



COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF PHOENIX SINCLAIR

The Honourable Edward (Ted) Hughes, Q.C.,
Commissioner

Transcript of Proceedings
Public Inquiry Hearing,
held at the Victoria/Albert Room,
Lower Level, Delta Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba

MONDAY, MAY 27, 2013

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2 PROCEEDINGS CONTINUED FROM MAY 16, 2013

3

4 THE COMMISSIONER: Good morning.

5 MS. WALSH: Good morning, Mr. Commissioner.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: We're ready to start phase 3.

7 MS. WALSH: We are. Before we begin, Mr.
8 Commissioner, as you've just indicated, today the
9 Commission moves to the third and final phase of this
10 inquiry.

11 Before we call our first witnesses, I want to say
12 a few words about the evidence we expect to hear over the
13 course of the next eight days and where that evidence fits
14 in the context of the proceedings as a whole.

15 In phase 1, we focused mostly on the facts
16 surrounding the contact Phoenix Sinclair and her family had
17 with the child welfare system. We heard from Phoenix's
18 biological father, Steve Sinclair, and from her foster, or
19 godparents, Kim Edwards and Rohan Stephenson. We heard
20 from child welfare staff, going all the way up the chain of
21 command, from the front line workers, to agency CEOs. We
22 heard from the principal of the school where Phoenix was
23 registered to attend nursery school, from the public health
24 nurse who worked with Samantha Kematch before and after the
25 birth of her fourth child, from staff of the Employment and

1 Income Assistance program and from people in Phoenix's
2 community, friends and family members of Phoenix and her
3 parents.

4 In phase 2, we focused on the child welfare
5 system itself, starting with a discussion about best
6 practice and the delivery of child welfare services. Dr.
7 Alex Wright, you will recall, testified about the
8 importance of what she called an ecological approach to
9 child welfare, on in which best practice is looked at not
10 only from the perspective of direct service delivery, but
11 also from the broader perspective of the community and
12 social system in which child welfare services are
13 delivered.

14 We heard from the assistant deputy minister of
15 the Department of Family Services and Labour, from the CEOs
16 of the General and Southern Authorities, the CEO of ANCR
17 and from the current CEO of Winnipeg Child and Family
18 Services.

19 The evidence from these witnesses focused on
20 changes that have been made in response to the
21 recommendations in the reports which were prepared
22 following the discovery of Phoenix's death, some of which
23 were specific to the facts of Phoenix's case and some of
24 which were of a more systemic nature. These reports
25 included the six reports which are listed in the terms of

1 reference which established this inquiry.

2 We also heard from witnesses put forward by the
3 Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, including Dr. Cindy
4 Blackstock, Chief Norman Bone and staff from First Nations
5 agencies about current issues surrounding the delivery of
6 child welfare services to and by First Nations people,
7 including the impact of efforts taken to implement the
8 recommendations made in the reports which you must
9 consider.

10 Repeatedly, in both phases 1 and 2, we heard
11 evidence that the dominant circumstances which makes
12 families vulnerable and which may lead them into contact
13 with the child welfare system are poverty, homelessness and
14 substance abuse. We looked at the statistics published by
15 the Department of Family Services and Labour, which showed
16 the numbers of children who are in care of the child
17 welfare system at March 31st each year. We saw that those
18 numbers remain high, almost 10,000 children in the most
19 recent count, over 80 percent of whom are aboriginal.

20 We heard about the implementation of a new model
21 of child welfare service delivery, differential response.
22 A model which places emphasis on prevention and early
23 intervention, on building relationships with families and
24 keeping children safe in their home. A model which relies
25 on developing partnerships with other government

1 departments and with community-based agencies and
2 organizations.

3 We heard evidence that notwithstanding the
4 addition of staff and money to the system over the last six
5 or seven years, resources remain stretched. Workloads are
6 such that agencies are often not able to spend the time
7 required to build relationships and implement prevention
8 and early intervention strategies. We heard that
9 notwithstanding the provision of additional resources to
10 the child welfare system, the underlying need, the social
11 context in which families and children live, is becoming
12 more dire and that the child welfare system alone cannot
13 protect Manitoba children.

