

LA COMMISSION D'ENQUÊTE SUR LES RELATIONS
ENTRE LES AUTOCHTONES
ET CERTAINS SERVICES PUBLICS

SOUS LA PRÉSIDENCE DE
L'HONORABLE JACQUES VIENS, COMMISSAIRE

AUDIENCE TENUE AU
88 RUE ALLARD,
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POUR LA COMMISSION :

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POUR LES PARTIES PARTICIPANTES :

Me MARIE-PAULE BOUCHER, pour le
Procureur général du Québec

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1 OUVERTURE DE LA SÉANCE

2 **L'HONORABLE JACQUES VIENS (LE COMMISSAIRE) :**

3 Good morning. Welcome to the Inquiry Commission
4 this morning. I will ask first the counsels to
5 introduce themselves for the record.

6 **Me DONALD BOURGET,**

7 **PROCUREUR :**

8 Donald Bourget for the Commissioner.

9 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

10 Welcome.

11 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU,**

12 François Dandonneau, Gowling Lafleur -- en fait,
13 Gowling WLG.

14 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

15 Thank you. Welcome.

16 **Me MARIE-PAULE BOUCHER,**

17 **PROCUREURE GÉNÉRALE DU QUÉBEC :**

18 Marie-Paule Boucher pour le Procureur général du
19 Québec.

20 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

21 Welcome you too.

22 So, Me Bourget, you will let me know what is
23 the program for today?

24 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

25 Yes. We have only one testimony, and we're very

1 pleased this morning to have Mrs. Kathleen Wootton,
2 Chairman of the Cree School Board to make the
3 presentation. She will be assisted by
4 Me Dandonneau, and first of all, she will make a
5 presentation on her own personal history, on the
6 population of the Crees in Quebec, and the Cree
7 School Board, which she is chairperson for, followed
8 by the presentation on the realities, namely,
9 including the poor housing conditions of the Cree
10 population, the challenges, the difficulties and
11 even the dangers that Cree youth and children, even
12 their families, have to deal with, in and out of the
13 communities.

14 So, without further delay, I will let
15 Mrs. Wootton make her presentation.

16 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

17 So, welcome, both of you. I will ask the clerk of
18 the court to proceed.

19 **LA GREFFIÈRE :**

20 Yes.

21 -----

22

23

24

25

1 Kathleen J. Wootton
2 Chairperson of the Cree School Board
3 Duly sworn

4 -----

5 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

6 So, you are free to tell...

7 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

8 I'm listening to you.

9 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

10 Okay.

11 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

12 ... what you have to say.

13 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

14 Thank you. First of all, I just want to say thank
15 you for the opportunity to come before the
16 Commission and to make a presentation on behalf of
17 the Cree School Board.

18 My name is Kathleen Wootton, I'm from the Cree
19 Nation of Mistissini. I have lived in Mistissini
20 now for over -- uh... let's see, almost fifteen
21 (15) years now, because I lived out West for a
22 while, so -- and it's good to be back home, where I
23 was born and raised.

24 So, basically, I will be presenting a brief
25 summary and an introduction, and then some general

1 observations and my personal history, and some
2 specific events that I have witnessed as a student
3 and an adult.

4 Then, there will be some information that I
5 will present regarding the Cree School Board, just
6 a general overview of what we're trying to do and
7 how we want to help our students, and then I'll
8 talk a little bit about some of the partnerships
9 that we have with the Cree Justice Department, and
10 also the Cree Board of Health, and then, well, I'll
11 mention a few issues, I guess, and that will be the
12 text of my presentation.

13 So, I shall begin.

14 Poverty, severely overcrowded and substandard
15 housing, lack of health and social services, lack
16 of education and job opportunities and many other
17 factors create health, social, psychological
18 stresses in the Indigenous communities that leave
19 Indigenous persons, including Indigenous women,
20 girls and youth, to move from their communities to
21 urban centers. There, many are at risk of
22 homelessness, violence and abuse. These conditions
23 have existed for many years.

24 One of the most urgent needs in Indigenous
25 communities is the shortage of social housing.

1 Poor housing conditions adversely affect the
2 academic performance of Indigenous children and
3 youth. Unless this critical need is addressed
4 through tangible action, the conditions of
5 Indigenous communities is unlikely to improve.

6 The issues regarding which this commission of
7 inquiry will recommend solutions are well known,
8 and so are their causes. The underlying challenge
9 is the will to address them. Concerted effort from
10 all stakeholders, including federal, provincial,
11 and Indigenous authorities, will be required,
12 combined with a commitment of significant new
13 resources, including with respect to housing.

14 The work of this commission of inquiry can and
15 must lead to actions that are urgently needed.
16 Given the human toll imposed by the issues,
17 inaction is not an option.

18 The Cree School Board has a special knowledge
19 of Cree children and youth and the challenges that
20 they face. The purpose of this brief is therefore
21 to provide the Commission with the perspective of
22 the Cree School Board on the challenges and
23 difficulties faced by Cree children and youth due
24 to social and economic pressures experienced in the
25 Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee.

1 This presentation has both an institutional
2 and a personal perspective. Before addressing the
3 institutional issues, I feel that it is important
4 as a Cree woman and a public servant to make
5 certain observations about the discrimination
6 experienced by Indigenous persons, in particular
7 Indigenous women in Quebec. I will share with the
8 Commission some parts of my own story, as well as
9 two (2) other specific instances that are relevant
10 in this regard.

11 My general observations: A comment made by
12 Viviane Michel, President of the Quebec Native
13 Women's Association, on the first day of the
14 Commission's hearing, starkly captures the
15 experience of far too many Indigenous women. She
16 said, and I paraphrase, "*It's simply beyond me.*
17 *They don't see us as human beings.*"

18 History has proven Madame Michel right. What
19 other conclusion can one reach, given the
20 unrelenting mental, physical, sexual abuse
21 experienced by Indigenous women in Canada over the
22 last four (4) decades? Like Madame Michel, one has
23 to ask if non-Indigenous societies see Indigenous
24 people, more particularly Indigenous women, as
25 human beings. If the victims of such abuse had

1 been non-Indigenous, would it have taken decades to
2 look into the matter? Why has it taken so long to
3 respond? Part of the answer may be that racism
4 towards First Nations is somehow tolerated in non-
5 Indigenous society. Why has non-Indigenous society
6 been so oblivious, so indifferent to the
7 mistreatment of First Nations' people? Part of the
8 answer may be that mistreatment was
9 institutionalised in Canada's approach to
10 Indigenous people from the start. These attitudes
11 then contaminated almost every interaction between
12 Indigenous people and non-Indigenous society.

