSET:** I know that -- I believe there are
8 two Inuit shelters. I know Quebec Native Women, they have
9 all the connections between all the shelters in Quebec. I
10 can't tell you the names of them offhand. I know that
11 there are Inuit addiction centres that we refer our clients
12 to, and we help with flying them there or finding the
13 transportation.

14 But in Montreal there's no Inuit specific
15 shelter. We -- like I said, PAK has Inuit clientele, the
16 Native Women's Shelter does, and sometimes they go to other
17 non-Indigenous shelters.

18 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And would you agree
19 that Montreal needs a specific Inuit women's shelter?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, for men and for women, so we
21 should have two.

22 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay, thank you. And
23 within these shelters that Inuit women in Montreal do have
24 access to, do they have things like country food, like quaq
25 or muktuk or char, seals, anything like that?

1 **NAKUSET:** At the Native Women's Shelter we
2 get country food, and I think the Open Door also gets
3 country food. I think the Native Friendship Centre does.
4 I think all the shelters do. They -- yeah, they know who
5 the person is to bring the country food down, or sometimes
6 if you have the staff then they have the connection.

7 Plus, you know, we also -- a lot of the
8 organizations are also working with the clientele to
9 develop their art with the soapstone sculptures. There's a
10 lot more projects going on right now for that.

11 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay, thank you. So
12 this question is going to be to all three of you, and would
13 you agree, Ms. Nepinak, Ms. Montour and Ms. -- or Nakuset,
14 that individuals and children who come into shelters, safe
15 houses and transition houses, are some of the most
16 vulnerable people in Canadian society?

17 **NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**
18 **Affirmed:**

19 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ZARPA:**

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

21 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

22 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would say so,
23 absolutely.

24 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And would you agree,
25 all three of you again, that each shelter is common in some

1 of their struggles, but they are also diverse in their
2 struggles based on their geographic location, as was
3 emphasized on reserve, off reserve, main stream?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

5 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

7 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And between all three
8 of you there is no representation of an Inuit shelter from
9 Inuit Nunangat, so Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik or
10 Nunatsiavut on this panel?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's true.

12 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And within that, do
13 you -- from what you've testified earlier, Ms. Montour, you
14 mentioned that the northern experience is very different?

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

16 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Did you want to
17 highlight what you mean by north?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, where I'm
19 thinking of north is just who is in our membership, and so
20 I'm thinking of Fort Albany -- the remote communities,
21 fly-in communities, like Fort Albany, Big Trout, even past
22 Kenora in the Treaty 3 area, that's who I think of in the
23 north. But I'm just thinking of our membership as far as
24 ASO, but in terms of -- I definitely support the idea of

1 definitely there needs to be an Inuit shelter, specific
2 shelter. I've always wondered why there wasn't.

3 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And in your idea of,
4 like, north within your membership area, what
5 were -- what's missing from hearing their particular
6 stories or their experience could be very different from
7 your geographic location because of where -- it's in the
8 north?

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely, yes.

10 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. At this point I
11 want to put in a formal protest that there's no
12 representation of Inuit shelters from Inuit Nunangat, and
13 in that there's a huge gap in the information that's being
14 shared here today, and the Inuit specific experience of
15 women and children and vulnerable people living far north.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's been noted.

17 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** It's duly
18 noted, thank you.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's duly noted,
20 thank you.

21 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** That's all I have
22 today. Thank you.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you,
24 Ms. Zarpa.

1 Commission Counsel would now like to invite
2 Ms. Julie McGregor on behalf of the Assembly of First
3 Nations to do her cross-examination. Ms. McGregor has 23
4 and a half minutes.

5 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Good afternoon,
6 Commissioners and panel members. My name is Julie McGregor
7 and --

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you just wait a
9 moment, Julie, sorry. We're just trying to set the time
10 for you.

11 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Okay.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry. Thank you
13 for your patience. I think Mr. Registrar had to step out
14 for a minute.

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** That's okay.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I would say go
17 ahead. You have extra seconds.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** My name is Julie
19 McGregor and I'm Algonquin from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg,
20 and I represent the Assembly of First Nations here today.

21 I'd like to thank Manitoba Keewatinowi
22 Okimakanak for sharing their time with the AFN today, and
23 I'd also like to thank all the panel members for all of the
24 great work they do. Ms. Nepinak, you mentioned the war on
25 Indigenous women, and I have to say, after listening to all

1 of your evidence today, I am so glad and so proud to have
2 warriors like yourselves on the frontlines of that war.

3 In terms of my questioning today, I want to
4 begin by directing my questions to Nakuset, Ms. Nepinak,
5 and then Ms. Montour.

6 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

7 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:**

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Nakuset, you said -- you
9 spoke about your frustration, and -- and it really came
10 through in your evidence, about always having to educate
11 institutions like the police, and you provided an example of
12 McGill University, on the circumstances of Indigenous people
13 and that the onus is always on Indigenous people to -- to
14 educate the public. Based on your interactions with these
15 institutions, why do you think there is a lack of knowledge
16 out there about these things? Is it just plain ignorance?
17 Is it resistance to change? Is it because there's a public
18 perception that these issues are not important? Or is it
19 just plain racism?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yes, yes, yes, yes.

21 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Good.

22 **(LAUGHTER)**

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think in -- do
24 you think that the government institution that you had
25 interactions with perpetuate negative stereotypes about

1 Indigenous people and that those stereotypes result in a
2 lack of public support for resolving these longstanding
3 issues?

4 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

5 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** One of the
6 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation
7 Commission, and I'm not going to get into the -- the TRC
8 report or anything, was that the history of residential
9 schools should be taught in schools so that there is public
10 education. In a similar way, what are some of the more
11 concrete and practical ways to educate public service
12 providers and governments, specifically about -- about
13 providing services to Indigenous people?

14 **NAKUSET:** In my area?

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

16 **NAKUSET:** You mean in Quebec?

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Yes, in Quebec.

18 **NAKUSET:** There's so much. You know, like I
19 said, you know, Quebec has 11 nations and most service
20 providers don't even know -- if they get three of them
21 right, that's amazing. So there's so much that they need to
22 be educated on, but that's, you know, cultural norms. I
23 mean, if we were to put out, like, stereotypes of Indigenous
24 people and just hand that around and -- and see if they're
25 like, oh, that's a stereotype, you mean it's not true?

1 There are so many misguided -- sometimes I don't even think
2 that they're -- they mean to be cruel. They -- they
3 -- they just don't know any better. So I -- like I said, I
4 -- I'm good with educating as much as I -- as I can, but I
5 think there's also responsibility for people to educate
6 themselves, and that seems to be a real effort for them to
7 do.

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So it should be the
9 government and the service providers educating themselves.

10 **NAKUSET:** I think everyone should be. But
11 you know, I mean, the TRCs, that was why they was created,
12 the, you know, the 94 recommendations were supposed to be
13 for institutions. So I think that when you start a job and
14 it's your first day and you're filling out the paperwork,
15 all of a sudden, the TRCs will be there. Can you read them?
16 You've read them? Can you sign the paper at the end because
17 you know them? Okay. Feel free to apply them as well. I
18 think that's what the whole purpose is. But who is going to
19 force these institutions to do that? I thought that's what
20 the whole purpose was, but no one's forcing them. So I
21 guess that's another thing on a wish list, of having the TRC
22 enforcers.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So would it be the TRC
24 or what -- it could be, you know, the governments
25 themselves? Like, how do they provide funding to service

1 providers? Shouldn't that be part of their -- their
2 agreements, their funding agreements? They somehow enforce
3 this level of public education?

4 **NAKUSET:** So you're saying that governments
5 should have funding so that they teach themselves about
6 First -- Indigenous issues?

7 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** No, I'm saying that when
8 you say, like, you have a -- say you have a child welfare
9 agency or you have the police services --

10 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

11 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- they receive money as
12 well, and that --

13 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- you know, but maybe
15 that funding should be conditional upon them showing that
16 they're doing that.

17 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I like that.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** All right. I was going
19 to ask you about which -- all of the levels that you talked
20 about. You should -- you said there should be training at
21 all levels and I wanted --

22 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- you to kind of
24 enumerate them, but I think you just mean at all levels
25 anywhere, right?

1 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

2 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** In terms of the
3 training?

4 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. Everywhere.

5 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

6 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:**

7 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** That's great. Thank
8 you. Josie?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes?

10 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And can I call you
11 Josie?

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

13 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Actually, can I call the
14 panel all of -- by your first names, if that's okay? Thank
15 you. In your evidence, I recall that you spoke about
16 *Minobimaatisiwin*, and -- and you said it's the good life.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Can you explain a little
19 bit for the panel what that entails?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, *Minobimaatisiwin*
21 is living a good life. And -- and within that good life,
22 you have your fundamental -- your beliefs, your actions, how
23 you interact with other people, what your home fires are
24 like, how you look after the people around you, extending
25 kindness, empathy, acceptance. And *Minobimaatisiwin* means

1 all of those things in a very broad context. And so it's
2 important, and it's -- it's -- it -- it's incumbent on us as
3 individuals, I think, to -- to -- to live that good life by
4 reflecting often on those teachings and -- and -- and the
5 role modeling that we received in our lives. And I think
6 about the -- the grandmothers, I think about the great-
7 grandmothers and the many grandmothers that were in the
8 communities that -- that demonstrated and role modelled
9 *Minobimaatisiwin* in my community and how I would like to
10 emulate that behaviour today to -- to be -- to live that
11 good life. That's what I believe it is.

12 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So *Minobimaatisiwin* is
13 a holistic principle in your --

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- your belief. Yes.
16 So in the spirit of that, would you agree that funding for
17 shelters needs to be sufficient to include holistic
18 programming for the individuals, which includes -- which
19 would -- could include childcare, support for Elders,
20 cultural programming, life skills, nutrition, everything
21 that would affect that individual who's coming into the
22 shelter?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

24 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** You mentioned also in
25 your evidence how important it is to have staff who know the

1 ways of our people.

2 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

3 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And that really struck
4 me, because I think it's an important point, because
5 Indigenous people really do have a unique way of relating to
6 each other. It's not always obvious to people who don't
7 interact with us or don't have that experience. And so
8 would you agree that there's a significant need to have
9 Indigenous people providing the culturally appropriate
10 services to Indigenous people?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely. And I
12 do believe that that is the only way to -- to move towards
13 healing and wellness, is to have people with the lived
14 experiences coupled with the educational experiences and --
15 and the ways of -- the traditional ways as well.

16 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And we -- we heard, and
17 I -- and I appreciate I'm not going to try to get you to
18 talk about other panels or whatever that happened during the
19 hearing, but we did hear a lot about requirements for
20 recruitments, training, and educational requirements as
21 being obstacles for Indigenous people to, you know, to
22 receive the credentials to do the kind of work that is
23 needed. Do you think that governments and service providers
24 are -- should partner with First Nations and Indigenous
25 communities to train staff and to perhaps look at

1 alternative measures for -- for credentials for people who
2 want to work in this area, Indigenous people who want to
3 work in this area?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, and I think
5 that should have happened decades ago. Not today, but
6 decades ago. I -- I -- I think it's very, very critical
7 that we have a curriculum developed by Indigenous folks to
8 -- to develop a training manual, to develop -- whether it's
9 a university curriculum or a high school curriculum to
10 prepare people for the work that is ahead. But also, with -
11 - in conjunction with our Elders as well, with -- with
12 ceremony, to prepare the people for it. Because there's --
13 there -- there needs to be a lot of strength in the work
14 that we're doing. It is very vicarious work, and quite
15 often, we see very high-risk situations, and so we need to
16 be prepared on many different levels to react to those
17 situations when they come upon us.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And in -- and when you
19 have the circumstances where you hire somebody who may have
20 the education, may have the training, may have the
21 credentials, but doesn't quite understand how Indigenous
22 people relate to each other, you know, but then you have, on
23 the other side, you have a person who is, you know, very
24 familiar with all of the issues, but perhaps doesn't have
25 the credentials to provide the services that you need in

1 your -- in the shelters. Do you think that, you know, that
2 those specific circumstances that where you weigh education
3 verses life experience almost, I guess you'd say, do you
4 need -- does that need to be adjust for the circumstances
5 for Indigenous people?

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. I think, what
7 we do at Awo Taan, is we coupled the -- you know, you have
8 some that are very, very culturally, very, very strong, and
9 some who are -- may not be as strong but have excellent
10 advocacy skills, so we try to pair people together, and I
11 know we -- there was mention that quite often people have to
12 work alone, but we're quite lucky we don't -- that doesn't
13 happen for our organization. There's also a requirement by
14 our funders, at least for the provincial funders, that when
15 we apply for dollars we have to send our job descriptions
16 with our minimum requirements to -- for -- for each of our
17 positions, and they'll sometimes ask for resumes, they'll
18 ask for criminal security clearance checks, as well as our
19 child welfare cheques every three years as well.

20 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm. Do you think that
21 governments need to invest, either provincially or
22 Federally, do they need to invest in building more capacity
23 within First Nations in terms of providing training and
24 education for Indigenous people to work within their
25 communities? Or in urban areas, as well?

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, and I -- that
2 should have happened, again, decades ago.

3 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So I just want to move
4 quickly to, you provided in your evidence you discussed the
5 Aboriginal Framework for Healing and Wellness, which you --
6 you wrote.

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** If you had the resources,
9 and a lot of this comes down to resources we've heard that
10 through your evidence today. You need more money.

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

12 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** If you had the resources
13 to update the framework and to expand it, what would you
14 like to see done?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, I'd certainly like to
16 -- it is a 10-year document, and as it -- it needs
17 revisions. We need more recent practices. We need -- we
18 need to find out what people are doing across the country to
19 put that in our manual, as well as we need current research
20 as to what -- what some of the trends are. We some of our
21 data, but we also need to go back to some of our Elders to
22 talk about some of those definitions around
23 -- you know, I talked about the definition of healing
24 yesterday. I talked about Indigenous ways of knowing. I
25 talked about what best practice is in communities. I talked

1 about colonization. It's time we -- we take that -- that
2 -- those words and -- and build them to be part of the
3 mainstream discourse as well or discussion.

4 So we need mainstream shelters to begin to
5 use our language around healing, around ways of knowing
6 Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, so that Indigenous women are
7 better served in -- in shelters.

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think that that
9 probably like a practical recommendation right there? Is
10 where you take a document, like the framework, and build it
11 into, you know, non-Indigenous service providers --

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

13 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- manuals, guides,
14 books.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It is -- it is available
16 to non-Indigenous service providers, and I actually took it,
17 when we did the manual, to a provincial network. And again,
18 there is the -- sometimes the lack of belief in Indigenous
19 ways. As -- as I mentioned earlier, I sometimes, you know,
20 I'm the only Indigenous shelter, where there may be, you
21 know, 30 other non-Indigenous shelters, and my voice gets
22 drowned out very quickly.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so people don't
25 listen or pay attention or they're just not interested. I

1 -- I have to say that a few years ago that the province was
2 doing a database, and I had to fight vigorously to have
3 Indigenous women included in -- in the count, and some of
4 the comments, you know, from other mainstream shelter
5 directors were, Well, why should we count Indigenous women?
6 They don't get nothing anyway, kind of thing. And -- and in
7 another comment that I got is, Why aren't Indigenous women
8 -- what is wrong with Indigenous women that they can't fit
9 into regular programming? And -- and I'm trying to
10 articulate, here's why, you know, there is a history, there
11 is colonization, there's materialistic policy, there's
12 racism. All of those things that I bring up, but people
13 haven't had that will to -- to do it or that thinking to do
14 it, and so many mainstream shelters continue to struggle on
15 how to work with Indigenous women.

16 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And do you think that
17 perhaps Indigenous women when they go to a mainstream
18 shelter, because of that perception, are somehow turned away
19 from them and told, Oh, you have to go to the Indigenous
20 shelter or some other service that's provided.

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. Yes, and I do
22 recall, you know, one Indigenous woman being told to leave
23 another shelter here in Calgary, and she was told to leave
24 with her "dope", which was actually her sacred smudge that
25 was trying to use, so they kicked her out. And another

1 woman was put out in the rain, you know, with her -- with
2 her stroller and her baby. I can't remember what the
3 situation was, but there are stories that -- that put
4 Indigenous women into very dangerous situations, and we need
5 to pay attention to those stories because this is the day-
6 to-day reality. These are the boots on the ground that are
7 telling us here is the situation for us today.

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Are there any resources
9 for the Commissioners to draw upon when you -- you're
10 talking about these stories, and you're saying, you know,
11 people need to hear this, and I think the Commissioners
12 probably need to hear these stories as well.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

14 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** What resources could
15 they draw on for that?

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, certainly increased
17 resources for Indigenous women's shelters. I think specific
18 shelters that service women from an Indigenous lens, from an
19 Indigenous framework, and to develop -- further develop the
20 concepts of healing lodges because there is a certain amount
21 of stigma when it comes to shelters as well. Who wants to
22 go into a shelter? Well, she's a battered, you know, she
23 wants to go in there. And there's a lot of labelling that
24 goes on.

25 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** You know, and there's --
2 I talked a little bit about assessments yesterday, about,
3 you know, he's the batterer, she's the battered women. And
4 so that whole language needs to change as well.

5 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Thank you.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It needs a whole new
7 reset is really what I'm saying. We need to build it, you
8 know, let's break it down and let's build it from the ground
9 up, and let's bring in our Elders, our traditional knowledge
10 keepers, our wisdom keepers, our people with a lived
11 experience, and -- and let's bring in our academics and our
12 researchers. but together I believe we -- we can build
13 lodges that are welcoming, and that do promote healing and
14 wellness in a very positive way.