14 With that in mind, Mr. Commissioner, the evidence
15 in phase 3 will look beyond the strict parameters of the
16 child welfare system, although there will necessarily be
17 instances of overlap, since, as the evidence has
18 demonstrated, no single response to protecting children can
19 be looked at in isolation. As we heard, however,
20 currently, only the child welfare system has the legislated
21 mandate to protect Manitoba children.

22 Over the course of the next week and a half, you
23 will hear from witnesses who will talk about where else you
24 might look in considering recommendations to better protect
25 children in Manitoba.

1 We will start by listening to the experience and
2 wisdom of some First Nation elders, the grandmothers. We
3 will go on to hear from those with experience and expertise
4 in the areas of poverty, homelessness, substance abuse,
5 early childhood education and care, public health policy
6 and building capacity for First Nations communities.

7 The witnesses who will testify come from a
8 variety of backgrounds. Their expertise and experience
9 ranges from local to international, from personal to
10 professional.

11 In listening to this evidence, Mr. Commissioner,
12 we must remember Phoenix herself and the circumstances into
13 which she was born. We will recall the evidence that
14 Phoenix Sinclair was born on April 23rd, 2000. Her
15 parents, Samantha Kematch and Steve Sinclair, were 18 and
16 19 years old, respectively. They were aboriginal, they
17 were urban, they had not completed their high school
18 education. They lived on social assistance because they
19 were unemployed. They had been wards of the child welfare
20 system themselves. They had issues of substance abuse.
21 Neither one of them had experienced much in the way of a
22 parental role model.

23 Samantha delivered her first baby when she was a
24 teenager and that baby was, shortly after, taken into care.
25 Neither parent was prepared for Phoenix's birth. Steve had

1 some supports from his family and certainly from his
2 friend, Kim and her partner. From the beginning, the
3 evidence was that Steve wanted to find employment and
4 daycare for Phoenix. According to the records in the Child
5 and Family Services agency files, Steve was certainly the
6 more dedicated of the two parents.

7 Both parents had some contact, at various times,
8 with community-based programs at Ma Mawi, Andrew's Street
9 Family Centre, the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club. Samantha
10 also participated in the Healthy Baby Program before and
11 after the birth of her fourth child, but as you will
12 recall, the evidence of the public health nurse connected
13 with that program was that contact, her contact with
14 Samantha ceased after she asked permission to speak with
15 Child and Family Services. And we know that throughout her
16 lifetime, Phoenix, a child under five, changed addresses
17 many times, moving between Samantha, Steve, Steve's
18 sisters', Kim Edwards and Rohan Stephenson, from Winnipeg
19 to Fisher River, never attending daycare, nursery school,
20 or any community programs. She was, as we have said, a
21 child who became invisible.

22 So with this in mind, Mr. Commissioner, we turn
23 to the evidence. By the end of phase 3, we expect you will
24 have an understanding of this community's needs and
25 responsibilities from which to make many of your

1 recommendations, to better protect Manitoba children.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you for that opening
3 statement, it's a very excellent review of where we've been
4 and where we hope to go in the next eight days.

5 MS. WALSH: Thank you. And so we start with our
6 panel of Kookum elders.

7 THE CLERK: All right. Ms. Schibler, you're,
8 you're still under oath, thank you.

9

10 **BILLIE SCHIBLER**, previously having
11 promised to tell the truth while
12 holding the Eagle Feather,
13 testified as follows:

14

15 THE CLERK: Can I just ask you to stand please?

16 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: You need to stand.

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Stand then?

18 THE CLERK: Yes. Just tell me your first -- your
19 whole name please?

20 MS. LAVALLEE: Margaret Lavallee.

21 THE CLERK: And can you spell me your first name?

22 MS. LAVALLEE: Spell it?

23 THE CLERK: Yes.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: M-A-R-G-A-R-E-T.

25 THE CLERK: And your last name please?

1 MS. LAVALLEE: L-A-V-A, double L, double E.

2 THE CLERK: Thank you. And you brought an eagle
3 feather staff?

4 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes, we brought out staff.