13 It has taken far too long, but we are now
14 seeing first signs that discrimination and abuse of
15 Indigenous people are starting to be addressed.
16 The creation of this commission of inquiry is an
17 encouraging example. Its recommendations can make
18 a difference. For that to happen, the work of this
19 commission and its recommendations cannot remain
20 just an expression of good will. The Government of
21 Quebec and Canada, and society as a whole,
22 including Indigenous people, must take the
23 commission and its recommendations seriously.

24 So, I'll now go into my background, my
25 personal history.

1 As I said, I am from Mistissini. I was born
2 in the bush. So, my personal history may help the
3 Commission to understand some of the discrimination
4 faced by Indigenous women and the hurdles that we
5 have to overcome to make our way through life.

6 I was born in the bush, near the Sakami river
7 in Eeyou Istchee. My parents were carrying on the
8 Cree traditional way of life and living off the
9 land. I have fond memories of these early years,
10 centered on family life and learning about Cree
11 culture.

12 This came to an abrupt end when, at the age of
13 seven (7), I was taken away to Bishop Horden
14 Memorial School, a residential school on Moose
15 Factory Island in James Bay, Ontario.

16 I was the first girl of my family to be taken
17 away to residential school. My parents were
18 convinced that they did not have a say in the
19 decision. As one can imagine, I was heartbroken
20 and homesick, in a completely foreign environment,
21 with total strangers speaking a language I did not
22 understand. I was essentially alone, since I no
23 longer had any contact with my parents or siblings.
24 While other girls from Mistissini and other
25 communities were present at the school, this gave

1 me little solace, for I felt keenly the separation
2 from my family and my community.

3 I attended Bishop Horden Memorial School for
4 four (4) or five (5) years. At the time, I was
5 given to understand that I was being taken away to
6 be educated. However, the truth and reconciliation
7 commission has made it clear that the real purpose
8 of the residential school system was to destroy our
9 identity as First Nations' people.

10 During my stay at Bishop Horden Memorial
11 School, I witnessed several instances of physical
12 and mental abuse of Indigenous children at the
13 hands of teachers and supervisors. These were
14 regular occurrences. One of my teachers was
15 especially cruel. He would make us stand up and
16 read, and whenever we would stumble on a word or a
17 sentence, he would hit us with a wooden pointer. I
18 also witnessed the supervisor physically abuse one
19 of the children, simply because of a broken record.
20 The child was slapped across the face until her
21 nose bled.

22 I was lucky enough to be a good student, which
23 allowed me to skip a year, and so, to skip a year
24 of abuse. At age eleven (11) or twelve (12), I
25 left Moose Factory Island to reside at the Mohawk

1 Institute in Brantford, Ontario. This was my first
2 experience attending a school with non-Indigenous
3 children, another effort to assimilate us into the
4 white society. The abuse that we had previously
5 experienced did not stop. While at the residence,
6 we were physically abused on a regular basis. This
7 was our reality.

8 If you look at the slide, there is a picture
9 of the residence where I was, but the next slide
10 shows a plaque that is outside the building, which
11 explains its purpose when it was built, but also
12 how the building has now been taken over by the Six
13 Nations' Community, and now, they use it as a
14 historical cultural centre for their nation.

15 I stayed in Brantford for only one (1) year,
16 until the opening of the La Tuque Indian
17 Residential School. There again, physical and
18 verbal abuse continued as part of our daily life.
19 One small relief: We were finally allowed to
20 interact with our siblings and to get a brief
21 moment of family interaction.

22 I remained in La Tuque for about six (6)
23 years. I was then sent to Riverdale High School in
24 Montreal. Because I failed French in Grade 11, the
25 Department of Indian Affairs sent me to Westbury

1 College in Montreal to finish high school. After
2 graduating from high school, I moved to B.C., where
3 I lived for eight (8) years working at several
4 different jobs.

5 I returned home to Montreal (*sic*) when I was
6 in my late twenties, actually, and I enrolled in
7 the teacher training program in Mistissini. But
8 because of the limited number of courses available,
9 I later enrolled in the teacher training program --
10 actually, it should be "Mistissini." Sorry.

11 As an Indigenous student, I was later enrolled
12 in the teachers' training program at McGill
13 University. As an Indigenous student, I was paired
14 with a counsellor for Indigenous students. After
15 receiving my application, the counsellor did not
16 forward it to the Admissions Department, but kept
17 it in his office. Having received no news from
18 McGill, I was forced to travel from Mistissini to
19 Montreal to meet with the counsellor. I took back
20 my application and submitted it myself to the
21 Admissions Department.

22 The counsellor never explained his reasons for
23 not forwarding my application to the Admissions
24 Department at McGill. He simply kept it on his
25 desk for almost two (2), three (3) months. Two (2)

1 weeks later, I was notified of my acceptance to the
2 program after I left it at the Admissions
3 Department.

4 When it came time to register for the fall and
5 the winter courses, I again travelled from
6 Mistissini to Montreal. A professor whom I had
7 previously met in Mistissini helped me complete the
8 form and I registered for five (5) courses as a
9 full-time student. I had to bring back the
10 registration form for signature by the counsellor.
11 He refused to sign it, telling me that the courses
12 I had chosen were a recipe for failure. He told me
13 that no Cree student had ever registered for five
14 (5) courses. In effect, I was being told that, as
15 an Indigenous student, I was less capable of
16 academic success than other students, and this, by
17 a counsellor whose responsibility it was to assist
18 me. So much for assisting Indigenous students...

19 The professor who helped me in the
20 registration process accompanied me to meet with
21 the Dean of the Education Faculty. The professor
22 supported my course selection, despite the
23 counsellor's refusal, and the Dean signed my
24 registration form, which allowed me to start
25 classes. For obvious reasons, I asked to be

1 assigned to another counsellor.

2 I passed all my first-year courses with flying
3 colours and obtained my bachelor's degree in
4 education in two and a half (2½) years, less than
5 the normal three-year program.

6 After my father passed away, I went to live in
7 B.C. and I started a master's program of education
8 at Simon Fraser University. While at Simon Fraser,
9 I obtained a teaching position in Vernon, B.C. for
10 a contract of eight (8) months while working on my
11 master's program. When the contract finished, I
12 was contacted to apply for a position of
13 coordinator/educator at the College Achievement
14 Program that was developed by the En'owkin
15 Education Centre in Penticton, B.C.

16 Despite the reluctance of certain committee
17 members to hire an Indigenous candidate, I was
18 ultimately selected for the position, after a long,
19 drawn-out process. This was through the Okanagan
20 College.