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Thank you.

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** *Miigwetch.*

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** *Miigwetch.*

18 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

19 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:**

20 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Sandra, I just have a
21 couple of questions about -- you raised in your evidence the
22 challenges of operating a shelter on reserve, and I'd like
23 to explore some of that. But I also -- I don't want to go
24 over -- my friend from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs went
25 over the funding issues, and -- and I know you -- you spoke

1 quite passionately about that, and I think that you were
2 talking about, you know, the life of a contribution
3 agreement. Basically, you -- you've provide a proposal, you
4 wait a long time to get an answer, you wait long time to get
5 a funding agreement, and then by the time you are getting
6 the money you've already had to have done half the things
7 you did in your proposal. And then, you know, there's a --
8 there's a chance that you don't get the time to do
9 everything you have in your proposal, and there's a
10 possibility for a clawback of those funds, right? Have you
11 ever experience that, where you've had to give back money to
12 the government?

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We really try not to do
14 that, but that has happened. That's like -- that hurts with
15 everything I -- you know, to have to give that money back,
16 but we have had to -- I'm thinking of one time, we did have
17 to give money back because by the time we were approved for
18 funding for our parking lot it was bad weather, and so we
19 couldn't. And of course, April 1, March 31st is when
20 everything has to be done. By the time we had -- were
21 approved for it, it already started snowing for our parking
22 lot -- to redo our parking lot, and because it snowed all
23 the winter and right to -- into, you know, end of March, we
24 weren't able to do the parking lot, so we had to send that
25 money back.

1 That was probably one of the few times we
2 have had to send money back, but we -- we're really
3 creative. I think we, you know, we've become very good as
4 -- at working with a system in doing the best we can to not
5 have to send money back but to make sure those objectives
6 get fulfilled. You know, we've -- we have to be. We have
7 to -- otherwise I'd be sending money back all the time, so,
8 you know, we have to be very creative in how we do it, and
9 so that they're happy with -- they get their needs met, and
10 we also get the work done too.

11 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think that --
12 different models say multi-year funding agreements, would
13 help out in those circumstances?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. That would
15 be great. Like I said, I spend -- the majority of my time,
16 I spend looking for money. And I know that last year
17 because of our government and, you know, with the -- with
18 the prime minister wanting new things for -- for Indigenous
19 people, there were a lot of opportunities for -- for, you
20 know, a lot of proposals for Indigenous people, so I was
21 very fortunate last year. But now, you know, I had a staff
22 that was just completely burned out saying, "Sandy, no more
23 proposals, no more, because it" -- you know, but they're
24 also just short term, right.

25 They're short term and now it's the reports,

1 so we're all stressed out writing all those reports and,
2 again, it's just short-term project money that's going to
3 be clawed back after it's done.

4 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** I'm going to throw this
5 out to all three of you, and you -- you're welcome to
6 answer, any of you, if you -- if you feel compelled to do
7 so, but what's easier to navigate, the provincial funding
8 system or the federal one?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I've had
10 experiences with both, and I find that the provincial is
11 much easier, and here is the reason why. Because at one
12 time I applied for funding through INAC, through
13 their -- through the Urban Aboriginal Initiatives, and I
14 waited ten months to get paid for a program that had been
15 running. We still have to pay bills for that program,
16 right.

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So ten months later, we
19 finally get the money. But in the meantime, they still
20 need your quarterly reports. And they -- and they're very
21 good at reminding you, you have to bring in your quarterly
22 reports, even though they haven't given you any money.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Yeah. Thank you.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** For us, it would
25 be -- for me it's the federal was much easier than the

1 province. We have a really good relationship with the
2 federal system, our federal program supervisor, and it's
3 more of a -- she will even text me if she needs stuff. So
4 it's more face to face. It's a relationship, I believe,
5 that we have with our federal system. Whereas -- and it's
6 a lot easier and I find her to be very understanding when
7 there's tragedy and when there's loss, and she knows
8 reports are going to be late, and she will say just get it
9 done whenever you can. So I find that the provincial
10 system to be much more complicated than the federal system.

11 **NAKUSET:** I find them both difficult. What
12 I like is the private, like the McConnell Foundation.
13 Yeah, I think going with private foundations reporting is
14 easier. If you have a surplus, they will meet with you and
15 they will be, like, "Okay, so how do you want to spend the
16 rest of this money?" It's awesome.

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Well, I'm just about
18 out of time. I kind of wanted to go further and discuss
19 child welfare and some of the risks that mothers,
20 Indigenous mothers, have when they --

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry, I don't
22 think you will have time to --

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** No, I know, I'm just
24 finishing up. And I wanted to explore that, so perhaps
25 maybe one of my colleagues might -- might get into that.

1 But for now I just want to say (speaking in
2 Native language), Sandra. Well, no, actually I'm going to
3 do this right, (speaking in Native language), Josie;
4 (speaking in native language), Nakuset; *wela'lin*, Sandra.
5 Thank you.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. So the
7 Commission counsel would like to invite Families for
8 Justice, represented by counsel Susan Fraser, to come up
9 next for cross-examination. Ms. Fraser has 23 and a half
10 minutes.

11 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Good afternoon,
12 Commissioners, Elders, panel members. Members from the
13 territory, thank you for having us and I'm grateful to them
14 for receiving us and I'm grateful for my Indigenous friends
15 in the Indigenous bar who have been here with me and who
16 have been guiding me and teaching me.

17 So I'm here today on behalf of 20 families
18 from different parts of Canada, including Stacey Duchaine
19 who is with me today, who is -- Stacey Duchaine Anton (ph)
20 who is originally Hodinohso:ni from Six Nations, but who is
21 happy to be residing in Blackfoot territory and enjoying
22 the friendship and support of the people here.

23 We have other people, and part of our group,
24 the family, the Tashina General who is from Six Nations who
25 unfortunately was murdered. Linda John, who -- Helena

1 Rivera who was killed as a result of family violence in
2 Buffalo, New York. So I come here with the greetings of
3 the families who have been watching.

4 And, Ms. Nepinak, I can tell you that it was
5 hashtag Josie rocks yesterday as they watched online, so --

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

7 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

8 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. FRASER:**

9 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** So I want to start then,
10 Ms. Nepinak, with you, with what is Exhibit 46 to these
11 proceedings, I think page 20, which are the recommendations
12 from the Round Table from February 2015. And
13 I'm -- so -- I don't know if you have that document with
14 you?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I do.

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. I just wanted to
17 kind of do a little check and see what of those
18 recommendations are presently outstanding?

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Very likely all of them.

20 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. Well, it
21 looked --

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It requires money and
23 resources.

24 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So recommendation

25 1: (As Read)

1 To continue to support and follow-up
2 with families of missing and murdered
3 Indigenous women in Calgary and
4 surrounding area.

5 Do you feel that there is sufficient funding
6 to do that at present?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No, there is not.

8 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Recommendation 2:
9 (As Read)

10 Create advocacy and healing environments
11 for families of missing and murdered
12 Indigenous women.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Scarcely. We have done
14 a couple, but, again, resources are nil.

15 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Recommendation 3:
16 (As Read)

17 Create a sacred place for people to
18 gather, reconcile and begin the healing
19 process.

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And when this
22 recommendation was drafted, did you have an idea of what
23 that looked like.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, we did. We -- we
25 thought about a gathering place, whether it was a room,

1 whether it was a monument by the bridge, whether it was an
2 honour wall somewhere in a location that people can visit.
3 So those were some of the things we thought about.

4 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** A place, and I'm
5 imagining, considering everything we've heard about, how
6 tenuous it is as an Indigenous person to occupy space?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

8 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. A place where you
9 can go where you're not threatened, where you have a right
10 to be, where you're not going to be hassled, where --

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

12 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** -- you will be welcomed?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right, and that
14 we can leave a monument that is not open to graffiti or
15 even, you know, destruction, to be -- to have a space that
16 is respected.

17 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And what's -- what is the
18 holdup, just in terms of --

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** We don't have the money
20 or the resources. We have dreams, we have hopes, we -- and
21 we'd like to see this place happen, this healing. I mean,
22 for many of us who have missing and murdered, and the ones
23 that have never been found, where do you go for that? To
24 go place a rose, a flower, to take a meal to that spirit, a
25 cup of coffee and you just sit quietly and meditate and

1 talk to that person's spirit. There is no place in Calgary
2 for us to do that.

3 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And do you know in the
4 work that you've done of other places across the country
5 where an Indigenous person might go in the way that you've
6 just described so well?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think there are
8 some places. I think Winnipeg has in their -- in
9 the -- the City of Winnipeg has through Oodena, they call
10 it, and it's a monument for missing and murdered Indigenous
11 women, so I think they do have a place. They also have the
12 Thunderbird House. And there are other -- I believe other
13 friendship centres across the country that provide space,
14 but it's notice specific to -- to that -- to the sacred
15 place to remember missing and murdered women.

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay, thank you. I'm
17 just going to -- I think we could probably spend a lot of
18 time on each one of these recommendations.

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

20 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** But you understand by now
21 the constraints of the process, so when I move to the next
22 one, it's not because I don't think there's more to hear on
23 that topic.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

25 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So just if we can

1 look at to create a family -- to create a provincial
2 Aboriginal advisory committee on family violence, have you
3 had any success at creating that?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Actually, we did several
5 years ago. And I'm going back, and so it's going to be
6 very difficult to try to articulate this because back in
7 19 -- not '78, but 1997, I believe, was the Aboriginal
8 Round Table on family violence and bullying, and at that
9 time, an Aboriginal advisory committee was established, and
10 the new province came in and it was done. They just kind
11 of wiped it off the -- off the radar and it no longer
12 exists. Part of the repercussions of that is the provincial
13 framework on family violence and bullying is silent of
14 Indigenous women's concerns and issues and recommendations.

15 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** So when we look to
16 recommendations like this that require some political --
17 well, when -- when the funding for that is attached to an
18 agency that's funded a government which changes, then the
19 -- you're put in jeopardy --

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, yes.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay, and I'm going to
22 deal with funding on a more broader basis in a minute.
23 Wanda talked about Recommendation 5, Inclusion in the
24 Family Violence Hurts Everyone: A Framework in Family
25 Violence -- about a document. So has -- have you been --

1 has the Indigenous perspective been included in that
2 document?

3 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

4 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we haven't, although
6 I've advocated several times, and my Board has advocated.
7 I'm going to give you an example of just how that works
8 here in Alberta. I mean, it just seems that, you know, you
9 can paint a pretty picture of -- of -- you know, of all
10 these investments, so to speak, but we -- and all the
11 shelters in Alberta are -- are funded provincially with --
12 other than the First Nation shelters. And there are funded
13 agencies that -- that -- I believe by excluding Indigenous
14 women because -- because we don't pay a membership or we
15 don't have the monies --

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Yes.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- in our budget to pay
18 a membership, so therefore we're excluded from the
19 provincial map. There is a map of -- you can click on and
20 then you reach a shelter. We're -- we're excluded from
21 that. We are excluded from the 1-8666 (sic) number, the
22 toll-free number. If I was to sit in my shelter from my
23 boardroom and call the 1-866 number, I would be directed to
24 another shelter in the city.

25 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Wow.

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So this is -- this is
2 what happens. And -- and the membership fees are -- are,
3 you know, more than \$2,000. And when you're -- when you
4 don't have that kind of money or you're trying to leverage
5 your -- your areas, other places.

6 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So recommendation
7 directed at getting around that would be appreciated, I'm
8 sure. So I'm going to skip Recommendation 6, since it goes
9 to the calling of a National Inquiry. Recommendation 7:
10 Creating culturally appropriate services for families who
11 are impacted. And you give examples of court support
12 attendance, liaison, police and families, and we've heard
13 from Nakuset how useful and crucial having somebody who can
14 put a foot in both worlds for an Indigenous person.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Does that funding or
17 those positions created?

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

19 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay.

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** They haven't been. I --
21 I have to say that Victim Services in Calgary has -- they
22 had -- they don't exist for Indigenous people. And there
23 have been many cases in the last few years where if we had
24 a strong non-police led Victim Services support, I think
25 families would have been looked after very well.

1 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So even a separate
2 dedicated fund for delivery of victim services for
3 Indigenous people by Indigenous people?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. I mean,
5 there was one woman whose -- whose daughter was killed and
6 she went to Victim Services and -- and the guy said to her,
7 Well, how -- how do you expect us to help you? Rather than
8 using a trauma-informed --

9 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So I'm going to --
10 I'm going to skip the last two recommendations. Maybe you
11 can just tell me a yes or no because I want to get to a
12 couple of other questions. Do you feel that recommendation
13 8 has been met?

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

15 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. And recommendation
16 number 9 to continue to -- to provide --

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

18 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** No, okay. And I'm sorry
19 for the people who are following along and don't have the
20 report in front of them, but I'm not reading it out. So I
21 just want to talk a little bit -- we've talked a lot about
22 problems. I want to talk a little bit more about what good
23 looks like.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

25 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Because I think

1 the shelter system provides such a model of what good can
2 look like. So -- and using the -- let me just see if I
3 heard correctly, (speaking in Native language).

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** (Speaking in Native
5 language).

6 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. I'm going to work
7 on that. Living a good life, but just how to do that,
8 because as I understand it, the shelter exists -- is the
9 shelter -- your time in the shelter limited. If you come
10 to a shelter, is it an indefinite period of time that you
11 could stay?

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, no. No, it's not.
13 The -- at least in Alberta it's 21 days. But we have had
14 families stay for 30, 40, 50 days, depending on their
15 circumstances. So -- but the time is limited, so -- and
16 this is really unfair to the families who come into the
17 shelters because I believe we expect that miracles are
18 going to happen. One, she's coming in usually with two to
19 three kids. She's very traumatized and so are the
20 children. She may have not slept for days.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right.

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** She may be coming in
23 with injuries that we can't see, and so are the children.

24 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right.

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** She may have not eaten

1 for two days, and so we expect her to keep her life
2 together, to live in a -- a somewhat structured environment
3 with a whole bunch of other strangers and to -- and to keep
4 her mental health together. We expect her to find income
5 support. We -- we also expect that housing supports will
6 be met within 21 days, which is just not acceptable for --
7 for the issues that they're coming in with.

8 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. And -- and those
9 issues may be childhood sexual trauma --

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. It's all of
11 it. It's --

12 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** It -- you've -- you've --
13 yeah, okay. You've -- you've explained the challenges and
14 the impact -- the war injuries, essentially. So in order
15 to help that person live a good life and transition from
16 either the family violence, the sexual trauma, the
17 addiction issues that they're suffering or even
18 transitioning out of a life where the money that has
19 sustained them has come through their own exploitation?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** So are there programs in
22 Alberta, in Ontario or in Quebec that will help people live
23 safely with the support of a healing lodge, transition
24 through life skills development, also career skills
25 development?

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** M'hm. There's parts of
2 it. I think it's very fragmented. I mean, we -- we -- we
3 offer support through our outreach and follow-up program,
4 and we do that up to six months. But quite often within
5 that six months we -- depending if -- if the woman and
6 children will -- will go back to -- to their home
7 community, and then they may come back into Calgary, and
8 there may be homelessness involved. There may be another
9 pregnancy, there may be addictions or there may be a very
10 serious illness as well.

11 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So what would --
12 what would good look like in that second stage where you go
13 beyond the shelter and the outreach in terms of that second
14 stage transitional housing and longer term, sort of,
15 connected with a skill development?

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think
17 recognizing that -- that healing process is a very long
18 process. I mean, individuals heal at various -- at -- at
19 different -- different rates and times, and -- and having
20 longer terms supports indefinitely, a minimum of a year,
21 possibly a maximum of four years where we have all of those
22 things that we've talked about already around the -- the
23 supportive counselling, the peer support, the trauma
24 informed, the historical grief supports, the -- the Elders,
25 the -- the trauma informed psychologists, health supports,

1 justice supports. I think all of those areas need to come
2 together and do this wrap-around service for mom and the
3 children on a very long-term basis. And I think it should
4 be mom that should tell us that I no longer need your
5 supports where she can begin to shed some of those
6 supports, because quite often funding is also restricted to
7 you will provide six months to this family and after they
8 must exit. And so we no longer, at times, can provide
9 those supports to families.

10 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. And that six-
11 month, like the aging out process of child welfare --

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

13 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** -- it's fairly arbitrary
14 in terms of whether the person's ready for it or not?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. That's correct.

16 **SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously**
17 **Affirmed:**

18 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. FRASER:**

19 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. I'm just going to
20 ask, Ms. Montour, what you think good looks like in terms
21 of helping women go from shelter existence. And you've got
22 more capacity within your model --

23 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

24 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And maybe to how to build
25 on that.

1 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We have our
2 Gayenawahsra program, which is, they are helping
3 themselves. It's a Cayuga word, and that's our second
4 stage housing. So individuals apply to reside there and
5 they can live there for up to two years, and even then they
6 can apply for an extension. And they have -- there is a
7 life skills worker that works with them as well as a -- a
8 child and youth worker that works with their children. So
9 there's after school groups that happen. There's life
10 skills groups that happen. There's parenting groups that
11 happen. There -- it's in a -- it's not -- it's a -- it's
12 in a -- they have their own community, so they are really
13 educated on the risks of each other. And who's -- who's
14 the risk -- the person to be aware of, and they monitor
15 each other. Because of staff are only there until, you
16 know, they're not there overnight. Like, it's not a secure
17 place, like shelter is, so it's more independence. And
18 it's what -- that is what it's geared to, is helping people
19 to help them find employment. Getting them hooked up with
20 the employment agencies within the community, whether it's
21 going back to school. We've had -- we've had people that
22 have been very successful in that program, that actually
23 went on to graduate with university degrees, and working
24 very, very -- doing very well today because of that
25 program.