5 THE CLERK: Thank you.

6 MS. LAVALLEE: That represents our Kookum Kaa Na
7 Da Maa Waad Abinoojiiak Council.

8 THE CLERK: Thank you.

9 MS. LAVALLEE: Children -- grandmothers
10 protecting the children --

11 THE CLERK: Thank you.

12 MS. LAVALLEE: -- is what it means.

13

14 **MARGARET LAVALLEE**, promising to
15 tell the truth while holding the
16 Eagle Feather, testified as
17 follows:

18

19 THE CLERK: Thank you.

20 MS. LAVALLEE: Okay.

21 THE CLERK: You can have a seat now.

22 Can you stand for a moment?

23 MS. SMITH: I can.

24 THE CLERK: And just state your full name for the
25 court.

1 MS. SMITH: It's -- my legal name is Anna Smith.

2 THE CLERK: All right. Just spell us your first
3 name please.

4 MS. SMITH: A-N-N-A.

5 THE CLERK: And your last name.

6 MS. SMITH: S-M-I-T-H.

7 THE CLERK: Thank you.

8

9 **ANNA SMITH**, promising to tell the
10 truth while holding the Eagle
11 Feather, testified as follows:

12

13 MS. SMITH: Yes, but I'd like to say my
14 traditional name, because then it would, it means more.

15 THE CLERK: Please do so.

16 MS. SMITH: Taa Pii Ge Gesis Ikwe.

17 THE CLERK: Thank you. Can you spell it for us?

18 MS. SMITH: No. Sorry, I can write it out after
19 and then I'll --

20 THE CLERK: Thank you --

21 MS. SMITH: -- spell it for you.

22 THE CLERK: -- that's fine.

23 MS. SMITH: Okay.

24 THE CLERK: Please be seated, thank you.

25 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

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M. LAVALLEE - DR.EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - DR.EX. (WALSH)

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1 MS. WALSH: Thank you.

2

3 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. WALSH:

4 MS. WALSH: So let's start with just a, a little
5 bit more by way of introduction and I understand that you
6 are comfortable with my referring to you by your first
7 names?

8 MS. SMITH: Yes.

9 MS. WALSH: So, Billie, you are currently the CEO
10 of the Métis Child and Family Services Authority?

11 MS. SCHIBLER: Yes, that's correct.

12 MS. WALSH: And you testified, a few weeks ago,
13 at this inquiry, in your capacity as former children's
14 advocate?

15 MS. SCHIBLER: That's correct.

16 MS. WALSH: Okay. At that time, you did describe
17 that you were a member of the Kookum Council, maybe --

18 MS. SCHIBLER: Yes.

19 MS. WALSH: -- why don't you tell us what, what
20 the Kookum Council is? I know that Margaret has, has
21 referred to it, but if you could just confirm for us what
22 the Kookum Council is?

23 MS. SCHIBLER: The Kookum Council is a community
24 group of grandmothers who come together for the purpose of
25 addressing matters related to the safety and protection of

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1 children. And when we define children, it's defined
2 broadly, because our children can be of many ages. It's
3 really about all out there who need the protection and the
4 advocacy of the grandmothers. In our traditional societies
5 the grandmothers and clan mothers were seen to be very
6 sacred in their roles, insofar as they were the wisdom
7 keepers and they were also the ones that had to work to
8 ensure balance in the community, but also making sure that
9 the, that the community worked in a way that honoured the
10 children and made decisions in a way that reflected a good
11 future for the next seven generations.

12 MS. WALSH: When did you form the council?

13 MS. SCHIBLER: The council was formed by Margaret
14 and I in February 2007.

15 MS. WALSH: How many of you are there on this
16 council?

17 MS. SCHIBLER: It varies, because it isn't a
18 stagnant council. It is one where there are also other
19 councils of grandmothers that have stemmed from the
20 original grandmothers' council here. And we try and do
21 much of the same type of work that is done by the 13
22 original indigenous grandmothers who are worldwide. And,
23 and really, it's about, you know, a better future for our
24 children and our grandchildren and generations to come.