21 I occupied this position for six (6) years
22 before returning to Montreal in nineteen ninety-
23 five (1995) to join the Cree School Board as the
24 coordinator of the post-secondary program.

25 I occupied this position for three (3) years,

1 and then enrolled in a master's of arts in
2 educational leadership at McGill University, while
3 working part-time with the Cree Human Resources
4 Department.

5 I graduated in two thousand and two (2002) and
6 was then elected as Deputy Chief of the Cree Nation
7 of Mistissini. I was re-elected in two thousand
8 and six (2006), and in twenty eleven (2011), I was
9 elected as Chairperson of the Cree School Board, a
10 position I now still occupy. I am in my last year
11 of my second term as Chair of the Cree School
12 Board.

13 While my academic path may appear unusual in
14 some respects, other parts were all too typical.
15 Certainly the message that, as an Indigenous
16 student, I was incapable of keeping up with non-
17 Indigenous students is one that my peers had heard
18 time and again. It is not surprising that some
19 Indigenous persons end up internalising the
20 message. It requires unusual determination to
21 retain one's faith in one's self and to persevere
22 in one's chosen course of studies.

23 Times have changed to a degree, but not
24 entirely. And this is an experience that
25 Indigenous students continue to face. It is

1 important that the Commission be aware of this
2 phenomenon.

3 So, I want to address some specific events.
4 It is also appropriate to draw the Commission's
5 attention to two (2) specific events that occurred
6 some time ago, but which remain as open wounds.

7 The first was the murder, in nineteen seventy-
8 one (1971), of Helen Betty Osborne, a young Cree
9 woman from Norway House, Manitoba. Her ambition, a
10 bit like mine, was to go to college and become a
11 teacher. So, she moved from the reserve to The
12 Pas. She came from Norway House, by the way, to
13 attend high school there.

14 She was kidnapped while walking down 3rd Street
15 in The Pas, brutally beaten, sexually assaulted,
16 stabbed over fifty (50) times and killed. Even
17 though some people from The Pas knew who had killed
18 Miss Osborne, there was a conspiracy of silence by
19 the townspeople. No one dared to inform the police
20 who had killed her.

21 Despite the report to the police, the
22 investigation dragged on. Four (4) non-Indigenous
23 men were eventually implicated in her death.
24 However, only one (1) was convicted, in nineteen
25 eighty-seven (1987), sixteen (16) years after

1 Miss Osborne's murder.

2 The Aboriginal Justice Implementation
3 Commission conducted an investigation into the
4 concerns about the length of time it took to
5 resolve the case. The commission concluded, "*It is*
6 *clear that Betty Osborne would not have been killed*
7 *if she had not been an Aboriginal.*"

8 Those who stood by while the physical abuse
9 took place, while sexual advances were made and
10 while she was being beaten to death showed their
11 own racism, sexism and indifference. Those who
12 knew the story and remained silent must share this
13 guilt.

14 Closer to home, two (2) girls from Mistissini
15 were murdered in nineteen seventy-three (1973), on
16 the road between Waswanipi and Val-d'Or. Lizzie
17 Blacksmith and Bella Brian, only fifteen (15) years
18 old, were taken away from their families like many
19 other young First Nations' girls and women.
20 Unfortunately, to most, the names of these two (2)
21 young girls are simply statistics on the ever-
22 growing list of murdered and missing Indigenous
23 women and girls.

24 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

25 If you allow me, I can tell you that I remember

1 very well the case of Lizzie Blacksmith and Bella
2 Brian. I was the Crown attorney at the time, who
3 had them convicted in seventy-three ('73). Three
4 (3) persons were accused to kill them (*sic*), and
5 they were convicted.

6 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

7 Um-hum.

8 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

9 I can tell you the police did a good job.

10 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

11 Thank you.

12 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

13 But I remember this case.

14 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

15 Yes.

16 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

17 I will never forget it.

18 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

19 Yes. Thank you.

20 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

21 If you note, on the PowerPoint presentation, on the
22 right-hand side, you see the name "Lizzie
23 Blacksmith" and "Bella Brian"...

24 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

25 Yes.

1 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

2 ... as the names of so many Indigenous women and
3 girls that went missing or were murdered, you will
4 notice that the list is by alphabetical order. So,
5 they're both under the letter "B", and
6 Mrs. Blacksmith, I believe is already number 103,
7 while Mrs. Bella Brian is number 124. So, you can
8 just imagine the length of that list.

9 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

10 But be sure I remember very well, and as soon as I
11 saw the list and realized it was in alphabetical
12 order, I went immediately to look at the name of
13 Bella Brian and Lizzie Blacksmith. Maybe too many
14 people forgot, but I didn't.

15 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

16 Thank you. Thank you for your information.

17 To the Cree Nation, the consequences of the
18 loss of these two (2) women will never be fully
19 measured, as they were violently taken away before
20 having the opportunity to contribute to the growth
21 of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. Such inaction
22 looks to Indigenous people like indifference and
23 contempt. It reinforces the message that
24 Indigenous lives simply do not matter. It breeds
25 the feeling of impunity in the aggressors, leading

1 them to believe, rightly, that they can get away
2 with murder. And, tragically, it leads some
3 Indigenous persons to question their own worth and
4 dignity as human beings. What other message are
5 they to take from such treatment?

6 This situation simply cannot continue. For
7 this reason, the Cree School Board strongly
8 supports the work of this commission in changing --
9 in this relationship between Indigenous and non-
10 Indigenous people.

11 So, I am just going to say a few words about
12 the Cree.

13 It's important to recall certain elements that
14 distinguish the Cree population from the general
15 Quebec population. The Cree have a young and
16 rapidly-growing population. Half ($\frac{1}{2}$) the
17 population is under the age of twenty-five (25),
18 while the growth rate between two thousand and six
19 (2006) to two thousand and eleven (2011) has been
20 sixteen percent (16%), more than three (3) times
21 that of Quebec generally.

22 In twenty eleven (2011), the Cree language was
23 spoken by about ninety-four percent (94%) of
24 Indigenous residents in Eeyou Istchee, and about
25 eighty-five percent (85%) of them speak Cree as the

1 main language in the home.

2 Significant improvements have been made in
3 recent years to community facilities and
4 infrastructure. Nevertheless, the housing shortage
5 has raised to crisis proportions in the Cree
6 communities. As noted above, the housing shortage
7 in the Cree communities is the root of several
8 social and health problems and has a direct impact
9 on the Cree School Board's ability to fulfil its
10 mission.