1 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And there are a number of
2 universities within proximity to Six Nations that would
3 allow -- universities and colleges that would allow people
4 to make that transition?

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. We have our own
6 university, Six Nations Polytech, right within the
7 community.

8 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** I didn't -- I actually
9 didn't know that.

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

11 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Thank you. And so that
12 would help because you -- there's a -- there's a skill --
13 there's a culturally appropriate service within the
14 community --

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** -- to help women
17 transition. Okay, so just speaking of culturally
18 appropriate, the next -- and I'm not meaning not get to you,
19 but I'm running short on time. Would -- do you think that
20 in terms of your federal and provincial partners, that
21 Indigenous cultural competence should be a job requirement,
22 like, bilingualism? Maybe -- sure.

23 **NAKUSET:** Sorry.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. So it's not just

1 about checking off a form after the day, and say, "Yeah,
2 I've read the policy." It's actually you -- in order to
3 have any contact with Indigenous people, you have to meet a
4 certain culturally competent threshold?

5 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. You should have some, kind
6 of experience. You know, you should have maybe done a stage
7 somewhere in a Native Friendship Centre, or you know, there
8 -- I'm sure there's other indicators too. But, yeah, it
9 should be.

10 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And that training, and
11 that standard of cultural incompetence [sic] should be led
12 by Indigenous people?

13 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

14 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** All right. And, you know,
15 white people would be, like, institutes. So I'm thinking
16 about -- if you had -- you've talked a lot --
17 of -- a lot of you we don't get to see each other. We don't
18 get to go to conferences, there's no funding for that. We
19 don't have a -- an opportunity to build our knowledge
20 together, but to have a centre for excellence, or to lead
21 the requirements for cultural competence in some
22 recommendation, would you support? I -- I'm kind of
23 thinking out loud here, but just in terms of -- you
24 don't -- you're doing -- when you're doing all of the front-
25 line work, you don't have an opportunity to create the

1 policy or make the demands. But to actually have
2 the -- a -- a centre to create the kind of training programs
3 that people who are working with Indigenous people should
4 take, that should -- is that something that you would
5 support?

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

7 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

8 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

9 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Let's see. Four
10 minutes, okay. So just coming back, Nakuset, what do you
11 think, and you heard my questions about transitioning from
12 the shelter experience. And what you've described in terms
13 of shelter is much beyond what a person normally thinks of
14 in terms of shelter, so I'm -- which is just a roof over
15 your head. You've described a roof over our head. You've
16 describe someone to be there negotiating with police, to
17 doing all of this wrap-around service for your clients.
18 So -- but beyond that, in terms of the transition for when
19 people leave your shelter, what would good look like for
20 you?

21 **NAKUSET:** Good would look like they
22 are -- find affordable housing, that they have the career of
23 their choice, that they have their children, that they're
24 happy, that they have a purpose. That would -- that's what
25 good looks like. Now, how you get them there, you know, is

1 -- you know, there are many steps and there are many
2 different services because everyone is different.
3 Everyone's needs are different. It's -- there's not really
4 one quick fix. And, I think, that's why, you know, the
5 shelter we have so many different kinds of staff, depending
6 on what their needs are. Yeah.

7 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. And just, sort of,
8 picking up that from the funding perspective, would it
9 assist you, if you were to flip the funding model on the
10 head and say -- and to say, for it to be -- instead of you
11 saying, "I'm going to get \$70,000 from Health Canada, and
12 I'm going to \$50,000 from Corrections because the work we're
13 doing is keeping people out of the jail system. And then
14 I'm going to get some from INAC and some -- " Would it
15 assist you to say, "This is how much money that I need."
16 That the funding process changed, where the Federal and
17 provincial and municipal partners got together and said,
18 "We're going to have one funding stream because people want
19 to do the work. And then we'll fight about who -- who's
20 accountable for it." That would probably help you?

21 **NAKUSET:** That would be great in a perfect
22 world.

23 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. Sandy's nodding
24 her head.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

1 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Josie's nodding her head.

2 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah.

3 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay.

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

5 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And I've seen from those
6 -- my own work and in -- and in non-Indigenous organization,
7 not-for-profit, that those funding proposals come completely
8 at random. And you get notice that you have to -- "We've
9 got this money you can apply for, but we need your proposal
10 within 48 hours."

11 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

13 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** You -- have you all
15 experienced that?

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah.

17 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. Absolutely.

19 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. And so you might
20 be in the middle of some crisis, you might be in the middle
21 of some initiative, but in order to access this extra
22 \$30,000, \$10,000, you got to pull something together within
23 a very short period of time.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **NAKUSET:** That's usually more the norm.

1 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. And just -- if
2 there's anything else you would like to say, in terms of
3 building up either the capacity of your organization or the
4 women you serve, of what would be assistance, I would be
5 interested to hear from you, starting with Ms. Nepinak.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think I would
7 like to see second stage because, quite often, women who
8 leave the -- the Lodge may end up coming back. Although, it
9 -- and -- and the presenting issue may be around
10 homelessness as opposed to violent situations. So I believe
11 that if we were able to -- to help her transition through a
12 transition home, that we would have greater success as well.

13 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Ms. Montour.

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would like to see more
15 focus as well on the children and youth. You know, we do
16 have a -- a youth -- eight-bed youth residential facility,
17 also, under us for individuals who -- children and youth
18 have been impacted by family violence and sexual abuse.
19 And, I think, there -- there needs to be more attention to
20 children's mental health residential services. Because
21 right now, when the government gives money to mental health
22 services, it goes to the day programs and -- and we get left
23 out of it. So they need to really focus on the residential
24 mental health for -- for our kids. But, yeah, really,
25 really, also agreeing, there needs to be more -- I mean,

1 we've talked about the need for more housing too. Like, we
2 have nine -- a nine-unit facility, but we need more. We
3 really do need more units for -- designated units for family
4 violence prevention.

5 **NAKUSET:** For sure the housing is huge. You
6 know, in a perfect world, I'd also like to have a better
7 working relationship and funding for services for those that
8 are in jail. Sometimes people chose to go to jail because
9 they have nowhere to live, and it's a warm place, you know,
10 for the winter months. So if we have better services and
11 collaborations with jails, that would be ideal. So -- and
12 -- and half-way houses, we don't have Indigenous half-way
13 houses in the city, and they fall through the cracks.

14 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Thank you, all,
15 very much. My time is up. And thank you, Commissioners.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms.
17 Fraser. We would like -- we would like to call the
18 Aboriginal Women's Action Network, Ms. Fay Blaney. Ms.
19 Blaney's only requested one minute.

20 **MS. FAY BLANEY:** Good afternoon. I am Fay
21 Blaney, and this is MiKenze Jordan. And I want to
22 acknowledge the other Aboriginal Women's Action Network
23 members, Donna Dickison, Florence Hackett, Laura Holland,
24 Amy Manyguns (ph), Ruby Langan (ph), several others that
25 I'm probably forgetting.

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Chief Commissioner
2 and Commissioners, there's been a request for a break, and
3 this actually happens to be a good point for our afternoon
4 break. I'm going to request that it is a 15-minute break so
5 that we can get through -- there's cross-examination by
6 Commission counsel left, questions that Commissioners may
7 have, as well as re-exam. So if it could be 15 minutes,
8 that would be great.

9 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes, 2:55,
10 please.

11 --- Upon recessing at 2:41 p.m.

12 --- Upon reconvening at 3:01 p.m.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** If we may
14 recommence. Next up we are calling Commission Counsel
15 Jennifer Cox. Jennifer Cox will only be allowed to ask
16 questions actually of Josie Nepinak because I have led
17 evidence for the other two witnesses. And Ms. Cox will
18 have the same that all parties had as standard, which is 19
19 minutes.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Good afternoon
21 Commissioners, witnesses. I would like to extend thanks to
22 the Treaty 7 area, as well as the Métis 3 Nation and the
23 Blackfoot people for this week, and the prayers of all of
24 the Elders that have helped us to get through what has been
25 a pretty busy week for us.

1 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

2 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. COX:**

3 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Josie, before I get
4 started, I did show you a document earlier, and
5 Commissioners I did provide a copy to you as well, and the
6 parties with standing have also been given a copy of the
7 document, and it's titled, "Family Violence Prevention
8 Programs Off Reserve."

9 Josie, I'm wondering, is that something that
10 you're familiar with?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I am, and I did see
12 the call for proposals.

13 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay, so, Commissioners,
14 I'm wondering if I could have that marked as an exhibit,
15 please?

16 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes, the
17 violence prevention -- Family Violence Prevention Program
18 Off Reserve Called For Proposals 2018-2019, is Exhibit 56,
19 please. No, I'm sorry, 55.

20 **--- EXHIBIT NO. 55:**

21 "Family Violence Prevention
22 Program: off-reserve call for
23 proposals 2018-2019," Indigenous
24 and Northern Affairs Canada, date
25 modified May 3, 2018 (four pages)

1 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Josie, I'm just
2 wondering if I could ask you a couple of questions about
3 that. So you've --

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

5 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So you've indicated to me
6 that you had seen that call for proposals, I'm wondering,
7 were you able to access that source of funding?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we didn't. And I
9 didn't apply, either.

10 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It was a \$50,000 grant.
12 Can I talk about -- a little bit about my experience
13 with -- or should I wait for your question?

14 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** No, you can -- you can
15 talk.

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. In the past we
17 have had funding from -- from this particular body and we
18 have -- it's a very cumbersome process to go through and
19 the money doesn't come. For example, this was for our
20 health program, and we had to wait ten months for funding,
21 making phone calls, trying to track the money to have it
22 sent out and -- but it is a very slow process.

23 And in the meantime, as a healing lodge and
24 a not-for-profit organization as well, we have to still pay
25 the bills, right, without this funding that's earmarked for

1 particular programming. So we're taking from Paul to pay
2 Peter, which is not a good management practice, and
3 certainly not something that would be -- you know, that our
4 auditor looks down upon as well.

5 So -- and for \$50,000, I'm not saying that
6 that's not a lot of money, but to hire a staff person
7 within a very short window of time, as well, is -- is very
8 difficult. And does that constitute a full time? Because
9 they also say, well, here's what you need to do, it needs
10 to be earmarked for this, so now you have to think, okay,
11 so how is -- what is this going to look like, where is this
12 going to fall under in terms of the programs and supports
13 that we do at the shelter. So it's been a very -- a very
14 difficult process at times.

15 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So this particular
16 program is not something that would -- it's
17 too -- basically what I'm hearing from you, correct me if
18 I'm wrong, is that it's too difficult to access these
19 funds?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It can be very difficult
21 as well, and I think when -- you know, as an administrator
22 in the lodge I have to consider where my leverage area is,
23 you know, in terms of energy, and in terms of
24 where -- where do you put that time for your greatest
25 return, and that is usually with the families and with the

1 staff that we have.

2 MS. JENNIFER COX: And --

3 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: The other thing I wanted
4 to say is there's no guarantees for long-term or sustained
5 funding for those grants as well.

6 MS. JENNIFER COX: So just getting back to
7 the time that you mentioned, you have to decide -- I guess
8 your evidence would be that it's too difficult, there's too
9 much time required just to apply for \$50,000?

10 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, yes, absolutely.

11 MS. JENNIFER COX: And can I ask, has
12 anybody ever reached out to Awo Taan about this program?
13 Have they ever talked to you about what ways could we make
14 it easier for you to apply for this?

15 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: By email, they
16 just -- you know, please see call for proposals and they
17 send the link over, that's how we received it.

18 MS. JENNIFER COX: And have they ever come
19 back to you and said, you know, you haven't applied?

20 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

21 MS. JENNIFER COX: They've never asked you?

22 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

23 MS. JENNIFER COX: Have you ever had any
24 conversations with anybody from the Family Violence
25 Prevention Program?

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** A few years ago I did,
2 yes.

3 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay. And I think what I
4 heard you say in your evidence earlier, perhaps yesterday,
5 was that you fundraise for the shortfall in your funding?

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

7 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And it's approximately
8 \$400,000 that you need a year to supplement? Is that what
9 I heard?

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, I didn't give that
11 testimony of \$400,000. We are -- we're more like \$200,000,
12 250, 300 thousand is what we require.

13 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** For the extra, the
14 fundraising, the casino fundraising?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** For the casino
16 fundraising, we use that for our health program.

17 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And that's approximately
19 \$67,000 every 16 months.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay. So I'm going to go
21 to what's Exhibit 46, which is also the Round Table report,
22 Josie. And you have that?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I have.

24 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** You indicated to my
25 friend that you have that in front of you. And I'm

1 actually going to look at recommendation number 7 of the
2 report.

3 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

4 MS. JENNIFER COX: I'm going to go a little
5 more further into it, and it says that it's looking for
6 culturally appropriate services for families who are
7 impacted, for example, courtroom attendants. Would you
8 agree with me that court workers for family law proceedings
9 would be very helpful for your families?

10 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, there certainly is.
11 And quite often what we do is if we have a very difficult
12 case, we will pull staff from other programs to -- to go
13 and attend and support the individual who is going into
14 court.

15 MS. JENNIFER COX: But would you agree with
16 me that if there were court staff or people who were court
17 workers working specifically in the area of family law,
18 that that would be very helpful to your families?

19 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. Yes, absolutely.

20 MS. JENNIFER COX: And one of the things
21 that you also -- I'm not sure if you're -- you also have
22 collaboration agreements, other members of the panel
23 mentioned that they have collaboration agreements with the
24 local child welfare agencies or the local police?

25 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Right.

1 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Would you agree that it's
2 difficult -- even though you have those agreements, it's
3 difficult to get the agencies to follow through with them?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely it is,
5 yes. And I'm not sure who reads the collaboration
6 agreements, I mean, at the policing level. And unless it's
7 trickled down to the -- to the people who are on the
8 streets who do the work, quite often that information I
9 don't believe is shared.

10 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And so would it be
11 helpful if, perhaps, the Auditor General or the local child
12 advocate looked at compliance with those collaboration
13 agreements?

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, that would
15 be great.

16 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And just for the benefit
17 of those who may not know what a collaboration agreement
18 is, I happen to have some experience in that -- with those,
19 but for the most part, when it comes to shelters, a lot of
20 those collaboration agreements indicate that child welfare
21 agencies are supposed to contact you first for assistance
22 to see if there's any way the child and mom can stay
23 together, right?

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

25 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And would you agree with

1 me that there's a lot of times where they don't contact the
2 shelter?

3 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's correct.

4 MS. JENNIFER COX: With respect to the
5 funding issue, would you agree with me that just having an
6 amount of money that's just basically emergency funding,
7 where you have the discretion to provide transportation and
8 immediate needs in those 21 days that you've indicated,
9 that, you know, if you were given a lump sum from the
10 Federal Government for emergency funds for transportation
11 and some really key things, that that would go a long way?

12 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, absolutely.

13 MS. JENNIFER COX: And that you would be
14 easily able to show how that money was being used, wouldn't
15 you?

16 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, that's right.

17 MS. JENNIFER COX: Without -- without big
18 long reports.

19 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

20 MS. JENNIFER COX: And would you also agree
21 with me that a narrative report or a report that's not full
22 of numbers and all kinds of statistics and, you know -- that
23 those reports are a lot easier for you to prepare?

24 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. Narrative report.

25 MS. JENNIFER COX: Yeah. So -- and I'm going

1 to speak a little bit to the briefing note on -- that was
2 prepared, so that's Exhibit 47. You recall -- you have that
3 document in front of you? It's called "Briefing Note on Awo
4 Taan?"

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

6 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And the reason that that
7 was prepared was to help you with the funding, wasn't it?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right. That's
9 right, to -- to show our funders that we are, in fact, doing
10 really good work, and here's our literature, here's our
11 evaluation.

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And you probably weren't
13 funded for that, were you? You probably had to find the
14 money.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we weren't funded for
16 that. We had a little bit of money left in our -- what we
17 call our SSR fund, and then we had to write letters to the
18 funders to -- to ask them to spend that money for an
19 evaluation.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Right. And if you didn't
21 have to spend all that money and time just to find how you
22 needed that money, you could spend the time with the
23 families, your staff could have wellness, or ...

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely, but on
25 the other hand, I think that the evaluation also provides

1 somewhat of a -- a blueprint that we're hoping that can be
2 shared with other shelters or lodges across the country.

3 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And going to that point,
4 one of the things that could happen almost immediately would
5 be a -- a meeting or a summit in Ottawa with the Minister of
6 Indian and Northern Affairs or Indigenous and Northern
7 Affairs with the shelter workers to discuss all of your
8 practices, to allow you to express some of your
9 recommendations like we've heard today, and that would give
10 you an opportunity to -- to be heard.

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Would that be fair?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

14 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And one of the concerns
15 that you've expressed, particularly here in the Province of
16 Alberta, is that you don't get heard. It's hard for you to
17 be heard.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right, it is.

19 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay. You feel isolated?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, at times, yes.

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And so being able to have
22 a summit with your fellow Executive Directors that run
23 shelters, Indigenous shelters, across the country would
24 provide you with the support, you know, in numbers.

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. The -- the support

1 and the energy and the motivation to -- to hear what other
2 people are doing, because sometimes you feel like you're
3 paddling your own boat, so to speak.

4 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And would it be fair to
5 say that your ability to advocate with the shelter workers'
6 associations -- so, here in -- in Alberta, you don't have
7 the ability to advocate because you're -- you're -- you're a
8 minority in that -- right?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

10 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So -- so if there was some
11 advocacy at the Federal level on your behalf, would it be
12 easier for you if there was more of a voice, a collective
13 voice, from Ottawa that would support you in some of the
14 initiatives?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Made up of Indigenous
16 women, absolutely.

17 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Those are all my
19 questions. Thank you.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thanks, Mrs. Cox.
21 Thank you, Ms. Cox. So that actually concludes the cross-
22 examination portion of the hearing. At this point, I would
23 like to ask the Commissioners if they have questions. Both
24 Mr. Blain and I will have re-examination of the witnesses
25 that I will assume will go after your questions.

1 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** We're just
2 going to take a five-minute break to get ourselves
3 organized.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Certainly. Thank
5 you.

6 --- Upon recessing at 3:15 p.m.

7 --- Upon reconvening at 3:21 p.m.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Chief
9 Commissioner, Commissioners, I understand that you have
10 questions for the witnesses.

11 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

12 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

13 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you.
14 First, thank you to all the panelists and to counsel. It's
15 been an absolute delight to hear your evidence and -- and to
16 have you here today. Ms. Nepinak, I'm going to start with
17 you because you're the closest one to me, okay? When you
18 say "beds," you have a certain number of beds at your
19 healing lodge, is that for adults, or does that include the
20 children that come to the shelters with their mothers?

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

22 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So that
23 could be one mother and seven children.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct, and we
25 have had one mother and seven children.

1 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** You and
2 the other witnesses have described how there's a common fear
3 amongst Indigenous women that if they come to a shelter or a
4 healing lodge, that they will lose their children.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. That's very common.

6 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And that's
7 become a barrier, actually, to women.

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

9 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** What do
10 you recommend as a way or ways of eliminating that barrier?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think the *Child*
12 *Welfare Act* needs some reforms to -- to better protect
13 mothers and children and not to use it as a -- a threat,
14 because women have been told, you go to the shelter or we're
15 going to take your children, or while they're in a shelter,
16 the mom may be really struggling and for the -- and -- and
17 -- and we often tell moms that Child Welfare can be a
18 support service in order to access other -- other programs,
19 such as child assessments, assessments for autism, et
20 cetera, et cetera. But they are very, very fearful, so the
21 -- they will rather not call Child Welfare to have those --
22 those basic services, because then it means that they --
23 they are vulnerable as well as their children. It's a real
24 fear.

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So if

1 women, Indigenous women are -- mothers are being told, "You
2 go to the shelter or we will apprehend your children," then
3 the length of your waiting list becomes absolutely critical,
4 doesn't it?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. It certainly does.
6 In one of our programs, our -- our -- it's called our Family
7 Violence Prevention Program, 75 percent of the referrals
8 come from Child Welfare and 99 percent of those
9 -- of those cases have family violence as a -- as an issue.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** As I
11 understand it, without going into a lot of details, you
12 receive funding from both Federal and provincial sources.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Mostly provincial.

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Now, if we
15 think outside the box for a moment and consider your
16 facility or facilities a true healing lodge, would it be
17 more beneficial to you and the services you can offer to be
18 designated as a health facility or a healthcare facility as
19 opposed to something else?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I'm not sure. I -- I
21 like that, because I do think we focus on many of those --
22 the -- the -- the holistic concepts that -- that encompass
23 -- I'm -- I'm not -- but -- but I -- I like that. Yeah.

24 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.
25 Thank you very much.

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

2 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Ms.
3 Montour?

4 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

5 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm?

7 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** A similar
8 question. You've raised the -- the barrier that many
9 Indigenous women who are mothers face, that they have a fear
10 of losing their children if they come to a shelter, or,
11 alternatively, if they don't go to a shelter. What do you
12 see as ways of eliminating that barrier?

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, there are some
14 best practices that are happening in Ontario. There is --
15 there are shelters that have -- that are very -- work very
16 closely with Child Welfare so that the actual Child Welfare
17 has workers in the shelter, located in the shelters. So, I
18 mean, I think that's a good idea, and that's something that
19 we have been wanting to do with our new Child Welfare, our
20 new designated Child Welfare, Ogwadeni:deo. And our hope is
21 that that person would actually -- we even talked about that
22 person being an employee of Ganohkwasra rather than -- so
23 that way, we could train that person. And yes, they would
24 -- they would be more employees of us both, but they
25 wouldn't -- and they definitely would be still there for

1 Child Welfare, but we would teach them to be more supportive
2 and more -- to work with our families and to work with us
3 rather than apprehending right away or doing the punitive
4 approach.

5 So there are various shelters in Ontario that
6 actually are doing that, and it's working. They talk about
7 it working very well. You know, they talk about -- what we
8 dreamed of is we dreamed of being able to have our -- our --
9 our resident in, who's having problems with her
10 -- with Child Welfare, but bring in the -- bring in the
11 Child Welfare with our -- with our staff as well and working
12 together and -- and ensuring that she knows, you know, what
13 she needs to do. So I know that -- I agree there's a lot of
14 hoop-jumping, that old system.

15 I think I'd also agree that there needs to be
16 better -- better collaboration between the Ministry of Child
17 and Youth Services and the -- and the Violence Against
18 Indigenous Women sector. We need to be working better
19 together, and I know in Ontario, we're planning to do that.
20 Just some really good best practices. I know the Ministry
21 of Child -- Ministry of Community and Social Services, they
22 do things like they bring in the VAWP sector [sic]. And
23 they consult with us before they do anything, so they --
24 they're doing that with the Violence Against Women sector.
25 And I'd like to see our Ministry of Child and Youth Services

1 also doing that, consulting not only with the Violence
2 Against Women sector, but the Violence Against Indigenous
3 Women sector.

4 So I think there's ways that we can work
5 together, and -- and I know there's been a lot of -- you
6 know, I know that Child Welfare system is trying to reform
7 itself, and -- and doing -- they're trying, but I -- I just
8 know that we still have a ways to go. So there's that
9 possibility of -- of -- there needs to be a better working
10 relationship. And I think those collaboration agreements,
11 they could work too. They could work if somebody was
12 monitoring what Child Welfare is doing, you know?

13 I -- I -- I'm -- I'm not legislated, I don't
14 have no power to do that. I can only monitor what we're
15 doing on our side, but somebody needs to be monitoring those
16 -- those collaboration agreements. They're -- I think the
17 tools are just -- they're already there. If somebody could
18 monitor on their side and -- and make them accountable, like
19 we're accountable, I think that -- I think it could work.

20 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you.
21 You mentioned earlier today about hearing that one Chief and
22 council spent money designated for a shelter for
23 something --

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** -- other

1 than a shelter. I've heard, all across Canada, similar
2 stories.

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

4 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** How do we
5 hold our own governments accountable for the safety of our
6 women and girls?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I've thought about this.
8 I really have, because it -- and it's happening, more than
9 one shelter for sure. You know, it's happening more often
10 than I'd like to admit out there. So, I mean, I thought
11 about what the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario could do and
12 -- and how we could help those shelters. Ideally, I'd like
13 to see the money go directly to the shelters. Right?

14 So what I know that that's stepping on the
15 Chief and council's toes, if -- especially if they have
16 arranged that the money go to them first and then they --
17 they transfer it to the shelters, however they do that. But
18 ideally, I'd really like to see the money going directly to
19 the shelters, and maybe there is more accountability that
20 states on those -- those agreements that this money is for
21 the shelter. You know, like, it -- they could still do
22 something else with it, but I think they would have to be a
23 little trickier about it. And, you know, I think that -- I
24 know that INAC has tried different ways to make sure the
25 money goes directly to the shelters because I know INAC was

1 aware that -- you know, they had concerns about this, so
2 they've tried different things, but -- I mean, I even
3 thought about ASOO, how ASOO could help because we're -- we
4 are an incorporated organization, I thought about us, you
5 know, but I don't -- I don't want to -- I don't want to
6 ruffle feathers, I don't want to -- I don't want to sever
7 our relationships with -- with those communities, that's not
8 my purpose because I just want to help those shelters.

9 So I think there's ways that -- you know,
10 maybe it's how it's written up with their -- with each
11 Chief and Council, maybe it states in there that this money
12 is to go directly to the shelter. Maybe it's ensuring that
13 those shelters have their own bank accounts, you know, so
14 that the money can be just transferred in that way, I'm not
15 sure. I think there's ways if -- I think there has to be
16 ways that we can do this.

17 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank
18 you. I want to ask you a little bit now about aging out of
19 the child welfare system and the youth beds that you have.

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

21 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** At what
22 age -- or what is the upper limit for the age for youth in
23 your youth facility?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Eighteen.

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

1 Are they allowed to bring their children, if they have
2 them?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** If they have children,
4 they would -- they would be probably in the shelter, more
5 than the youth lodge.

6 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We would -- we would
8 bring them into the shelter and we would support them
9 there.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** M'hm.
11 From the continuum of care that you're able to offer, what
12 do you see that are the biggest obstacles or obstacle to
13 Indigenous women aging out of the child welfare system?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I -- I think that there
15 needs to be -- I see -- what I see is there's -- what we've
16 seen traditionally, I think, is the fact that once they
17 reach that magic age they're just let go, all the supports
18 just stop, and I know with all the reforms to legislation
19 they're trying to change that.

20 I just think there needs to be more -- more
21 wraparound services as -- as the youth age, age out of the
22 child welfare system, more supports. They do so much
23 better when there's family supports. And if it can't be
24 family, maybe it's developing some other type of support
25 for the youth as they're -- as they turn 18 because

1 it's -- it's -- you know, it's a hard, hard life out there,
2 and when you have no supports, and I mean healthy
3 supports -- so hopefully maybe more focus developing those
4 networks and those supports for the -- for the youth before
5 they -- way before they turn 18, so that they can have,
6 once they do -- once they do start to age out of the system
7 they're not just left alone, and they're not just out there
8 vulnerable to human trafficking or whatever is out there
9 for them.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

11 Thank you, very much.

12 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

13 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Nakuset,
15 you mentioned a checklist that you use to put complaints in
16 writing --

17 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** -- about
19 racism. Would you be willing to share that checklist?

20 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. I would have to email
21 it to you, it's occurrences for outside appointments or
22 something like that, but it's only I think -- well, we
23 definitely have it in English, I'm not sure if we have it
24 in French, we probably do, but, yeah, I can send that to
25 you.

1 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank
2 you.

3 **NAKUSET:** Am I sending it to you? Who am I
4 sending it to?

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Christa.

6 **NAKUSET:** Okay, I'm sending it to her.

7 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank
8 you. You also mentioned this morning an empowerment fund.
9 Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

10 **NAKUSET:** Like, in a perfect world if you
11 were to have that? Okay, I think every individual has
12 strengths, and I think that it's so easy to focus on all
13 the negative things of what's wrong with people, but if you
14 were to look at an individual and find that strength and
15 help develop it so that -- sometimes people don't even know
16 what their strengths are until someone actually points it
17 out and says, Hey, wow, you're really amazing at this. I
18 am? Okay, so let's work on it, let's develop it. And that
19 could be sort of their passion.

20 So if we -- because I think, you know,
21 everybody -- you know, we're gifted with life, we all have
22 a purpose, and if we can help people find that purpose
23 through this empowerment fund, that would be a good life.
24 So, like I said, in a perfect world, but it could be done.

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay,

1 thank you. And again, the same question, the fear of
2 losing the children being a barrier, if that's the correct
3 word, to coming to a shelter, how do we address that?

4 **NAKUSET:** Well, you know, I'm not sure if
5 it's the same when you're off reserve so much. I think
6 that -- or maybe it's just the fact that people know that
7 we are trying to work more with Social Services that they
8 see us more like a safety net, like, they can come to us
9 and that we have, you know, all the services that
10 are -- that are needed.

11 But, for sure, there's still a lot of
12 problems with youth protection and, you know, how she
13 was -- Sandra was saying about trying to hold youth
14 protection accountable to their honouring the
15 collaborations, and that's why we have a research, we're
16 doing a research with Dr. Elizabeth Fast into how all the
17 youth protection workers at Batshaw are applying the
18 collaboration, and that way you can actually sort of gauge,
19 and also strengthen the relationship because we have focus
20 groups and we find out from each division because it's all
21 very complicated. And you have this EO department and this
22 other one just for youth and one for those that are in
23 special facilities, it's like -- it's crazy. But we get
24 all of them to kind of sit together and have conversations
25 about what is working, what is not working, what do you

1 know about Indigenous services, what are your difficulties,
2 how can we help.

3 And then eventually we want to create a CIG,
4 which is a clinical integration group because this would
5 actually be mandated by Batshaw that their staff have to
6 attend and have to work on this particular issue.

7 They used to -- they had one for sexual
8 assault and it was sort of mandatory, now we want it to be
9 for this group, for the Indigenous kids in care. So -- so,
10 yeah, I suggest, Sandra, you get a research, get a
11 research.

12 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you
13 all three. Thank you very much.

14 **NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**
15 **Affirmed:**

16 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
18 *beaucoup.*

19 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Just give us a second to
20 get set up here and get her going on her translation.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
22 *beaucoup. Bonjour, Josie. Vous savez, je veux commencer,*
23 *pis ça, je suis fidèle à moi-même, c'est mon style pis je*
24 *vais rester fidèle à moi-même. Lorsque c'est cette*

1 période-là. Il y a une façon de poser de questions parce
2 que des enquêtes c'est des enquêtes mais moi, je l'a fait
3 toujours différemment mais ça revient au même. Je veux
4 vous dire un gros, gros merci pour votre courage. Je veux
5 vous dire merci pour la force que vous avez de continuer.
6 Vous avez mentionné que vous sauvez des vis, vous avez
7 mentionné que vous avez donné un empowerment à des femmes
8 et des enfants que vous avez réunit. Des enfants séparé de
9 leurs mères. Vous avez fait beaucoup, beaucoup de magie,
10 beaucoup, beaucoup de magie puis plusieurs entre nous
11 connaît très bien les sacs de poubelles parce qu'on à du
12 quitter d'urgence une nuit sans voiture, sans argent et se
13 retrouver dans des centres d'hébergement. Mais mon époque,
14 il n'y avait pas d'hébergement en milieu autochtone ou pour
15 recevoir des femmes autochtone alors j'ai toujours une
16 grande, grande admiration pour ces femmes-là, qui sauvent
17 des vis, qui a sauver ma maman, et ma maman aujourd'hui
18 redonne à la communauté parce que justement, il y a des
19 gens comme vous qui l'on aidé. Je vais essayer, je vais
20 commencer avec la communauté Six Nations.

21 Ma première question pour vous, est-ce que
22 vous recevez du financement de base du Ministère qu'on
23 appelait avant INAC?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

1 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Est-ce que ce*
2 *financement de base là ressemble ou est l'équivalent des*
3 *maisons d'hébergement non-autochtones en Ontario?*

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTour:** INAC doesn't fund --
5 INAC doesn't fund the mainstream shelters in Ontario. So
6 our -- so --

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** My question
8 was -- I'll ask in English for you.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTour:** Okay.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** This part now,
11 because it's easier in English for me, but there's a part
12 that it's going to be in French. I know INAC, you saying is
13 financing you, because you're in a community.

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTour:** Yes.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay? Core
16 funding.

17 **MS. SANDRA MONTour:** Yes.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And the non-
19 Native women shelter, the non-Native women outside of your
20 territory, it's coming from the Ontario government?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTour:** Yes.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Do you -- do
23 you know how much they receive in core funding?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTour:** No, I don't know. And
25 that's why Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario wants to do this

1 research, to find out to really concretize what the
2 difference really is. So how much funding they're
3 receiving.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And how much funding
6 we're receiving. And to -- to -- to see what the difference
7 really is. That research needs to be done, and that's
8 something that we are planning to do, as -- as an
9 association.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Is that a
11 recommendation to support this?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, please.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And is
14 -- is it something that it should apply to across Canada,
15 this recommendation?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** You know, if I can talk
17 about the very first time I came to a gathering of Murdered
18 and Missing Indigenous Women, out in Vancouver I believe it
19 was, I remember -- what I remember -- one of the things I
20 remember the most was all the shelters that came up to the
21 microphone, begging for help, asking, saying how underfunded
22 they were, and needing help.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And -- and asking,
25 begging for help. And I -- that really struck me because I

1 knew exactly what they were saying. They were talking about
2 the comparison, the wage, the --

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- the funding disparity
5 that exists in Canada. And they were begging for help. So,
6 yes, I think that needs to be done across Canada.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. In
8 2000, in -- in '98 I think it's where Nakuset, you started,
9 in those -- those years, in '98?

10 **NAKUSET:** I started the shelter in 1999.

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** '99, okay.

12 INAC was funding shelters across Canada to an amount of
13 \$100,044 -- *Cent quarante-quatre mille in English?* \$144,000
14 for 16 bed in 1998. Now we're able to see true -- what the
15 women push, of course, over the years. That the average
16 it's 450 -- \$450,000. *Quatre cent cinquante mille.* For --
17 \$450,000. I am getting better. For 16 bed. For a non-
18 Native in Quebec shelter for the same services, not
19 culturally, we -- we talk about core funding. For the same
20 amount of bed, 16 beds, it's almost \$900,000. So there is I
21 guess, a gap.