11 I'm going to skip the...

12 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

13 If I may, just for greater information regarding
14 the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, we invite this
15 commission to refer to the initial brief filed by
16 the Grand Council of the Crees and the Cree Nation
17 Government back in June of twenty seventeen (2017).
18 I believe it was filed as Exhibit P-10. You'll
19 have greater information regarding the Cree
20 population as a whole, the coastal and inland Cree
21 communities.

22 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

23 I think everyone here as heard about the *James Bay*
24 *and Northern Quebec Agreement*. I will not go into
25 the agreement itself, but suffice it to say that

1 Section 16 of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec*
2 *Agreement* provides for the creation of the Cree
3 School Board, a Cree-controlled institution
4 exercising jurisdiction over education within the
5 Category I and II lands of the Cree communities.

6 While originally governed by the *Education*
7 *Act*, the Cree School Board was officially
8 constituted in nineteen seventy-eight (1978) under
9 the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi*
10 *Native Persons*.

11 The Cree School Board is an independent school
12 board in Eeyou Istchee, the traditional Cree
13 territory. It is recognized by the Minister of
14 Education and -- I don't know how to say that...

15 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

16 Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement
17 supérieur.

18 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

19 Yes. And it serves primarily Cree students in the
20 region. Its education programs are adapted from
21 the general provincial education curriculum to
22 provide education in Cree language and culture.

23 We are expected to meet the needs of Quebec
24 standards as a Cree school board, but we do have
25 that flexibility to create programs in Cree

1 language and Cree culture.

2 The Cree School Board is governed by the
3 Council of Commissioners, composed of commissioners
4 elected for a three-year term by the Cree
5 communities. One commissioner is elected by the
6 tenth Cree community of Washaw Sibi as an observer.
7 In addition, one commissioner is elected by the
8 entire Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. This
9 commissioner acts both as a commissioner designated
10 by the Cree Nation Government and as a chairperson
11 of the Cree School Board.

12 The Cree School Board provides education
13 services in three (3) sectors: Youth education,
14 which includes preschool, elementary and secondary,
15 adult education, which is general education and
16 vocational training, and post-secondary services
17 for college and university levels.

18 The Board also has supporting departments
19 which provide services to all Cree communities in
20 all sectors.

21 So, in Waswanipi, we have a regional training
22 centre, and we sponsor students who attend post-
23 secondary and college institutions all across
24 Canada. The majority of our students attend
25 university or colleges in Ontario. We have some

1 that go to Quebec, and then we have a
2 "dispersement" of students ranging from maybe the
3 Maritime provinces all the way to B.C.

4 So, we have a school in each community, and in
5 some of the bigger communities, we also have high
6 schools. Actually, we have both elementary and
7 high schools, but for large communities like
8 Mistissini, we have two (2) buildings, one for the
9 elementary, and one for secondary.

10 So, we operate a total of twelve (12)
11 elementary and secondary schools in the Cree
12 communities. We serve over forty-three hundred
13 (4,300) students in the youth sector, including
14 almost two hundred (200) students with special
15 needs.

16 In addition to the youth education, the
17 Sabtuan Adult Education Services provide a wide
18 range of community-based educational and vocational
19 programs for a clientele of over eight hundred
20 (800) adults living in the Eeyou Istchee territory.

21 The Cree School Board operates the Sabtuan
22 Regional Vocational Training Centre in Waswanipi.

23 Finally, the Cree School Board's Post-
24 Secondary Student Services Program encourages and
25 sponsors Cree students to acquire CEGEP, college,

1 university and professional qualifications, through
2 guidance, counselling, social support services and
3 financial assistance, with the offices in Montreal
4 and Gatineau. Over the past years, the Cree School
5 Board has sponsored between five hundred (500) and
6 six hundred (600) students in this way.

7 Since its inception, the Cree School Board has
8 taken back control over the education of Cree
9 children and emphasized Cree language and culture
10 in the schools. In so doing, the Board has put an
11 end to the residential school system used to take
12 away so many children from their families and
13 communities.

14 Over just forty (40) years, the Cree Nation
15 and the Cree School Board, working with MEES, has
16 completely transformed education in Eeyou Istchee.
17 Our children are now taught in the Cree language
18 and have courses in Cree culture in the schools.
19 The Board has a majority of Cree-speaking teachers
20 and managers, and the highest number ever of Cree
21 students enrolled in post-secondary education.

22 These achievements are real and very positive.
23 At the same time, challenges remain. Only forty
24 (40) years ago, the large majority of Cree depended
25 on hunting, fishing and trapping for their

1 livelihood. Today, most Cree families continue to
2 hunt, fish and trap, but fewer depend on these
3 activities as their main source of income.

4 Many Cree now work for the Cree Government,
5 such as the Cree Nation Government or institutions
6 such as the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of
7 Health and Social Services of James Bay.

8 Today, Cree children see members of the Cree
9 Nation working in Cree governance, in offices, as
10 police officers, pilots, in construction, as
11 firefighters, as teachers, in health care, in
12 forestry, mining, and other development. We have
13 Cree doctors, nurses, lawyers and accountants. All
14 these occupations require higher education or
15 technical training, and it is the task of the Cree
16 School Board to ensure that each student is
17 educated and equipped to reach his or her full
18 potential. In fact, the Cree School Board is an
19 essential component of a healthy and prosperous
20 Cree Nation.

21 In order to achieve its mission, the Cree
22 School Board has built partnerships with a number
23 of Cree entities and institutions, such as the Cree
24 Government Justice and Corrections Services
25 Department, and various departments of the Cree

1 Board of Health and Social Services, including the
2 Department of Youth Protection.

3 So, I'll talk a little bit about these
4 partnerships.

5 First, the Department of Justice and
6 Corrections Services of Cree Nation Government.
7 The Cree School Board and the Department of Justice
8 and Corrections Services of the Cree Nation
9 Government have recently collaborated to implement
10 the Alternative Suspension Program, including in
11 the Cree communities of Chisasibi, Mistissini and
12 Waswanipi, including other programs like the arts
13 concentration programs, Mikwichiyan.

14 We also have concentration programs in sports,
15 and we also have another program for at-risk youth
16 called The SNAP Program, which the acronym is,
17 "Stop Now And Plan." So, it teaches the youth who
18 are at risk some life skills, of how to handle
19 their anger or, you know, rather than getting into
20 situations where they could get into trouble, that
21 program helps to give the students some
22 skills -- coping skills.

23 Originally developed by the YMCA, the
24 Alternate Suspension Program addresses school
25 suspensions as an opportunity to support youth

1 requiring extra skills or assistance in specific
2 areas in which they are struggling. The program
3 seeks to ensure that the time spent away from
4 school is an overall success for students on both a
5 personal and educational level.