22 You -- you mentioned that you have to be
23 very, very creative, in order to -- to respond to the demand
24 and help the women. You get from INAC, but do you get also
25 from the province? I think, yes.

1 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, we get money also
2 from the province.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And is
4 -- are you a regional for your -- for the First Nation, or
5 it's only for Six Nation?

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No. We are -- well, for
7 the province, it's any woman.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Any -- any -- from
10 anywhere could come.

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. Good.
12 *Merci Beaucoup.*

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And I -- I'm
15 not aware about Ontario, but do you have any like, for
16 Indigenous, and if you answered that, I'm sorry, secondhand
17 -- second --

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Stage.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Stage. *Merci.*
20 Oh, you -- you do for Indigenous women?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Second stage, yeah.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Housing?

23 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You have?

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, we have nine-unit

1 second stage housing. We -- that was built in oh, I want to
2 say in -- in the 90's it was built.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. But
4 what about you, Josie? (Indiscernible) nothing?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** We don't have any -- we
6 don't have a second stage, but we would like one.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Same thing in
8 Montreal, Nakuset?

9 **NAKUSET:** We're opening one fairly soon. The
10 City of Montreal has -- well, we found a location a couple
11 of years ago, that's a couple of blocks away from the
12 shelter. And the City of Montreal sent us a letter last
13 week saying that we could have this building, so it'll be 29
14 units of you know, for like, a three-bedroom apartment, two-
15 bedroom, one-bedroom and what do you call it? Tiny little
16 apartments? Studios. Studios.

17 And we're going to be trying to get funding
18 through (indiscernible). There -- he knows all the
19 different funders that would -- that we can apply for,
20 however, I also sent Prime Minister Trudeau a letter, asking
21 him for seven million dollars for the amount. And I sent it
22 to Jody Wilson Raybould and the Minister Carolynn Bennett,
23 because you know, they're trying to help Indigenous people,
24 so they should fund us. We sent them floor plans and the
25 budget and a beautiful letter. Haven't heard any response

1 from them yet, but we're -- we're waiting.

2 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** The beautiful
3 things -- it's national. It's life.

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Oh, for sure a
6 message went to the right place.

7 **(LAUGHTER)**

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
9 *beaucoup*. Thank you, thank you Madame Montour, and I have
10 to say on a personal note, it was very, very touching, very
11 beautiful the way you welcome us --

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** -- when we
14 visited you many moons ago. Well, of course, with the
15 Inquiry, I was there with a colleague, and Dylan Fern (ph)
16 and we saw the beauty and the magic that you are doing for
17 the women. So thank you so much. For the -- the -- the
18 shelter who are not on communities, so Madame Nakuset and
19 Nepinak, when a woman leave a community, you do receive
20 women from communities, huh?

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, yes.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** When they
23 leave, and they go to your place, to your shelter, is the
24 community still involved financially for all programs and
25 services to support --

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No. It's --
2 it's -- it's just a shelter funds only.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And does it
4 bring a challenge or difficulties?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, it -- there's
6 always things that we need. For example, if mom arrives,
7 you know, she's -- she's got three little ones with her, you
8 know, we may not have the right formula in the house. And
9 formula is very expensive, as you know, diapers and you
10 know, we -- we need to ensure that we have the appropriate
11 -- well, the beds are there. They're already funded, right?
12 But there -- there's the issue of clothing often. Quite
13 often families have to leave with what they have on their
14 back.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so that's important.
17 So that -- that can pose issues. Absolutely. I mean, even
18 just around the city when -- when they're -- let's say for
19 example, they need to go visit a doctor or get some dental
20 work done, et cetera. We -- we give them one -- one bus
21 ticket to go there, and one bus ticket to come there -- to
22 come back. And so it's a tight budget in terms of
23 transportation. So yes, it does pose its challenges.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm. And you
25 get, I -- I -- I didn't take the -- the notes. Same for

1 you, Nakuset and Madame Nepinak, because you're based in the
2 city, is it from the province or INAC, the core funding?

3 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** From the province.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yeah. Also for the
6 province. And in terms of the other question that you
7 asked --

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah, sorry.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- the Cree's, we
10 get -- we can bill the Cree. So for services, if they refer
11 the -- the clients to us sometimes they'll send clients
12 because they want the client to utilize our addictions
13 worker and our -- our therapist, and you know, to see our
14 Elders, so they'll send them for like, a couple of weeks.
15 And because they have more money, they can afford it. But
16 that's probably the only community that -- that offers, I
17 guess, financial help.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And
19 we -- we've heard from Chief Commissioner and Madame Montour
20 that when you're based on a community, it's an agreement
21 with the Chief and council.

22 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Right? You,
24 Nakuset and Madame Nepinak, do you have to go -- is the
25 mayor and the councilor, or -- administrating your funding?

1 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No.

2 **NAKUSET:** For us it's -- it's the CS now that
3 covers it. So, you know, and -- and we just have to, you
4 know, do the statistics, which I presented, so you can all
5 take a look at the statistics I've did for this year. And
6 we have to have our AGM. And then we send in the report
7 before, you know, the end of this month. And then we're --
8 we get our monies.

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And my
10 last question for you, Nakuset, we all -- about your list
11 now.

12 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Your
13 checklist.

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Checklist.
15 And it's same for you, the other women from the -- the
16 shelter, Madame Montour and Madame Nepinak. When a woman
17 come and it's -- she -- she share her story like we've heard
18 across Canada, that either the police or the system
19 discriminated her, or something went wrong, or she didn't
20 get the service that she was supposed to get, I'm sure -- I
21 don't want to say I'm sure, but is it things that it
22 happened to you also?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely. We hear
24 the stories all the time about the dismissive attitudes of
25 the police, and how difficult it is to -- to have services

1 from them, or to ask them to intervene when there is a
2 violent situation.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Madame
4 Montour?

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, definitely. I -- I
6 know that that is true. And a lot of it -- what we hear is
7 -- a lot in Child Welfare. We hear that -- the way they get
8 treated in the Child Welfare System. And we strongly
9 advocate for them. And I know that they know that we'll do
10 that. And -- so we are actually trying to have a better
11 relationship with our Child -- our new Child Welfare System.
12 We -- we only hope for the best because we have a new
13 designated Child Welfare System at Six Nations. But we also
14 have to work with the old Child Welfare System as well. And
15 we're -- we're really hoping for a better relationship. We
16 want things to change. Things need to change.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

18 **NAKUSET:** And, you know, at the Native
19 Women's Shelter, it's pretty much across the board. So
20 every single service provider they go to, they usually have
21 difficulties. So that's why we always send out the staff.
22 Because it's the staff that will put a stop to it. The
23 women they -- they just take it.

24 I mean, you know, we had the -- there was
25 a -- a particular woman at the shelter that I've known since

1 1999, and she -- she was abused, thrown around by a group of
2 police officers at Cabot Square, and I was alerted to it
3 after the fact. There were a couple of community members
4 that got involved that made a report to the police and
5 because I signed the agreement with the police, they were,
6 like, "You -- you should do something." So the woman that
7 got abused by the police, not only did she get abused by the
8 police, but then she got ticketed in -- while she was in the
9 ambulance, because they end up having to call the ambulance,
10 they gave her a ticket. So I saw her at the shelter, and I
11 was like, "Listen. I'm going to go and see the -- the
12 police commander about this. Do -- do you want me to do
13 that for you?" Because I need her permission. And she
14 looked at me, and she was, like, "You would do that for me?"
15 And that broke my heart. I'm, like, "Of course I would do
16 that for you." So I did it, you know. And we're still
17 waiting. That was two years ago. And it hasn't been, you
18 know.

19 The first group of police officers, they
20 said, "Oh, we did an internal thing, and we were saving her
21 life." You were not saving her life. So then we have to go
22 to the anthology, I mean, there's a French word for it, so
23 you have to go the second step, and we're waiting. So she's
24 still waiting for her day in court.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. When

1 you hear -- when they come to you with the -- those sad
2 experience, do you officially, if they agree, bring them to
3 the -- the Human Rights Commission, or Ethic, or a place
4 where they receive complaint like that?

5 **NAKUSET:** We do when we can. And if they
6 want to, a lot of the times they don't want to. You know,
7 they're too afraid to do it. So the first part -- the --
8 the first witness was from the Open Door, who saw it, and he
9 put in the complaint. And then I was, sort of, like, taking
10 the baton and then taking the next step because the woman
11 was Indigenous, I signed the agreement, so I need to figure
12 out what's going on. But we always offer that. But at the
13 same time, we try to let the women know what they're rights
14 are. We try to, sort of, guide them to all the different
15 people that are working in, you know, Native Para-Judicial
16 Services, or First Peoples Justice Centre, or you know, the,
17 sort of, experts in the field to help them. So we're always
18 referring, but really the most helpful is when we stand by
19 their side.

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm. I -- I do want to
21 say with the Six Nations Police, we've come a long way.
22 Like, I -- we have an excellent relationship with them. And
23 we've worked hard to make that happen, and I know they have
24 too. So if there's a complaint like that, I -- I could call
25 up the Chief and say, "What are you doing?" I know, and --

1 and he -- and he would explain to me what happened, or he'd
2 apologize.

3 And, I think, for us the -- we have a high-
4 risk committee that I co-chair with the police. I think
5 that has brought us such mutual respect in the work that we
6 each do. And so I -- I feel that if there was such a
7 complaint that came to me, to my attention, I could just --
8 I could even -- either text them, and say, "I need to talk
9 to you, and I need -- you know." And I know they would
10 respond, and they would -- they would sit down with me. And
11 -- and if it's a mistake on their part, they would say, "You
12 know what? We blew it. And so it -- we'll get this officer
13 to apologize." So I know that we -- we worked really hard
14 to make that happen, and so have they. And I've -- I just
15 have total -- I have a respect for them, for the Six Nations
16 Police and what they're -- what they're doing. I -- I
17 believe in them.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* Madame
19 Nepinak?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** M'hm.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Do you bring
22 them -- or follow, or support them?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** We provide them with
24 the -- with the resources, and the referrals. But quite
25 often, as I mentioned, they are in the shelter -- in the

1 Lodge for -- for 21 days. And within those 21 days, the --
2 the energy is very low. And -- and they're really concerned
3 about the -- the immediate experiences that they've had
4 around --

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- trauma and ensuring
7 that -- that their children -- that they are okay. But we
8 do have outreach workers that have supported staff to --
9 supported women to -- to attend seminars on -- on human
10 rights, and to -- and we encourage to -- to write a
11 complaint if it involves the police. And we show them how
12 to do that. And -- and, like others have already expressed,
13 there -- there is a fear around doing that.

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Because they feel that
16 they won't be listened to.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm. *Merci*
18 *beaucoup*. They feel listened by you and protected by you.
19 And we have so many communities, and cities, village, and
20 places across Canada that they deserve a place safe like
21 you're providing. So *merci beaucoup*.

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** *Miigwetch*.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah, sure.

25 Sure.

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
2 Robinson?

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Hi. (Speaking
4 in Native Language). I have a couple of questions for you,
5 Nakuset, for clarification. And then the rest of my
6 questions, I would like any of you, or all of you, if you
7 feel you want to respond, to do so. I understand that
8 Nunavummiut women, or citizens of Nunavik northern Quebec,
9 when they're sent down for medical, they have access to
10 interpreters, and transportations, and things like that. If
11 you are a Nunavik Inuk woman living in Montreal, or a
12 resident in Montreal, can she access those translation
13 services that are available to those who are part this
14 health provision system, between Nunavik and Montreal?

15 **NAKUSET:** They would have to ask.

16 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm.

17 **NAKUSET:** I -- I just met the -- the director
18 of the new -- it's not called Northern Module anymore, and
19 she's absolutely --

20 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Terrific.

21 **NAKUSET:** -- amazing, the woman who runs it
22 now. I have -- I don't remember her name off hand. I don't
23 know if it's not medical related, if they -- it goes outside
24 of their mandate I'm not sure if they're allowed to.

25 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay.

1 **NAKUSET:** That's the problem.

2 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm. And
3 then you gave us this scenario of a police officer or a
4 frontline person refusing to speak English. With the
5 language laws as they are in Quebec, and this is -- I've
6 heard this from others as well, but it was told that that
7 was the service provider's right, to give service in French
8 and wasn't required to give service in English. Is that
9 something you know about, whether that's okay to say, no,
10 I'm going to speak French?

11 **NAKUSET:** That is the reality of Quebec
12 right now. So there have been horror stories where people
13 have, you know, gone into the ambulance and the ambulance
14 attendant will only speak French and not English, and
15 people are freaking out because they don't understand
16 what's going on. So it's pretty much across the board.
17 You can go to the medi-care office and there's a big sign
18 saying, you know, *La language française, tu dois parler la*
19 *langue*. And that's why we always have to that send our
20 staff with the women, because they don't -- if they don't
21 speak the language, they don't get the service.

22 It's the only way -- it's the only loophole.
23 I can't force people to -- you know, to speak English, but
24 when that woman needed to, you know, have a report done
25 because her daughter went missing, that's crucial. He

1 doesn't want to, you know, talk to her in English. Jessica
2 took care of that, she translated everything.

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And for
4 Nunavik Inuit women and children who you work with in
5 Montreal, the primary languages as I understand it are
6 Inuktitut, second language is usually English or French?

7 **NAKUSET:** English.

8 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And how many
9 do you know that -- how many do you encounter that are
10 trilingual?

11 **NAKUSET:** There are a couple, but they've
12 lived in the city long enough --

13 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah, yeah.

14 **NAKUSET:** -- to learn it, so --

15 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you.
16 Now, this is for -- for anyone who -- who wants to chime
17 in. One of the things that I noticed in your -- all of
18 your testimony, and yesterday from Ms. Anderson, and
19 everywhere we go the importance of advocacy and navigators.
20 And -- but that doesn't always have to be a lawyer, you
21 know, and that's -- that's the other thing that -- when it
22 comes to navigating these legal or administrative systems,
23 there's this misconception that you need your law degree to
24 be an effective guide.

25 We've heard from other women about the need

1 for Indigenous women advocates, and it strikes me that
2 that's what you're doing in many ways. Are you funded at
3 all for that specific work?

4 **NAKUSET:** No.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we're not. I think,
6 if I can just -- please. It becomes part and parcel of the
7 work that we do every day. If it is about supports for mom
8 when she -- let's say for school supports, that her child
9 is registered in the local school and how do we -- you
10 know, we -- we send advocates or child support workers to
11 be that bridge and to -- and to provide that transitional
12 support, but quite often it is advocacy work. Because
13 you're teaching often about family violence even to
14 teachers who are receiving the children in their grade 3
15 and grade 4 class, or grade 1, even the bus driver. So
16 every day there is advocacy that happens on so many levels.

17 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, I don't
18 want this to be interpreted as me recommending or thinking
19 that the government should just create another pocket, I
20 would envision that this be part of a more holistic and
21 comprehensive way of providing financial support, but do
22 you think that Indigenous shelters should receive funding
23 for that type of work?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Can I answer that
25 first --

1 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yes,
2 absolutely.

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- that -- your last
4 question? So at Ganohkwasra we -- actually, there was a
5 call for proposals about, oh, I don't know, about six years
6 ago, and instead of the three shelters applying and
7 competing for the same dollars because there's three court
8 systems within our Haldimand-Norfolk branch -- county.

9 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm.

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** This was just for legal
11 advocacy. What we decided to do is we decided to split
12 that one position into three shelters. So we get 12 hours
13 of legal family court support work as paid for. But do we
14 need more? Absolutely. So each one of those -- those
15 other two shelters are mainstream shelters, so we share
16 that. We didn't want to compete with each other because we
17 knew two -- two of us weren't going to get it, so that was
18 our -- that was our solution.

19 So -- but do we need a full-time family
20 court support worker? Absolutely. I think every shelter
21 needs at least one. There's actually other shelters out
22 there that have more than one because they're so busy, and
23 that's just specifically for the court.

24 But that advocacy is what our shelter staff
25 do all the time, we're very good at it. We're navigators,

1 we help women and families to navigate the system. We're
2 very good at it.

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you. In
4 terms of that right -- or that service being properly
5 funded and being recognized as an essential service as
6 opposed to a pilot project or a -- would you agree with me
7 that that's how it has to be looked at?

8 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

9 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I'm seeing all
10 heads nod.

11 **NAKuset:** And I just wanted to say, I found
12 the woman's name that I wanted to mention. Her name is
13 Maggie Putulik, and it used to be called Northern Module,
14 but now it's call Ullivik and it's an absolutely beautiful
15 centre, and she does amazing work. And she's, like, crazy
16 awesome, this woman, so you might want to ask her whether
17 or not she would lend her translators for other services.

18 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you.
19 What I've -- we've heard a lot about how you are funded,
20 how are you supported and use multiple different pockets,
21 and there was a program, and I think, Nakuset, you
22 mentioned it having been a source of financial support for
23 you at one point, but the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, I
24 believe it sunsetted in -- oh, just before my son was born,
25 2009.

1 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

2 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, as a
3 Commissioner, I don't -- you know, reinventing the wheel is
4 not always the best way to start, so I'd like to ask what
5 your thoughts were on how the Aboriginal Healing Foundation
6 supported you? Was that funds you were able to access?
7 Was that model of funding, did it allow you to do the work
8 you know you need to do?

9 **NAKUSET:** Can I answer that first? Sorry.

10 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** You go ahead.

11 **NAKUSET:** Okay. So, yes, we received monies
12 from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and -- oh, my
13 goodness. So with that money we were able to do -- we had
14 a sexual assault worker, we had a family care worker, we
15 had a healing lodge coordinator, we had a clinical
16 supervisor. We were able to get all the other -- program
17 director, we ever got a student in the summer to help with
18 the healing lodge because we sent the women away for, like,
19 two weeks to this beautiful location. And with the program
20 director we were able to get, you know, the art therapist
21 in, and the Elders in, and the psychologists in, and we
22 would have massage therapists in, and we have wellness days
23 and we would -- so it was crucial. When they cut the
24 funding, I was in shock.

25 I think I was on maternity leave. It's so

1 funny you were talking about your baby that's, like, the
2 same age as mine.

3 But, yeah, we were in shock. And then it
4 was sort of, like, okay, now what do we do? So we're
5 having a spirit walk on June the 16th, so we used to get
6 two weeks for the healing lodge that we had through the
7 Aboriginal Healing Foundation, now we have, you know, four
8 days that we can fundraise from the community so we can
9 send our women, you know, out of the -- out of the city to
10 just breathe.

11 Then I had to find another family care
12 worker and then I had to, you know, keep on my clinical
13 coordinator because, you know, she's someone that really
14 oversees all the case management, manages the stage
15 students, you know, she has a lot of weight on her shoulder
16 and we need the expertise. And when they cut that money,
17 it's -- we -- we ended up, you know, absorbing that
18 position through our core funding, because it's essential,
19 and then we were trying to fundraise for other ones. I got
20 monies at one point for the family care worker through
21 ESDC, then they said no one year. Now, you know, I've
22 applied through the McConnell Foundation. We'll see if
23 they will continue with, like, well, I sent them a
24 completely different proposal. Family care -- just for the
25 family care system.

1 You always have to think outside the box and
2 you also have to dream big, and this is what we're
3 continuing to do. So we wanted -- we want to -- want to
4 make sure that we have monies for the essential services
5 that our women need and then we also have to look into the
6 future about, okay, so this isn't moving fast enough. I
7 have a collaboration agreement, I have the research of the
8 collaboration agreement, and yet things are not moving fast
9 enough. What would make it fast enough? Oh, okay, we're
10 going to apply for that. So that's what we have to do.

11 We have to come together and we have to dream
12 big and then we have to find the people that are -- are
13 open. Because if I had sent the same proposal to a
14 different government agency, they'd be like, are you crazy?
15 I sent it to someone else and they're like, oh, my God, this
16 could actually work. So we like those kind of people.

17 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. We -- we also
18 applied to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and -- and we
19 were very successful and the programming was amazing. We
20 were able to get our very first sexual assault supervisor,
21 sexual assault counsellor, so people, for the first time,
22 formally received sexual assault therapy at our -- in -- in
23 our community. And we did groups and we did art therapy
24 groups, we did -- we worked with men, we worked with
25 children, we worked with adults, and we did a lot of

1 community education, and that lasted for about four years
2 before it was cut. So that was our very first -- but there
3 was a lot of healing that -- that Ganohkwasra was able to do
4 with that funding.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And we've never accessed
6 the Healing Foundation monies.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I think my last
8 two -- one is a -- a -- a question in terms of the -- the
9 National Summit and gathering, which I think is -- is
10 -- gathering and sharing is so important and learning from
11 each other. And you touched on this a little bit, but it
12 -- would you agree that it's really important that these
13 summits be sort of distinctions-based, that it not be sort
14 of pan-Indigenous or -- and they're -- that it -- ensure
15 that there's space for all nations? Inuit, Métis, and trans
16 and two-spirited?

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely.

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

19 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

20 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, I have to
21 tell you that, since you guys have been on this panel, from
22 the voices behind me as well as in the hallways and in my
23 phone, how many women have said, "I want to do what they're
24 doing for my community," and saying, "How do I start?"

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

1 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** First, in terms
2 of the financial resources, would you recommend that there
3 be money to facilitate women coming together?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

6 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, did you
8 have -- and then, my last question is, do you have any
9 advice, guidance, words for the women watching, listening,
10 sitting in this room, on how to start?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think it starts
12 with a -- with a vision of the women in the community and
13 that vision of healing and wellness. And to -- to bring in
14 supports to do that, because most communities are not
15 resourced to -- so it takes a lot of will, a lot of
16 determination. I have a lot of confidence in the women out
17 there because we women are warriors. We're -- we're
18 fighters and we make things happen, you know. We've made a
19 pot of soup with 50 cents. You know, so we -- we can do a
20 lot of things that -- if we're put up to the challenge, and
21 I do believe -- and I -- actually, I would like to challenge
22 women across the -- across the communities. Let's do it.
23 Give us a call, email, Facebook. Let's do it.

24 **(APPLAUSE)**

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I can't help but think

1 of our founding board -- board of directors, who were a
2 group of women back in the '80s that -- that were meeting at
3 -- at their -- in their basements, in their house, and they
4 -- they were meeting because one of our community members
5 was taking in women into her house from abusive partners
6 because she didn't want to go to Brantford. She didn't want
7 to go to Hamilton. She didn't want to leave the territory,
8 so she was bringing her in, she was bringing in women into
9 her home. And -- and from there, that dream became -- they
10 got more women involved and more women involved and they
11 kept meeting and they kept asking people to help.

12 But definitely, there's a lot of shelters out
13 there, and I think every community should have a shelter.
14 That's my personal thought. So if you want to start one,
15 just give us a call. There -- we will help you. More power
16 to you.

17 **NAKUSET:** Because the -- the Native Women's
18 Shelter is in the city, anyone who wants to get into this
19 field in the city, you need your education. You -- you need
20 it, and you need to walk between two worlds, because all the
21 partnerships, all the people you're going to have to deal
22 with are going to be non-Indigenous, so how are you going to
23 be able to communicate with the language that they respect
24 or honour or whatever you want to call it? And then also be
25 able to almost translate the same sentence to someone who's

1 Indigenous and be like, okay, well, what she really means is
2 blah, blah, blah. You know?

3 Like, and dare to dream. I mean, I've been
4 working at the shelter, and when I worked there, they're
5 only -- when I started, there was only ten staff. We're up
6 to 24. I think that, you know, from -- personally, I'm the
7 kind of person that, when I see an issue, I kind of look
8 around the room, and I'm like, is anyone going to do
9 anything? No? And then I step forward. And if I don't
10 know how to do it, then I find the experts in the field to
11 make it happen. So that's what you have to do, because I
12 really -- I don't know a lot. I mean, I may sound like I
13 know a lot, I don't know a lot. But I have a lot of smart
14 friends that help me and push me forward and we go together.

15 We -- it's really about collaboration and --
16 and -- and building bridges, and -- and we do it for our
17 women. Because, you know, they talk about the next seven
18 generations. That's our -- that's our job, to make it
19 secure, you know? I would like to make my -- work myself
20 out of work. That or it doesn't need to be a shelter. But
21 we're not there yet.

22 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you all
23 so much.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
25 Eyolfson?

1 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you. I
2 did have a few follow-up questions for you all, but they
3 ended up getting asked by my colleagues, so ...

4 **(LAUGHTER)**

5 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** So I think I
6 don't want to be repetitive, so I -- I'm not going to ask
7 you any questions. I'm just going to take this opportunity
8 to thank you so much. It's obvious you're -- you're -- you
9 have limited resources in your work and your time is
10 precious, so I think we're truly blessed to have had you
11 come here and spend this time with us and share your
12 knowledge and your expertise. So I'm truly grateful. Thank
13 you so much.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

15 **(APPLAUSE)**

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So Commissioners, we
17 do have a redirect, but rather than asking for a break, I'm
18 going to ask that we just stand for one moment, so I can
19 confer with my colleague and then proceed into re-
20 examination.

21 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- in total we do
23 have for their re-examination, 20 minutes. Both, Mr.
24 Blain, I don't think we're going to take that time, but
25 what I'm going to suggest we do 'cause we're both very

1 amicable to sharing the time, is that we set the 20
2 minutes, but I just ask that you stop the clock when Mr.
3 Blain's done just to give me a moment to start my
4 questions, if that's an acceptable approach?

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes,
6 thank you.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

8 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

9 **RE-EXAMINATION BY MR. DARRIN BLAIN:**

10 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Thank you. A late good
11 afternoon to the Commissioners. My wife is upstairs
12 watching this on -- online. This goes to one of the
13 comments I just heard and all of the clapping. So I went
14 up there with lunch and she met me at the door, and I said,
15 How do you like that panel? And she punched her arms up in
16 the air and said, "You go sisters."

17 **(LAUGHTER)**

18 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Josie, we had someone
19 here from the Federal Government -- this goes to your
20 comments about funding -- who painted a picture for us a
21 few days ago that the funding for First Nations health in
22 this country is something to be celebrated, it's a
23 beautiful story, and it's something to get excited about.
24 Those are her words. I notice that she's not here, I wish
25 she would have been here to hear your -- your comments on

1 the -- on the panel. What we're hearing is that it's not a
2 celebration, it's not a beautiful story and it's nothing to
3 be excited about, but rather the way that you get funding
4 for your organizations and the way that -- or the amount
5 that you get is cumbersome, frustrating, time consuming and
6 it takes away from the real work that you want to do. It's
7 paternalistic and it's demeaning, correct?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

9 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** And I'm wondering if your
10 funders -- you talked about the statistics that your
11 funders like you to have, and all the forms that you need
12 to fill out to get a few dollars --

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

14 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** -- on a regular basis.
15 We talked about periodic quarterly and annual funding, and
16 that kind of thing. I'm wondering if the same people that
17 hold your feet to the fire will let you hold their feet to
18 the fire, and I'm wondering if there -- the agencies that
19 you deal with regularly or ever, as a result of having no
20 beds available, and having to turn Indigenous women and
21 children away, ever ask you for the statistics on how many
22 women have been killed, beaten, raped, left by suicide,
23 lured into sexual exploitation as a result of not being
24 able to come into your shelter?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we have never been

1 asked that question.

2 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Thank you. And my final
3 question is this: I was unable to get this representative
4 from the government, the good doctor from the government,
5 to agree with me that this is of national importance, and
6 this is of national concern, and it might even be an urgent
7 concern. And she wouldn't agree with that, so I'd like you
8 to respond to that. I'd like you set -- set the stage and
9 bring the truth out, Josie. And my question to you in that
10 regard is, from all the evidence that we've heard this week
11 on the status or the state of affairs with respect to
12 Indigenous women, safe places and shelters in this country.
13 Are you confident enough to look at that Commission and
14 tell each one of those Commissioners that this represents a
15 national urgent concern that should receive principal
16 consideration, fulsome consideration in the Commissioner's
17 Report to the public?

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

19 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Those are my submissions.
20 Thank you.

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah, can I just --

22 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Sure.

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah. I -- I -- I just
24 want to say yes, we are. We need to declare a national
25 emergency with respect to the number of missing and

1 murdered Indigenous women that are killed. I talked
2 yesterday about the war on Indigenous women, and how that
3 continues to play itself every day. And until we have the
4 -- the appropriate resources and supports on the ground,
5 then that's not going to stop. We need to look at the
6 systemic. We've already talked about some of those with
7 the police and investigating the police and look at the
8 linkages with -- with -- with other systems such as child
9 welfare, residential school, how it all plays into the
10 current state of -- of affairs with Indigenous women and
11 how that places us further into dangerous domains. And so
12 all of those systems together, and I have confidence that
13 -- that you, the Commissioners, are going to take those
14 recommendations and -- and move forward.

15 I'd also like to recommend some action.
16 Let's -- some action to -- to get this work done. There
17 have been other inquiries, there have been commissions,
18 there -- et cetera, and unfortunately some of those have
19 gathered dust on library shelves across this country, and I
20 would like to say, let's -- let's not let this one lie.
21 Let's move on.

22 We -- we have one kick at this cat and let's
23 -- let's do it in a good way, and thank you so much for
24 what you do. (Speaking in Native language).

25 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Ms. Big Canoe.

1 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

2 **RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. I will
4 be doing re-direct to both Sandy and to Nakuset. I only
5 have, like, some clarification questions, because we've
6 already heard a lot from both of you.

7 Sandy, earlier today one of my colleagues,
8 Ms. Beamish, asked you about safety -- safety requirements
9 and maintenance in terms of standards --

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- and you described
12 a number of things that you have to do.

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to ask
15 you, are you -- do you know whether or not the building
16 codes on reserve have different a standard than those off
17 reserve?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I believe there's a
19 different standard, yeah.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if I -- if I told
21 you or you just accept it as true, that the Federal
22 standards for building codes on reserves are different than
23 the provincial ones, and just for the sake of this
24 question, you believed that I told you that they're higher
25 for provincial, would you be able to tell me, based on your

1 own experience, if the on-reserve -- the actual on-reserve
2 shelters are in buildings that are often dilapidated or
3 need roofing or are not meeting the same building standards
4 as you'd expect from off-reserve, would that --

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** (Indiscernible) safe
6 houses. Just have to go to take a visit of one on-reserve
7 shelter and go and visit one off-reserve shelter, and you
8 would see for yourself.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And again, I don't
10 like speaking generality, but you know, in terms of the
11 ASOO members that are the Indigenous ones, do you know if
12 each of those communities actually has a fire -- an actual
13 fire station or fire services?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I don't know.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay.

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I don't know. Each one
17 of their -- our members, if they do or not. I don't know.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So just in
19 your own experience in Six Nations, is there a fire?

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if there was an
22 emergency or safety a concern at Six Nations, you would
23 have a local response?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

1 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

2 **RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Nakuset.

4 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Earlier my
6 colleague asked, and you've been speaking a lot today about
7 all of the funding and the different pots and pools you
8 have to go to. And earlier my colleague actually asked
9 Josie about the Family Violence Prevention Program off-
10 reserve call for proposals. It was Exhibit 55. Are you
11 also familiar with this funding proposal call?

12 **NAKUSET:** I am.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did you guys make
14 a call for the funding?

15 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. So what happened was that
16 this is something we applied for, and when we applied for
17 it, we wanted to tweak it a little bit because I think that
18 every woman that comes through the shelter has -- has lived
19 violence, and because of 85 percent of our clientele, also
20 deals with addiction, we wanted to kind of create a violent
21 -- family violence and addictions program. So that's what
22 we submitted to them. And it said that we could only have
23 ten documents submitted, and some of those were letters of
24 support. We actually had seven letters of support, so we
25 couldn't even include them all, which is -- you know, I

1 guess a good thing, but still we -- we sent in the
2 application, which was, like, three pages, and then we had
3 another -- another couple of other things. We had audited
4 financial statements, blah, blah, blah. We sent everything
5 in on time, and then I get an email from AADNC saying
6 something to the effect that, Thank you for submitting, but
7 our computers aren't able to decode the language in which
8 you sent it. And I'm, like, isn't that ironic. They still
9 don't understand us.

10 So I'm not sure what's going on with the
11 computers at INAC because our computers aren't, like, you
12 know, super, you know, wonderful computers, they're regular
13 computers. We just sent the exact form that they sent us,
14 we just send it back to them. They can't open it. Okay.
15 So we -- you know, I -- I was concerned though, because we
16 -- we submitted it by a deadline, so I'm like, "Does that
17 mean you're not going to accept it 'cause you can't open
18 it?" They're like, "No. No. No. It's our fault. So
19 we'll accept it, but can you scan it or something so we..."
20 the next day we re-submitted it.

21 Then they said, "Okay. Great. We're going
22 to let you know whether you got the money, or you didn't get
23 the money by mid-May." It's June. Time to start stalking,
24 because we haven't heard from them, and that's something
25 that we have to do. Can you give us an answer? Because we

1 have to plan.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

3 **NAKUSET:** You know? I mean, the -- the
4 person that we wanted to hire to be the addictions worker is
5 waiting to know, can I start work? Well, you know, I
6 already applied for another -- the Echo Foundation from
7 Montreal, and they gave us \$20,000, so we're going to start
8 her off with 20, and I am going to motor to find the rest of
9 the money. So it'd be awesome if they gave me an answer, so
10 then I can look elsewhere, but that's an essential service.
11 And that's the pitfalls of working with government forms.
12 Hopefully they've upgraded their computer since.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. I have just
15 one last question for the both of you. And I -- I'll draw
16 your attention to the screen, 'cause this -- this picture
17 actually comes from an exhibit that came -- oh. Sorry.
18 This picture actually comes from an exhibit that was put in
19 through Josie in relation to the report she wrote. And this
20 morning one of my colleagues, Ms. Julie McGregor (ph), you
21 know, mentioned the comment of you know, the -- the fact
22 that it's been characterized as a war on women.

23 And so -- and we've been -- I think you can
24 -- it's fair to say everyone's acknowledging you as
25 warriors. But I've also heard a lot about wanting peace.

1 And I know that in terms of the words of inspiration and the
2 Commissioner asked you that question about you know, there's
3 all these women that want to do this, but what are the words
4 that you think of every time you leave your space, your
5 shelter at the end of the night that's of hope for the women
6 in your shelters?

7 **NAKUSET:** What?

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Instead of war, what
9 other words, or what -- what -- how would you like to
10 characterize when you think of the women that you're leaving
11 in the shelter at the end of your work day, or the long
12 hours; what is the hope? Or the positive inspiration you'd
13 have for the women, instead of characterizing it as a war,
14 what would you like it to be? And you first.