6 Our Mikwichiyan program was put in place to
7 address the drop-out of our students, and it's more
8 how to retain and to spark the interest of the
9 students in different areas that they may think
10 they don't have a talent, but it gives them an
11 opportunity to pursue artistic, you know, projects
12 and -- in music, drama, and so on. So, that's what
13 the Mikwichiyan program is about.

14 As a matter of fact, out of the Mikwichiyan
15 program, our students have produced a music video,
16 through N'we Jinan, which was quite a hit on
17 YouTube. It became -- you know, it received a lot
18 of -- how shall I say?

19 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

20 Views?

21 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

22 Hits? Views? Yes. On YouTube. So, that made the
23 students feel really good for themselves.

24 The Cree School Board and the Cree Nation
25 Government have adapted a model of alternative

1 suspension program using culturally-appropriate
2 content and taking into consideration the history
3 and the reality of the Cree Nation. The ultimate
4 objectives of the program are to analyze the
5 students' attitude towards school and identify the
6 elements which drive and motivate students, develop
7 the students' self-esteem, develop and improve the
8 students' social and self-confidence, promote self-
9 respect and respect for others, get the students on
10 the right path and back to school.

11 If the Cree School Board and the Cree Nation
12 are able to take advantage of this program to
13 improve the commitment of Cree children and youth
14 to their education, these children and youth are
15 less exposed to succumb to outside risks. In turn,
16 this may lead to relieve some of the pressures on
17 certain public services, such as the police,
18 corrections, and youth protection services.

19 Our other important partner is the Cree Board
20 of Health and Social Services of James Bay. In
21 November twenty sixteen (2016), the Cree School
22 Board and the Cree Board of Health signed a
23 protocol -- a partnership for the benefit of the
24 Cree children and youth in the Youth Protection
25 system.

1 The agreement signed by the Cree institutions
2 provides a protocol for engagement between Youth
3 Protection and the Cree School Board to facilitate
4 collaboration, sharing of information and
5 preparation of psychological and educational plans
6 to support parents and youth in our communities.

7 In Eeyou Istchee, Cree children and youth are
8 in need of protection, sometimes live in their
9 community environment -- sorry. That sentence
10 didn't make sense. Sometimes, they are taken into
11 temporary placement, such as foster families, group
12 homes in the Cree communities, or the reception
13 centre in Mistissini, on a case-by-case basis.
14 Their care is overseen by the Director of
15 Protection of the Cree Board of Health, in close
16 cooperation with the Department of Youth Healing
17 Services, which provides culturally-adapted care
18 and support for healing.

19 Throughout these transitions, Cree children
20 and youth continue to attend school. Because of
21 the need for confidentiality in such cases, the
22 Cree School Board and the Department of Youth were
23 previously limited in their ability to share
24 information and discuss with each other the
25 educational needs of the youth in care.

1 The agreement signed in November twenty
2 sixteen (2016) provides for information sharing
3 between the educators and social workers, opening
4 the door to collaboration on individualized
5 psychosocial and educational plans to support
6 parents in helping the youth succeed.

7 Ultimately, the agreement is based on
8 improving the services for both organizations, and
9 also includes mechanisms for regular stakeholder
10 meetings between the two (2) regional Cree
11 entities.

12 So, I will now address some issues.

13 While there is some room for debate as to how
14 to improve education for Indigenous students and
15 their academic performance, there is little
16 disagreement about the relatively poor outcomes for
17 Indigenous students in education systems across
18 Canada.

19 In two thousand and six (2006), Indigenous
20 persons aged fifteen (15) and over had a much lower
21 educational attainment than their non-Indigenous
22 peers, with forty-three point seven percent (43.7%)
23 not holding any certificate, diploma or degree,
24 compared to twenty-three point one percent (23.1%)
25 for the general Canadian population.

1 In twenty eleven (2011), the Assembly of First
2 Nations, AFN, identified the rate of high-school
3 completion for Indigenous students as thirty-six
4 percent (36%), compared to the Canadian graduation
5 rate of seventy-two percent (72%). Again, sixty-
6 one percent (61%) of First Nations' young adults
7 aged twenty (20) to twenty-four (24) had not
8 completed high school, compared to thirteen percent
9 (13%) for non-Indigenous in Canada.

10 In fact, the AFN concluded that Indigenous
11 youth are more likely to end up in jail than to
12 graduate high school. A grim finding -- finding,
13 sorry. Can get my tongue straight.

14 In twenty eleven (2011), the overall
15 Indigenous high school dropout rate in Quebec for
16 students aged twenty (20) to twenty-four (24) was
17 forty-three percent (43%), or twenty-eight percent
18 (28%) higher than their Indigenous (*sic*) peers.

19 A study released in twenty sixteen (2016)
20 found that only four out of ten (4/10) young adults
21 living on reserves across the country have
22 completed high school. For off-reserve Indigenous
23 persons, this figure is seven out of ten (7/10),
24 while it is nine out of ten (9/10) for non-
25 Indigenous persons.

1 These numbers are very concerning. While it
2 is not part of the mandate of the Commission to
3 address education services provided to Indigenous
4 communities in Quebec per se, it is essential that
5 the Commission be aware of these challenges and
6 their causes.

7 A key factor to improve educational
8 performance for Indigenous students lies in the
9 appropriate housing conditions. Housing is central
10 to any family's well-being and to a child's
11 academic performance. This inevitably raises the
12 issues of housing conditions in Eeyou Istchee.

13 The statistics tell a disturbing story.
14 Overcrowding affects almost twenty percent (20%) of
15 households in Eeyou Istchee, about fifteen (15)
16 times the rate of one point three percent (1.3%)
17 for Quebec as a whole.

18 Census data for two thousand and six (2006)
19 show that Cree households comprise multiple
20 families at a much higher rate than Quebec --
21 sixteen point six percent (16.6%) versus zero point
22 eight percent (0.8%) -- while the number of persons
23 per room is much higher -- zero point seven (0.7)
24 versus zero point four (0.4).

25 In addition to overcrowding, the quality of

1 dwellings is often substandard. While the portion
2 of Cree dwellings in need of major repairs
3 decreased from forty-six percent (46%) to twenty-
4 four percent (24%) between nineteen ninety-one
5 (1991) and nineteen ninety-six (1996), this portion
6 reached twenty-nine point seven percent (29.7%) in
7 twenty eleven (2011), compared to seven point two
8 percent (7.2%) for the rest of the province.