15 **(LAUGHTER)**

16 **NAKUSET:** Strong comes to my mind as you say
17 that our Dawn Song.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

19 **NAKUSET:** Our Dawn Song is -- was actually a
20 -- used to be a -- a war song, but because it was so
21 beautiful, we kept it as the Dawn song. We call it the Dawn
22 song. And it's a song that it's a -- it -- it means new
23 beginnings. It means, for us at Ganohkwasra it means,
24 "Looking to the east and seeing the sun come up."

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

1 **NAKUSET:** And that's what -- that's what I
2 want for our women. that's what I want for our people, is
3 new beginnings. I want peace, respect. The good mind. The
4 great law of peace. All these things are -- are
5 what -- what I would -- I want for our -- our women. And
6 -- and joy. I mean, that's a -- that's something I pray for
7 every day, because you know, as a Indigenous woman myself, I
8 know trauma. I know -- I know what it's like to live in
9 trauma. And I know that very well. And I know what it's
10 like to live in grief. And I pray for joy. I want to know
11 joy. I want to know laughter. I want to know family.
12 Those are things I want for me, and those are things I want
13 for all our women. I want them to know joy, laughter, belly
14 laughs, peace, friendship, sisterhood.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

16 **NAKUSET:** Sacred sisterhood. That's what I
17 want.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

19 **NAKUSET:** You know, when I think of this
20 shelter, I had a colleague that came in about a year ago,
21 and we -- she was sitting in my office, and I'm on the
22 computer. And she was listening to the women in the other
23 room, the common room, and they were laughing, and they were
24 talking. And she looked at me, she goes, "This kind of
25 reminds me of like, a dorm at a sorority." And I thought,

1 that's a really good compliment, 'cause like, we're a crisis
2 centre, but the women at the shelter, when they come
3 together, you know, they find ways of -- of coping. And we
4 often do it through laughter. But you know, when they leave
5 the shelter, what we want for them is like, safety and
6 empowerment. 'Cause as much as we can support them when
7 they're in the shelter, they need to find those tools to do
8 it for themselves, and for the next generation. You know,
9 they -- they're -- they're the future leaders. Then they're
10 going to be you know, working, bringing up the children and
11 creating the next group of -- of future leaders. So
12 whatever tools that we can give to empower them, to make
13 them all warriors as well, that's what I want.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Those are my
15 questions. Thank you very much. So in terms of formally
16 closing the -- oh, sorry, I apologize. Chief Commissioner, I
17 understand that you --

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** It's okay.
19 Well, speaking of joy and laughter and empowerment, we have
20 gifts for you. We were told by the matriarch on Haida Gwaii
21 on the west coast to gift our witnesses, all of them, with
22 eagle feathers. Well, you don't argue with matriarchs. We
23 all know that.

24 **(LAUGHTER)**

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So we have

1 eagle feathers for you. And I've learned across Canada that
2 there are different beliefs about eagle feathers, but I
3 think it's safe to say that there's some commonalities that
4 eagle feathers lift you up and hold you up in the moments
5 when you need to be lifted up and held up. And then when
6 you dare to dream, they'll help you reach your dreams. So
7 these are our gifts to you because you've given us more
8 gifts than you can ever imagine.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I'll let you do
10 that.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm sorry.

12 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

13 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Waiting
14 for our official closing in ten minutes, please.

15 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

16 **--- CLOSING CEREMONIES**

17 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Check, check. It's
18 funny I say, "check, check," on the microphone and -- and
19 I'm thinking about something else at the end of that
20 conference. Yeah, we -- we're prepared, Chief Commissioner,
21 for the closing ceremonies, and I just wanted to say, we
22 added as much as we could into the closing ceremonies. We
23 even have a fashion show, so.

24 Just real quick, ladies and gentlemen, I'd
25 like to introduce you to a -- a sister of mine. This is

1 Tasha Snow (ph). She's the -- one of the -- I think almost
2 the youngest of -- of the late Chief John Snow. And
3 Tiffany, if you could come and join here. Tasha has been a
4 -- has been a care worker and a worker at -- for a number of
5 years, Eagle's Nest is the shelter out in the Stoney
6 community. Chief John allowed me to -- into his family and
7 invited me, and so I'm an adopted brother. Tasha's also a
8 seamstress for her children for the powwow and for ceremony
9 where -- anyways, for Mother's Day, we had it arranged for
10 Tiffany to have this dress. Tasha creates this dress, and
11 it's created in honour of the murdered and missing. And if
12 you look at the pattern, there's one woman in the dress
13 that's wearing red. That's the dedication to the Inquiry.
14 And so if any of you people out here would like to have a
15 dress made, Tasha's here. And it's in special spirit and in
16 honour of you all, so thank you, Tasha. Give them a round
17 of applause here.

18 (APPLAUSE)

19 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Tasha will stick
20 around. That's the end of our fashion show.

21 (LAUGHTER)

22 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: We -- we have a
23 number of things that we're just going to kind of get
24 through. And I'm going to invite Sarah to say a few words
25 on behalf of the -- the Advisory Council, and again, we'd

1 like to honour Cynthia Cardinal, Melanie Morrison, and Myrna
2 LaPlante, and Sarah's going to say a few words, and of
3 course, our sister Charlotte Wolfrey is going to help us
4 with the Qulliq as well. So I'll ask, Sarah, if you could
5 come forward and say a few words in our closing?

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They're all coming
7 forward.

8 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Oh, they're all
9 coming. Okay. I'm sorry. Come on forward. Again, give
10 them a round of applause for joining us here.

11 **(APPLAUSE)**

12 **MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** (Speaking in Native
13 language).

14 **(LAUGHTER)**

15 **MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** Because I -- I wanted
16 to -- okay. (Speaking in Native language).

17 You are amazing people, the ones that were in
18 the panel. Strong warriors, wow. I wish I could be that
19 warrior, like you guys. Wow. And it's good to know that
20 you are helping women and children when nobody -- when
21 nobody can take them. When people are just turning away.
22 Wow. I'm -- I can only say "wow." You remind me of polar
23 bear, you know, mother polar bear, strong, who's protecting
24 her cubs, and you guys are like polar bear, protecting these
25 women. Lot of little cubs. Protecting them. Polar bear is

1 strong and powerful to protect her babies, so I see those in
2 those women that were speaking here. So thank you.

3 Thank you to all the parties for being in --
4 sharing the work that you do. Good questions. Wow. You
5 have amazing questions here, too. Thank you for the staff
6 for making this happen, to all the staff that are here with
7 us, and Blackfoot people for welcoming us here, *naqurmiik*.
8 Welcoming us to the -- this place, beautiful place, Calgary.
9 (Speaking in Native language) Where did I write it? Jason
10 Goodstriker. Thank you. You're such a funny guy.

11 (LAUGHTER)

12 MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK: You make me laugh,
13 you make us laugh. We really needed that. Thank you. And
14 you're always welcome to come in my hometown, to Nunavik.
15 If that will happen one day, you will be very welcome.

16 That's all I can say. A lot of -- seeing
17 all of you great women here, wow, we -- together we are
18 strong, all of you. All of you here, thank you for all the
19 work that you do, everyone. We have to protect women and
20 children, even men, even our men, so thank you.

21 (APPLAUSE)

22 MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: Sarah, you're going
23 to leave me here alone? I would say something too. I
24 thought they were going to leave me, but they wouldn't do
25 that.

1 Thank you, Sarah, for your powerful words.
2 You're powerful, you're a polar bear, *nanook*, thank you.

3 And I'm going to say, I'm going to be kind
4 of business like instead of heart stuff. I -- I too am a
5 member of NFAC, and that's the hat that I've got on right
6 now. I would just like to say thank you to the people on
7 the panel who gave us the information that you gave us, and
8 I really wished at times that I could jump in. Especially
9 from the representative from FNIHB, I really wished I could
10 have jumped in and asked some questions.

11 I would also like to thank the organizations
12 with standing who asked the questions for us. Thank you,
13 you ask good questions.

14 If I had one wish, it would be that all the
15 provinces and territories would have a place at the
16 hearings -- I've got to find my place again now -- so that
17 the questions could have been specific to the realities of
18 what Indigenous women are dealing with in their province,
19 in their territory, in their community because the -- I
20 think the Commissioners are getting a small glimpse of what
21 is or what might be across the country, but I think that it
22 is integral to make recommendations when you know what is
23 across the country.

24 So I guess when I'm saying that, and I'm not
25 a lawyer, but I'm going to use a phrase that I've been

1 hearing all week, would you agree --

2 (LAUGHTER)

3 (APPLAUSE)

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I love that word.

5 MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: Would you agree to
6 ensure that the Inquiry has time and resources to finish
7 this inquiry right --

8 (APPLAUSE)

9 MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: -- so that we can
10 get it out there what the specific needs are of the
11 territories and the provinces?

12 And to the Commissioners, thank you for
13 listening. I don't envy you for having to sit hours on
14 end. My butt was hurting on those beautiful good chairs,
15 so I really don't envy the job that you have. (Speaking in
16 Native language). Thank you everyone.

17 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you, Sarah.
18 So this is going to be the final remarks of the Commission,
19 and we're going to do some -- we're going to sing you some
20 songs in a few moments, but -- and we have a few words to
21 share.

22 I was just speaking with Chief Commissioner
23 Buller about, just like what Sarah said, what if there are
24 people out there that want to make a submission? I would
25 just advise that you can either call Carolyn or you can

1 navigate the website, murdered and missing website. And if
2 you're a program person from a department in any of our
3 cities or any of our communities in Canada and you feel the
4 need to send in a letter or your report or such, or
5 comments that you have, you're more than welcome to submit
6 them electronically online.

7 So thank you again to anyone who is
8 watching, and that's an extension of an invite for all of
9 you all to have your voices heard.

10 We're going to first off introduce for the
11 final time here Chief Commissioner Buller. Give her a big
12 round of applause.

13 **(APPLAUSE)**

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you
15 very much, Eric. Thank you. One of the biggest challenges
16 I face is getting to the lectern without tripping.

17 First I want to recognize and thank the
18 people of Treaty 7 and the Métis Nation in Region 3 here
19 who have hosted us so warmly and so graciously this week.

20 I would also like to thank Norton, also
21 known as Spike Eagle Speaker, and Alvine Wolfleg Eagle
22 Speaker, you've been wonderful to have. Gerald Meguinis,
23 John Wesley, Edmee Comstock, and of course our very
24 talented Jason Goodstriker.

25 Thank you also to the drummers, the

1 Blackfoot drummers for welcoming us and making all of us
2 dance. Thank you. It's hard to stay in your seat when
3 they're performing.

4 I also want to thank our Elders who travel
5 with us, our grandmothers who keep us pointed in the right
6 direction, pick us up, dust us off and set us out again
7 when we need that, and it happens from time to time.

8 Thank you also to the traditional knowledge
9 keepers and our NFAC, National Family Advisory Circle,
10 members who were here all week well. Again, they keep us
11 pointed in the right direction and we're grateful for their
12 guidance as well.

13 To the honoured witnesses, to those of you
14 who shared your knowledge and expertise with us, I want to
15 thank you too for helping us to understand your work
16 better. And I want to thank the parties with standing who
17 were here this week, thank you for your thoughtful
18 questions. They are so very important to the truth
19 gathering part of our work.

20 I also, of course, want to thank the most
21 amazing translators at the back of the room who we very
22 rarely see, but upon whom we rely.

23 And last but certainly not least, the most
24 amazing National Inquiry staff who work tirelessly because
25 of their love of their work and their love of our people.

1 I found it very helpful this week to
2 understand a little bit more about how government services
3 work, whether it was victim services, health services,
4 family violence prevention, addictions, mental health
5 services. All of the witnesses described their special
6 service delivery challenges, especially in the north and
7 remote areas. That was very important to our work.

8 We also heard about the frontline workers,
9 those who, based in culture and tradition, work tirelessly
10 daily, often in unsafe conditions to strengthen, support
11 and empower now generations of Indigenous women and girls.

12 They work hard every day. They work in
13 circumstances that would try the most patient of us. I am
14 grateful that all Canadians had the opportunity to hear
15 this week about how hard the frontline workers work every
16 day and how they're pressed for resources to do their work.

17 Knowledge brings understanding, which brings
18 compassion. We're learning that this is a challenge for
19 all Canadians.

20 We've also been able to connect the dots a
21 bit more about how we've heard in the past from families
22 and survivors and the difficulties they've had in accessing
23 programs and services across Canada. Now, we've been able
24 to connect some of those dots to the service, and the
25 service providers. We have a -- a wealth of knowledge and

1 information now. That we have to take time to carefully
2 analyze and reflect upon. I'm grateful to everyone who's
3 participated this week.

4 Personally, this week has highlighted and
5 reinforced how ending violence against our women and girls
6 is a responsibility shared by all Canadians. It's important
7 that we continue to build partnerships with each other
8 because that's where the strength is. Unfortunately,
9 though, we were -- we're reminded again this week, and took
10 time to honour that we recently lost more loved ones. It is
11 difficult, truly difficult to hear about these tragic events
12 as we work across Canada because we hear about these losses
13 far too often.

14 The lives of Indigenous women and girls
15 depend on the work that we do. And we're aiming for, of
16 course, recommendations that will work to end the violence.
17 And as one of our witnesses today said so perfectly, to end
18 the war against Indigenous women and girls. We have to work
19 together to stand up for our mothers, daughters, nieces,
20 cousins, aunties, those who are no longer with us. And
21 those who can't join us. Those who are able to join us too.
22 We must remain strong and united because the lives of our
23 sisters, and mothers, and cousins, and daughters, grandmas,
24 all depend on it. And the urgency is palpable.

25 I'll close by saying, we'll meet again in a

1 few weeks in Toronto for our next hearing on racism. I
2 expect it will be as moving, and as thought provoking as
3 this week. Thank you all again. And I look forward to
4 meeting you in a few weeks in Toronto. Safe trips home to
5 everyone. Thank you.

6 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you.

7 **(APPLAUSE)**

8 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** We're going to invite
9 Commissioner Robert [sic] -- Robinson to come and to have
10 some closing remarks. And I'd like to thank and -- we move
11 forward.

12 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** First, I'd like
13 to say thank you, (Speaking in Native language), to the
14 wonderful welcoming we've had from the Blackfoot Nation,
15 from the Treaty 7 Nations, as well as the Métis Nation in
16 Region 3. I'd like to thank the Elders who've guided us
17 every day, started us with ceremony, with prayer every day.
18 I'd like to thank the Elders and grandmothers who travel
19 with us and guide us and set us straight every day. I'd
20 also very much like to thank you, Jason, for -- for the
21 laughs. Yeah. The drummers for the songs, and -- and that
22 medicine as well.

23 I want to acknowledge the families and
24 survivors who have come to bear witness as well. This is
25 your space. I want to acknowledge and thank the National

1 Family Advisory Circle members that are here with us,
2 Bonnie, Cynthia, Sarah, Charlotte, and Melanie. And we've
3 also had Myrna was here with us as well.

4 I'd like to thank the witnesses. The women
5 and men who have come and shared with us, and answered hard
6 questions, and talked about tough truths. And did so in an
7 honest way, and in a good way. And -- and I really want to
8 express my gratitude for that. And I asked at the beginning
9 of the week, to -- to -- for the witnesses to give
10 themselves to this. And I think that they rose to this.
11 And I thank them for that.

12 Parties with standing, I'd like you to -- I'd
13 like to appreciate your -- your time here, your questions.
14 Also, for sitting in the seats for so long,
15 and -- and working together, and asking questions, thought-
16 provoking questions that have us all thinking about how we
17 move forward.

18 We've learnt so much this week. So much.
19 And I acknowledge what Charlotte has raised. Let's be
20 frank, it's the tip of the iceberg. But we learnt about the
21 challenges of the availability, accessibility, and the
22 appropriateness of Victim Services, health and wellness
23 services, and safe space and shelter access. We heard that
24 the needs are so high, but they're not being met. Even with
25 the amazing efforts of the grassroots and the community-

1 based groups we've been hearing from. We've heard that
2 there is a tremendous disconnect between government funders,
3 and community-based service providers in the women, girls,
4 trans, and two-spirited, that these programs and policies
5 are -- are designed to serve.

6 We've heard what the solutions are as well,
7 and we can't brush over that. A wrap-around, community-
8 based support that meets all the needs, rooted in culture,
9 relationship, and that recognizes the inherent strength of
10 the women, not as victims, but as strong, capable, rights-
11 holding, worthy humans. We've heard that in this effort,
12 there's challenges. This is the approach that grassroots
13 and community-based organizations are trying to provide.
14 They recognize that women and girls aren't, "This is where
15 my health is going to be addressed. This is where my mental
16 wellness is going to be addressed. This is where my
17 spiritual health will be addressed. And this is where my
18 shelter's going to be addressed." They are whole beings,
19 that need holistic help and support.

20 But at times, government priorities,
21 policies, mandates, and programs don't see it this way. And
22 this is a big problem in the disconnect. Existing pockets
23 that don't fit the needs, limited opportunities for those
24 experts, community-based groups as well as those with lived
25 experience have an opportunity to help inform the design and

1 the priorities and the policies of these programs. That
2 partnership and relationship needs to happen more. We heard
3 some examples, but we heard what the challenges are when it
4 doesn't happen. Lack of data, lack of information, lack of
5 evaluating effectiveness. You know, what's needed. But you
6 don't know how what you're doing is meeting that need.