9 The housing shortage and conditions are
10 causing grave social and health problems.
11 According to the last Cree Board of Health and
12 Social Services overview of the health of the
13 population of Region 18, in a twenty o six to two
14 thousand and seven (2006-2007) survey, forty-four
15 percent (44%) of men and fifty percent (50%) of
16 women reported having been physically abused in
17 their lifetime, and twenty-three percent (23%) of
18 men and thirty-five percent (35%) of women reported
19 having been sexually abused.

20 Suicide attempts are the top cause of female
21 hospitalizations for injuries, and the rate of
22 hospitalizations for suicide attempts and suicide
23 ideation remains roughly ten (10) times that found
24 in the rest of Quebec.

25 The housing shortage also has negative impacts

1 on academic performance of Cree youth. Over time,
2 these negative impacts on academic performance take
3 a larger toll on the Cree population.

4 Unemployment, precarious employment, limited
5 access to higher-income employment, this leads to
6 the economic, social, psychological and health
7 stresses often experienced by low-income families.

8 So, what are the consequences of the
9 overcrowding of houses? Number 1, I guess, would
10 be the risk of security, the lack of secure or safe
11 place for children to study and sleep, security and
12 development of children is compromised, risk of
13 family violence. The lack of space forces children
14 onto the streets, children arrive tired at school
15 and are less able to absorb lessons and to study.

16 As a result of poor academic outcomes, there
17 is a risk of children not being able to reach their
18 full potential, increased tensions which may lead
19 to bullying, physical and verbal abuse, increased
20 risk of pressure, which may lead to alcohol and
21 substance abuse.

22 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

23 If I may, we were talking about that this morning.
24 There is an image that is used by other Indigenous
25 communities, and especially in the Inuit

1 communities. They refer to overcrowding and
2 substandard housing conditions as "*The house that*
3 *never sleeps.*" Given the number of occupants in a
4 dwelling, the residents have to take shifts in
5 order to sleep, so there is always someone awake in
6 the house, there is always noise, there is always a
7 TV that is turned on, so not only does this have an
8 impact on a child's ability to study and to carry
9 out the homework for school, it directly affects
10 his ability to rest, to sleep and to be in a good
11 position on the following day to attend school and
12 to make sure that he has the necessary energy to
13 carry out his day. So, the image that is sometimes
14 referred to is "*The house that never sleeps.*"

15 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

16 Thank you.

17 Overcrowded housing risks putting the academic
18 performance and the development of Cree children
19 and youth at risk. In some cases, the pressure and
20 the tension may be so severe as to lead families to
21 leave their home communities for urban centres for
22 their children to attend school.

23 As noted above, the need for additional
24 housing in Cree communities is urgent. Poor
25 housing in Eeyou Istchee has serious consequences

1 for Cree communities and the Cree Nation as a
2 whole. It drives Cree individuals into the cities,
3 where some find themselves homeless and living in
4 the streets, prey to violence and abuse.

5 A concerted action is needed now between the
6 Government of Quebec and Canada with the Cree
7 authorities to tackle the housing crisis in Cree
8 communities. Progress on the front will help to
9 create the conditions Cree students need to succeed
10 in their studies in their home communities.

11 So, in conclusion, I guess the harm done to
12 Indigenous people in Canada and Quebec and the Cree
13 people of Eeyou Istchee has been well documented.
14 Looking forward, it is useful to refer to several
15 key recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation
16 Commission, set out in its report. Certain
17 recommendations are directly relevant to the
18 improvement of education with Indigenous
19 communities. They also relate to the mandate of
20 this commission dealing with child welfare and
21 health. Rather than summarize these
22 recommendations, certain of them are set out in
23 Schedule 1, which is attached.

24 The issues regarding which this commission of
25 inquiry will recommend solutions are well known,

1 and so are their causes. The underlying challenge
2 is the will to address them. Concerted action for
3 all stakeholders, including federal, provincial,
4 and Indigenous authorities will be required,
5 combined with the commitment of significant new
6 resources, including with respect to housing.

7 The work of this commission of inquiry can and
8 must lead to action that is urgently needed. Given
9 the human toll imposed by the issues, inaction is
10 not an option.

11 Thank you.

12 And just to refer the Commission, there are
13 different categories of calls to action. The first
14 category is Child and Welfare, and then, there is
15 Education, Language and Culture, Health, Justice,
16 and it includes the -- the calls to action are
17 important, and I believe that certain provinces are
18 starting to address some of the calls to action.

19 There's forty-two (42) calls to action that
20 were put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation
21 Commission, and we certainly will try our best to
22 address the ones under Education, but we also have
23 to look at the Language and Culture calls to
24 action, because that's part of our mandate as a
25 Cree school board.

1 So, thank you for hearing me this morning.

2 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

3 Thank you. Maybe, Me Bourget, you will have some
4 questions?

5 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

6 Given the very well structured and complete
7 presentation, I won't have any questions for
8 Mrs. Wootton, and I will -- I want to thank you for
9 what you said.

10 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

11 Me Boucher?

12 **Me MARIE-PAULE BOUCHER :**

13 I won't have any question either.

14 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

15 Me Dandonneau, will you have something to add?

16 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

17 Well...

18 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

19 I agree with Me Bourget that the presentation is
20 very, very complete. It addressed many problems,
21 and there is a sequence that is easy to follow to
22 understand what's going on and why it's going on
23 this way. And I appreciate. I thank you very much
24 for this.

25

1 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

2 Thank you.

3 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

4 It will help. The housing problem is -- I remember
5 when Matthew Coon Come came here, he told us about
6 that. And many other leaders of Indigenous
7 communities in the province told us. It's not a
8 problem occurring only in Cree communities. We
9 have these problems in most communities in the
10 province, and we understand that it's not easy for
11 a child to study in such an environment. It's very
12 difficult, and it doesn't help at all. So,
13 something has to be done about that.

14 And there are not only problems with children
15 students, but elders also. It's -- when it's
16 overcrowded in a dwelling house, it's not easy for
17 anybody. As you told, TV always going on, how can
18 you study in such...?

19 **Me FRANÇOIS DANDONNEAU :**

20 And if you look back forty (40) years ago, the Cree
21 youth and Cree children were not exposed to the
22 same opportunities and offers that they have now
23 with Internet and with access to television. They
24 have limitless options. They can become anything
25 they want. The mission of the Cree School Board is

1 to make sure that they are educated and trained to
2 achieve their full potential. Unfortunately, there
3 is a limit to what the Cree School Board can
4 achieve on its own, and the Cree School Board is
5 not responsible, or can do so much to improve
6 housing conditions. And, you said it, the housing
7 shortage and the housing conditions in Eeyou
8 Istchee, but as well in other Indigenous
9 communities in Quebec, is at the root of so many
10 problems, which puts undue pressure on several
11 public services that are provided by Quebec. So...