7 We've heard about two very -- three very
8 concerning realities. A lack of political and institutional
9 will, discrimination, and racism. And I look forward to the
10 conversations we'll have in two weeks in Toronto, where we
11 will talk about racism. Because until those ideologies of
12 supremacy are rejected, change can't happen fast enough.

13 I'd like to thank all those that have come
14 forward. What we've learnt this week is going to help. Not
15 only create safer communities, but the goal is not just to
16 stop the violence. It's for -- to allow Indigenous women
17 and girls, trans and two-spirited, to reclaim their space,
18 their place and their power. (Speaking in Native language).
19 Thank you all for being here with us this week. And I look
20 forward to us returning in a couple weeks. Safe travels.

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You too.

22 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you,
23 Commissioner Robinson, who have beautiful moccasins by the
24 way, so. All right. I'm going to call forward again for
25 the final time on the week, Commissioner Eyolfson. If you

1 Indigenous women, girls and trans and two-spirit people
2 through their very thoughtful strengths this week.

3 I found it very valuable to hear about many
4 of the things we heard this week, such as the delivery of
5 victim services, and health services. Particularly, some of
6 the challenges -- challenges and gaps in those services.
7 Some of those that occur in the northern communities in
8 particular. Also, the importance of providing services for
9 our exploited youth in a way that's informed by lived
10 experience. And also, the resource challenges of shelter
11 services that we heard are so crucial to our Indigenous
12 women and girls.

13 And I just also want to take this time to say
14 this week I was also reminded of the role that men have to
15 play in ending violence against Indigenous women and girls.
16 As men, we need to come together to find ways of ending
17 violence that our Indigenous women and girls, and trans and
18 two-spirited people face. And we need to talk to other men
19 about these issues. Ensure that men are held accountable.
20 And we need to work together to end violence.

21 So what we learned this week has built on
22 what we heard through the community hearings, and the
23 statement gathering events. And it's also been a compliment
24 to what we heard in our expert hearing. And I look forward
25 to seeing many of you at our -- our next expert hearing on

1 racism in Toronto in a couple of weeks. And I just want to
2 end by saying thank you to everybody. *Chi-miigwech*, and I
3 wish you all safe travels home to your family. Thank you.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you,
6 Commissioner. Oh, my friend, my sister, gee, you know,
7 Commissioner Audette and I, even though I'm 45, we've known
8 each other since we were -- oh, over 60 years I would say.
9 So give her a big round of applause. Thank you again,
10 Commissioner Audette.

11 (APPLAUSE)

12 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Did you say
13 that we were liars when we started? We are not, you are.

14 (LAUGHTER)

15 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Well, I want
16 to say (speaking Native language). I see, and I heard, and
17 I join my heart and my voice to my colleagues, to
18 Commissioner who said thank you to all of you here. And the
19 families, I want to add from -- from the bottom of my heart,
20 I see there is family members in this room that spent the
21 week and listen. Or spoke to us, shared their concern.
22 Their tears are -- was afraid that we failed -- failed them
23 or failed you.

24 I don't know if I'll be able to solve
25 everything. I don't think so. But one thing I know, that I

1 am walking beside you, because you're my mentors. You're
2 the women and the men, and the youth and the Elders that are
3 telling us, telling me why we need to do this. I don't have
4 to be here like you, you don't have to be here. We should
5 be dancing, celebrating, but because we lost a loved one, or
6 because we're a survivor, or because we're continue what our
7 ancestor asked for many decades to find the truth, because
8 we know that truth, but to share that truth to Canada. And
9 make sure with that truth, that Canada, Alberta, and the
10 rest of Canada, provinces and territory, would honor that
11 truth.

12 And I'm going to fight for that. Sometimes
13 I'll cry, sometimes I'll speak loud. Sometimes I'll be
14 quiet, but I'm going to fight for this justice. For my five
15 children, and my granddaughter, but also for the friends
16 that I met over the years. Some that I reconnected here,
17 some that I met here. And I know we're 75, maybe 80 of us
18 on this amazing, tough journey; this National Inquiry. But
19 it's nothing compare when you lost -- when you lose a loved
20 one.

21 So we have to make sure we do not fail you.
22 And if we do, I apologize. But after, I'll become Free
23 Moccasin, I will continue that's -- that journey with you.
24 It is something very different compared to the hearings that
25 we had with families and survivors, but still inside, deep

1 inside, we had panel that came from communities, came from
2 organization, from grass root organization, that demonstrate
3 the difference or the gap between the mission statement or
4 between the objective of this services or this institution,
5 this government.

6 They came here to show us and show Canada
7 that what's written there on the website, it's not the
8 reality on the ground. That we're still in the survivor
9 mode. That we're still fighting among ourself [sic],
10 because there's not enough. So of course, in this report,
11 the voices that we've heard today and yesterday, and weeks
12 ago will be very important in this work. Very, very
13 important.

14 We receive truth this week and we'll receive
15 again next week. There was an important debate also this
16 week; how should we share that truth? Believe us, we want
17 to receive the truth from every government. From every
18 organization, but we have to do it well. And I will fight
19 to make sure we do it well, but many of us will -- will do
20 it. So I'm very confident.

21 We've heard a lot about finance, the budget,
22 money. And I understand that there is a big gap on how the
23 mission statement will provide the funding to the
24 organization. And when a family is turned down because
25 there's no room in the shelter, and couple days later we --

1 we found out they're dead because they weren't safe. They
2 weren't protected. So there again, we receive so many
3 proof, so many proof from the strength of the family across
4 Canada.

5 And I want to say to Canada, very sincere,
6 very open heart, very open mind, that there is still 500
7 family members and survivors that took the courage to
8 register to this -- to here, and to come and share their
9 truth. How can we honour that? The staff is exhausted.
10 The Commissioner, not yet, but soon. But how can we make
11 sure that we are healthy to receive that truth when we still
12 don't know if we do have or not an extension? Just tell us.
13 Just tell us how many months, how much we will receive. Not
14 for us, but for this mandate. The mandate you -- you gave
15 us. From that after, you'll see if I agree or not. I'm
16 asking you, give us an answer. Family deserve an answer.
17 Survivors deserve an answer. Our Elders, in fact, all of
18 us, people in this room deserve an answer.

19 You have a good example this week that
20 different government across Canada, from provinces wanted to
21 share their truth, their document, but because of lack of
22 timing we had to say a kind of no, which I think it's not
23 fair. So everybody deserves a time here in answer to our
24 question, tough question, but deserve also to explain why.

25 In conclusion, I'll say again to the

1 families that I met this week, I don't know if we will
2 cross our path again, but social media is there, if you
3 have a concern, if you have a beautiful word to share to
4 us, or a tear, I'm not far. I'm not far.

5 Again, thank you, because of you, the love
6 of the Elders, the song, the ceremonies, the willingness of
7 what you are sharing to us, this is why I wake up every
8 day. This is why I'm stubborn, and I am your ally. I am
9 not perfect, but fudge, I'm dedicated. Thank you.

10 **(APPLAUSE)**

11 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you. We just
12 are very happy to hear your words, and I always look
13 forward to your -- you're very well thought out and you're
14 very methodological. I've never met -- I very rarely met
15 leaders that take the time to put in that amount of effort
16 in what you say and how you lead.

17 I was asked to say two things. I just
18 wanted to -- I will keep it short. And in our ways we say
19 (Speaking in Native language). So years ago I was made an
20 announcer, so I'm asked to say things privately and to
21 bring things forward, and that's kind of been my job for a
22 long time.

23 My dad was a -- like I mentioned, was a
24 20-year member of the National Parole Board, and one of the
25 things that he said on all of the people that were on the

1 inside, men and women, he said one thing that I noticed in
2 the interviews was that many of them didn't have Indian
3 names, and so he said whenever you have access to a crowd,
4 whether you're at a powwow or something, encourage people
5 to give their children Indian names. And that's a little
6 bit of homework.

7 And he said because when you name a spirit,
8 it will help you and it will continue on in their lives.
9 And it's very few tools we have for our children when
10 giving them ways of protection as they go forward in their
11 challenges, so I would just extend that to you from my
12 father, to -- no matter what colour you are, because we're
13 all children of Earth, and you can seek out Elders' help or
14 people of experience and get them Indian names if they
15 don't have any just yet. That was one thing.

16 Last night when Elder Blu and I were having
17 a discussion, a midnight smoke of course, we were talking
18 about a lot of things, and she gave me a real powerful
19 teaching. And we all have -- every family has people in
20 it, what the outside society calls it is LGB -- and
21 a -- and a whole -- it's just -- it's the English alphabet.
22 We say (speaking in Native language) that's our people,
23 they're neither men, neither women, but they're people.

24 And I can honestly say that I've seen some
25 statistics from family members of mine who are this way,

1 and I was very astounded to hear about the numbers of, you
2 know, suicide attempts, arrests, dealing with addictions
3 and going beyond, the bullying that happens when they're
4 young and in school. And this is something that's going to
5 be perhaps the next steps of where we're going, and as
6 we -- as we unwrap the issues through the -- through the
7 Inquiry.

8 But what Blu told me was that -- it was a
9 special teaching, and it was, you know, the residential
10 school agreement that we all were a part of when we came to
11 be, one of the things in the school's lasting legacies that
12 unfortunately lived in our communities, that we were
13 ashamed of the people like that. We were made to feel
14 ashamed of the people, and so it all went into a deep dark
15 place for a lot of years.

16 And now what Blu has told me last night, was
17 one of the things that was so special was that it was
18 foretold in a profit -- in a prophecy from some years back,
19 that the children are going to be the ones that will
20 strengthen the identity again and make us all proud and
21 again family members.

22 Now we see it. Now it's come forward. So
23 she asked me to mention that, and that was something that's
24 very valuable, and the days of shame are in the past. Like
25 my friend, Emery (ph), would say, The past is the past,

1 so -- but this is something that I was asked to say.

2 I'm going to ask Sarah to come forward and
3 to help us with the -- oh, Charlotte. Oh, I'm sorry,
4 Charlotte is going to help us with the Quiliq, and the
5 Elders, I'd like to ask if Spike and Alvine would help us
6 out, and all of our friends here -- oh, Gerald is here as
7 well, Meguinis, from Tsuut'ina, and Edmee Comstock from the
8 Métis Nation to come and say some words of prayer.

9 Now, we're just at the tail end, we're going
10 to all get out of -- get going here in a few moment, but
11 one of the special things about being Blackfoot, and most
12 any of you have this in your cultures, that we protect
13 ourselves on our travel, so these are going to be prayers
14 for yourselves and your family, but one thing I'm going to
15 ask the Elders that you consider when you say your prayers
16 and when we take down the lamp, is that we -- we pray that
17 this is going to go somewhere with the Federal Government,
18 and we pray that this isn't going to be a Royal Commission
19 stuffed on a shelf, that this isn't going to be a Kelowna
20 Accord that got dropped off the earth, that this is
21 actually going to happen, and we're going to need to do
22 something about that.

23 (APPLAUSE)

24 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: So I'm going ask
25 the Elders to use that in your prayers and ask for that,

1 that we have a continuance. (Speaking in Native language)

2 **MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** Excuse me. If I
3 can have a minute, if you want to put the timer on.

4 **(LAUGHTER)**

5 **MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** You know what, as
6 Elders we just sit and sit and sit, but, you know what,
7 we -- we do like to come up and say something, we do. And
8 this is the reason why I'm here. Nobody elected me to be
9 here, I just figured I'm going to do it.

10 I want to thank the people that asked my
11 husband and I to be the Elders within this room within this
12 week. It was a pleasure.

13 I would also like to thank the Elders of
14 this region for helping us out. Without the Elders'
15 prayers and without their knowledge, wisdom, my father used
16 to say, nothing will go.

17 Without the Elders that we have gone to
18 school, like all of you. You have big degrees, you have
19 bachelors, masters, doctors, and some of you might have
20 triple doctors, but we too go to school. And we -- we
21 learn to be who we are and to do the best job we can do.

22 Everything that has happened here, I too
23 suffered on the streets of Calgary with my children, a
24 little boy that was 2 years old, a baby in my arms and two
25 little girls, I was refused to have lodge. It's supposed

1 to be a safe house, it's supposed to be safe for me. I
2 remember the dumpsters today where I slept with my
3 children.

4 I know how it is to be down and out. To
5 have a life with my husband, it was all because of Elders'
6 prayers, it was all because of their hard work to make my
7 husband a better man. Without the teachings of our Elders
8 we won't be where we are today. I don't know where I would
9 have been, or my children. The wisdom that we've learned,
10 and the knowledge, and above all, the love that was taught
11 to us through our smudge. The first time you -- you burn
12 your smudge, that first smoke, teaches us that that's love.
13 Love for anybody. It doesn't matter who it is.

14 Today, I walk proud. Today, I learn to love
15 a lot stronger than I did before, because I blamed everybody
16 for what was happening to me. Today, you young people have
17 a lot of backup. I wanted to say something yesterday and a
18 person here asked me, "You should go up there and say
19 something." As Elders, we don't like to just step in and
20 say, hey, what, let me say something here. There's a lot of
21 young people that overstep us as Elders. We don't use
22 Elders and just put them on a shelf, why -- every once in a
23 while, dust them off. You utilize the Elders with your
24 mind, body, and spirit. That's how you use the -- you don't
25 use them or abuse them. But a lot of communities do that.

1 figured it out, and all it meant was, you've got to fight.
2 Don't give up. That's all they told me. Fight together.
3 Like the holders of Canada. This is our land, let's fight
4 together rather than fighting each.

5 I want to thank -- and I could never get her
6 name. Where's that lady that was going to put me in her bag
7 and take me home? I might need a ride to Toronto, so maybe
8 I'll -- I might take that offer and jump into her suitcase.

9 **(LAUGHTER)**

10 **MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** There you are.
11 But my husband and I have talked, we've cried in our room,
12 we're silent, but we've prayed hard. These are not the
13 cries of -- of being unhappy. We cry because we're -- we're
14 not sad, we're happy. We do cry when we're happy, too, and
15 that's where we are. My husband and I are 48 years, a lot
16 of years for us to be together, but we made it with the help
17 of the people that open their doors to us. Sometimes
18 there's basements, walking up and down the streets of
19 Calgary to find rent. Our children are running by us. We
20 buy bologna, bread, one little hop, we tell our children
21 we're going to have a picnic. We let them sleep and we're
22 on our way.

23 Those are some of the experiences that make
24 us strong today. And that's why you have to be strong. I
25 love all of you, and in my Blackfoot language, when -- we

1 don't have a word for "goodbye." We just say
2 *kitaakotamattsinoo*. "I'll see you later." So I -- I think I
3 took more than one minute. Sorry about that.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER, MR. SPIKE EAGLE
6 SPEAKER, MR. GERALD MEGUINIS, AND MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK:

7 (Speaking in Native language).

8 --- CLOSING PRAYER

9 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Hey. Thank you.

10 MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK: (Speaking in Native
11 language) and thank you, everyone, in English. I will say
12 it, and I did ask for the government to come through with
13 the money and to bless each and every one. Commission, the
14 panel, any. And my Elders that I learned so much from them
15 as well. (Speaking in Native language).

16 (APPLAUSE)

17 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: (Speaking in Native
18 language) -- anyways, my late grandfather, his name was
19 Pinakwiam (ph), he -- he was a holy man, and I was two weeks
20 old when he gave me my first song, and it was a travelling
21 song. Anyways, he had a dream, and it came about when he
22 rode amongst an enemy in his dream, and he rode a sorrel
23 horse. And he used the song over the years, and it was
24 gifted to me with my first Indian name. Anyways, one time
25 he was flying down to Los Angeles and they ran into

1 many of them are passed on now, I'm not too sure how many
2 of -- are still around, but we -- amongst our Blackfoot
3 bands we have a name for each of our clubs, and this one
4 was called A-1 Club. These two songs that you're going to
5 hear are well over 50, 100, whatever
6 -- however old they are, but the first one is the flag song
7 and it's the song that we sing for our warriors, our
8 veterans. We're just going to sing a couple starts, and
9 then our last song is a very special one. So you don't
10 have to stand, you could kind of visit around if you like.

11 **(SINGING)**

12 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you. It's
13 hard to -- it was hard, for a moment there, to talk to tell
14 you this last one. A-1 Club was a special group for a
15 number of reasons, and it was intended on restoring our
16 pride. And, anyways, the women of the Anglican charge was
17 gifted this song by A-1 Club. This was gifted to them some
18 20 -- well, 30, 40 years ago, and this is the women's song.
19 And this is our final song that we're going to sing for all
20 you here, and it's a special one. It was his grandson who
21 made this song. (Speaking in Native Language).

22 **--- CLOSING SONG**

23 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Okay. Thank you.
24 We -- have the best singers in the world here, so anyways,
25 don't forget to call your spirits with you as you leave, so

1 you don't want to leave your spirit in downtown Calgary,
2 there's a lot of crazy things happen around here at
3 nighttime. Anyways, thank you again. I just wanted to
4 also say that that song is our moving camp song, so when we
5 move to the next camp we call for prayers and we pack up --
6 roll up the teepee and we move on. So good luck in
7 Toronto, and good luck in the conclusion of the commission.
8 And thank you again to the organizers and all of you all.
9 We love you all. Come back again to Calgary. Aho!
10 --- Upon adjourning at 6:00 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11

I, Krystle Palynchuk, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.



Krystle Palynchuk

June 1, 2018