12 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

13 And I understand also it's not easy, in your story,
14 to get self-esteem when going out of communities to
15 study at college, university. It takes a lot of
16 courage to proceed and to continue. I hope the
17 counsellor you had at first, who treated you the
18 way he did, is listening to us today.

19 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

20 I don't know if he is dead or...

21 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

22 I don't know him, but I hope he is listening and
23 that he will understand the harm he caused to you.

24 We will do our best. I understand you. I
25 think you made it clear. It's easy to follow.

1 Maybe it's not so easy to correct. We'll have to
2 find ways to correct those situations, but I don't
3 hold a magic stick.

4 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

5 Yes.

6 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

7 We need suggestions to proceed -- to call to
8 action.

9 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

10 But...

11 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

12 Yes?

13 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

14 But I don't think the onus should be just on Quebec
15 or Canada. I think the onus has to be also on
16 Indigenous leadership to make sure that, you know,
17 we are addressing the issues and working with
18 Quebec and Canada to address the issues.

19 And I think the Truth and Reconciliation
20 Commission, the Missing and Murdered Women and
21 Girls Inquiry, this commission of inquiry, are, I
22 think, good beginnings to start addressing some of
23 the very difficult -- and if you look at the
24 findings of the Trust and Reconciliation, I think
25 all the dysfunction within Indigenous communities

1 can be traced back to the residential-school era
2 and the institutional policies that were put in
3 place by both the federal and provincial
4 governments, in how they tried to handle Indigenous
5 populations and the policies that they put in place
6 back then. And I think, while it was important to
7 address those issues, I think what's more important
8 now is for us to move on, look forward to the
9 future, and say, "Yes, *this happened, but now, we*
10 *need to do this,*" and move forward and work
11 together, you know. Rather than the government
12 always trying to find and come up with ways how to
13 address social issues, work with Indigenous
14 communities so that they have a say, that they come
15 up with creative ways how to solve some of the
16 problems that they have in their communities.

17 I think for the Cree especially, I think we've
18 progressed quite a bit because of the *James Bay and*
19 *Northern Quebec Agreement*, because we've been able
20 to take back control for governance, for education,
21 for health and other, you know, development that is
22 happening in our territory.

23 But being equal partners means that we listen
24 to one another. As a friend of mine likes to say,
25 you know, you're born with two (2) ears, and only

1 one (1) mouth, so you listen twice as much as you
2 talk. And I think that's what we need to do. We
3 need to listen to one another and work together
4 towards problems.

5 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

6 I think what you just said shall be listened by
7 everybody. We have to work all together, to listen
8 to each other, and to try to improve the situation,
9 the relations between Indigenous people and public
10 services, and the government in general.

11 Even if we have six (6) public services in
12 this inquiry, we understand that many other
13 services are implied in the way -- the usual life
14 of everybody. We can't just go with...

15 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

16 Yes.

17 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

18 ... a little track without looking nearby. We have
19 to take this as a whole.

20 So, I thank you very much. I hope many people
21 will listen to you. And I am happy you used the
22 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, with their
23 calls to action, because we are looking at that
24 also. Because we realize that many calls to action
25 were not -- not taken care of?

1 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

2 Um-hum. Um-hum.

3 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

4 We have to go back to that.

5 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

6 Yes.

7 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

8 And it's not because it was not done that we have
9 to do nothing. We have to start somewhere, and
10 each day, if somebody is doing something, somebody
11 is expressing -- that's important -- like you did
12 today, we may finally go forward and improve all
13 the situation.

14 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

15 Thank you. Thank you.

16 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

17 That's a wish I have. I will thank you again,
18 if -- you have nothing to add?

19 -----

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

2 Just before the closing, Mr. Commissioner...

3 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

4 You have to file some documents?

5 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

6 Yes. We have to proceed to the filing of the
7 documents, namely, first of all, under
8 Exhibit P-340, the PowerPoint presentation dated on
9 November fifteenth (15th) (*sic*).

10 ***** PIÈCE COTÉE P-340 *****

11 And under Exhibit P-341, a brief of
12 Mrs. Kathleen Wootton, Chairman of the Cree School
13 Board, dated on January twenty-fourth (24th).

14 ***** PIÈCE COTÉE P-341 *****

15 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

16 I understand that's all for today?

17 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

18 Except that we have a completion of the hearing
19 that occurred on last Monday.

20 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

21 Oh, yes. Okay.

22 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

23 A brief completion.

24 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

25 Okay. So maybe we can suspend for ten (10) minutes

1 and proceed with that later.

2 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

3 For sure.

4 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

5 So, I thank you again.

6 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

7 Thank you.

8 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

9 Thank you for coming, having accepted our
10 invitation. If you have something else going
11 through your mind that you would like us to share
12 with you, you are always welcome.

13 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

14 Well, thank you.

15 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

16 You know how to join us; Me Dandonneau also. You
17 are always welcome.

18 **Ms. KATHLEEN J. WOOTTON :**

19 Thank you.

20 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

21 And thank you again, very, very much. It will be
22 helpful.

23 So, we will suspend for ten (10) minutes.

24 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

25 Thank you to both of you.

1 **LA GREFFIÈRE :**

2 Suspension de l'audience quelques minutes.

3 SUSPENSION

4 -----

5 REPRISE

6 **LA GREFFIÈRE :**

7 Reprise de l'audience.

8 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

9 Oui. Alors, bonjour. Avant d'ajourner à demain
10 matin, neuf heures trente (9 h 30), j'ai compris,
11 Me Bourget, que des vérifications ont été
12 effectuées suite au témoignage de l'agent d'enquête
13 reporter Benoit Théorêt, qui relatait ce qu'il
14 avait reçu comme récit de faits d'un témoin
15 relativement à des affaires concernant la
16 Protection de la jeunesse; c'est ça?

17 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

18 C'est bien ça.

19 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

20 Et il avait été convenu que des vérifications
21 seraient effectuées par monsieur Théorêt auprès du
22 témoin en question dont il reportait (*sic*) les
23 travaux, relativement à des affirmations concernant
24 des abus sexuels en matière de protection de la
25 jeunesse. Je comprends que ç'a été fait?

1 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

2 Oui.

3 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

4 Et nous avons convenu que quand vous auriez la
5 réponse -- parce que du côté de Me Boucher, qui
6 représente le Procureur général, bien, il y avait
7 évidemment une préoccupation, hein, si des choses
8 comme ça se produisaient, bien, on ne laisse pas ça
9 dans les nuages, il faut faire quelque chose.
10 Alors, je comprends que les vérifications ont été
11 faites et que vous êtes en mesure de donner suite à
12 ça?

13 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

14 Oui. Conformément à notre engagement, les
15 vérifications ont été faites et on comprend les
16 inquiétudes de Me Boucher sur le fait qu'il puisse
17 y avoir des enfants en situation compromettante au
18 moment où on se parle.

19 Effectivement, monsieur Théorêt a appelé et
20 pris contact avec le témoin dont l'identité était
21 protégée, même si le récit était public. Donc, je
22 vais vous lire le résumé des deux (2) conversations
23 qu'il a eues avec ledit témoin hier, donc, vingt-
24 trois (23) janvier :

25 « *Nous communiquons par téléphone avec le*

1 *témoin dont l'identité est protégée pour*
2 *obtenir des précisions... »*

3 Permettez, je vais mettre mes lunettes,
4 question d'âge.

5 *« ... des précisions attendues par le*
6 *Commissaire au sujet de la phrase*
7 *suivante : "À ma connaissance, il y*
8 *aurait eu au moins trois (3) familles*
9 *d'accueil chez qui des enfants auraient*
10 *subi des abus sexuels." »*

11 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

12 Je comprends que c'est dans son témoignage du
13 vingt-deux (22) janvier.

14 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

15 En fin de journée le vingt-deux (22) janvier,
16 effectivement.

17 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

18 C'est ça.

19 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

20 *« Elle explique qu'elle a eu connaissance*
21 *de ces événements par les victimes elles-*
22 *mêmes. Les événements se seraient*
23 *produits dans les années mil neuf cent*
24 *soixante-dix (1970), mil neuf cent*
25 *quatre-vingts (1980). Les victimes sont*

1 *maintenant toutes adultes. Dans un cas,*
2 *la famille d'accueil était formée d'un*
3 *homme et d'une femme qui habitaient dans*
4 *une maison dans la localité. La femme*
5 *serait décédée, et l'homme, maintenant*
6 *avancé en âge, ne résiderait plus dans la*
7 *maison familiale. »*

8 *Donc, ça, c'est le résumé de la première*
9 *conversation qu'il a eu avec le témoin dont*
10 *l'identité est protégée.*

11 *Toujours le vingt-trois (23) janvier :*
12 *« Le témoin nous rappelle. Elle sent le*
13 *besoin de préciser les informations.*
14 *Elle précise que la famille d'accueil*
15 *décrite dans la note de suivi concernant*
16 *le premier appel -- donc, la famille*
17 *d'accueil numéro 1 -- cette famille était*
18 *un homme qui vit toujours dans la*
19 *localité. »*

20 *Donc, ça, c'est la victime.*
21 *« L'homme serait âgé d'environ cinquante*
22 *(50) ans maintenant. Il se serait ouvert*
23 *sur les abus sexuels subis dans la*
24 *famille d'accueil numéro 1 à sa*
25 *fille -- donc, à la fille du témoin -- à*

1 Noël deux mille seize (2016). L'homme
2 aurait déclaré que les abus étaient
3 commis par les deux (2) fils du couple de
4 la famille d'accueil. Au moment de la
5 révélation, l'homme aurait montré un
6 document à l'effet qu'il pouvait aller en
7 cour, mais il avait peur de procéder,
8 dans le cadre de poursuites éventuelles.

9 Le témoin nous dit que la famille
10 d'accueil numéro 2 serait aussi une
11 famille d'accueil ayant œuvré dans la
12 communauté. Elle a appris de sa
13 cousine -- donc, le témoin a appris de sa
14 cousine -- qui était l'un des six (6)
15 enfants de cette famille d'accueil
16 constituée de trois (3) enfants naturels
17 et trois (3) enfants placés, que cette
18 dernière -- donc, que la cousine -- y
19 aurait subi des abus sexuels, sans plus
20 de détails. Cette seconde présumée
21 victime serait maintenant dans la
22 cinquantaine. Le témoin ne se souvient
23 plus du nom de la famille d'accueil
24 numéro 2 en question. Elle dit que cette
25 famille était connue des intervenants de

1 *la communauté. Pas d'information sur le*
2 *ou les agresseurs. »*

3 Et il n'y avait pas de troisième famille
4 impliquée, là, dans cette déclaration eu égard à
5 des abus sexuels.

6 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

7 Et je comprends qu'il s'agit d'événements qui
8 remontent aux années soixante-dix ('70), quatre-
9 vingts ('80)?

10 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

11 Quatre-vingts ('80).

12 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

13 Il n'y a rien de plus récent que ça?

14 **Me DONALD BOURGET :**

15 Alors, il n'y a aucune situation compromettante de
16 façon contemporaine, au moment où on se parle.

17 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

18 Merci. Me Boucher, est-ce que ça répond à vos
19 questions?

20 **Me MARIE-PAULE BOUCHER :**

21 Merci beaucoup pour les précisions, Me Bourget et
22 Monsieur le Commissaire. Ça répond à mes
23 questions.

24 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

25 J'apprécie que vous soyez préoccupée de cette

1 question-là, et j'apprécie aussi, Me Bourget, que
2 des démarches aient été prises par notre agence
3 d'enquête pour aller plus loin, et on comprend
4 mieux ce qui s'est passé. Alors, merci.

5 Alors, sur ce, nous allons ajourner à demain
6 matin, neuf heures trente (9 h 30)?

7 **LA GREFFIÈRE :**

8 Tout à fait.

9 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

10 Pour le témoignage de l'avocat Pierre Rousseau.

11 **LA GREFFIÈRE :**

12 Alors, ajournement de l'audience, demain, le vingt-
13 cinq (25) janvier, neuf heures trente (9 h 30).

14 -----

15 FIN DE LA TRANSCRIPTION.

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1 Je soussignée, **LOUISE ANNE CEGELSKI**, sténographe
2 officielle bilingue, certifiée sous mon serment d'office
3 que les pages qui précèdent sont et contiennent la
4 transcription exacte et fidèle, au meilleur de mes
5 connaissances et de mon jugement, de l'enregistrement
6 numérique effectué hors de mon contrôle et au meilleur de
7 la qualité dudit enregistrement, le tout conformément à
8 la loi.

9
10 Et j'ai signé,

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LOUISE ANNE CEGELSKI
17 Sténographe officielle n° 284087-1