25 So originally, when we began our council, there

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1 were 13 grandmothers who belonged to that council and it
2 has since grown. But as I say, other grandmother councils
3 have, have, have spread out through that council.

4 MS. WALSH: So the focus of the council is
5 children?

6 MS. SCHIBLER: That's correct.

7 MS. WALSH: Okay. Margaret, you serve as elder
8 in residence at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of
9 Medicine?

10 MS. LAVALLEE: That's correct.

11 MS. WALSH: Okay. And you have been employed, in
12 the past, with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, as
13 an aboriginal awareness facilitator?

14 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes, that's right.

15 MS. WALSH: I understand you still do some work
16 with the Regional Health Authority?

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

18 MS. WALSH: Okay. You're also a member of the
19 Child Death Review Advisory Committee that was established
20 for the Office of the Children's Advocate?

21 MS. LAVALLEE: That's correct, yes.

22 MS. WALSH: And I understand that you were born
23 and raised in Sagkeeng First Nation?

24 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

25 MS. WALSH: Okay. And as, as Billie identified,

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1 you were one of the founding members of the Kookum Council
2 here in, in --

3 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

4 MS. WALSH: -- Manitoba?

5 Anna, you are employed as the child abuse
6 coordinator for Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba?

7 MS. SMITH: Yes.

8 MS. WALSH: Okay. And you've been previously
9 employed with the Southern Authority, working in the West
10 Region Child and Family Services?

11 MS. SMITH: Yes.

12 MS. WALSH: When was that?

13 MS. SMITH: Most recently, or the last -- because
14 I was there two times --

15 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

16 MS. SMITH: -- from 2008 to 2010.

17 MS. WALSH: What did you do with them? What kind
18 of work?

19 MS. SMITH: I was hired to do abuse investigation
20 in the city of Winnipeg when ANCR had, had an overload, I
21 believe, of investigations. So each agency was asked to
22 bring on an investigator --

23 MS. WALSH: Okay.

24 MS. SMITH: -- just for a short term.

25 MS. WALSH: When did you joint the Council, the

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1 Kookum Council?

2 MS. SMITH: I joined it in March 2007.

3 MS. WALSH: Okay. So pretty much from the
4 beginning --

5 MS. SMITH: Yes.

6 MS. WALSH: -- as well?

7 Margaret, you, when, when you took your oath, you
8 said a little bit about what the Kookum Council means; can
9 you just tell us again what, what Kookum means and what the
10 council means?

11 MS. LAVALLEE: Kookum means grandmother. Kookum
12 Kaa Na Da Maa Waad Abinoojiak means grandmothers
13 protecting the children. When Billie and I started in 2007
14 to look at us having a council or a grandmothers' group, to
15 look at the issues, where children were concerned,
16 primarily, at the time, we were really focusing on the
17 sexual molestation of children and we wanted to make people
18 aware that the grandmothers are taking up their rightful
19 place in society, the aboriginal, aboriginal women, as it
20 once were many, many years ago, where the grandmothers were
21 the wisdom keepers, were the ones that make sure that all
22 children were in safe places. That went away for a very
23 long time. So this is the reason why we formed Kookum
24 Council, with that idea to protect the children from sexual
25 molestation. There was an issue that came up at that time

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1 that we thought was very important to have. And, and this
2 was made public, so I'm not disclosing anything secret,
3 because that was in the news, it was in the paper, how this
4 child was molested by her grandfather. So we wanted to put
5 a stop to that.

6 MS. WALSH: So that was the impetus for forming
7 the --

8 MS. LAVALLEE: That was --

9 MS. WALSH: -- council?

10 MS. LAVALLEE: -- the formation of our Kookum
11 Council. And at the time, we were very affected and
12 somewhat angry at what's going on in our society and no one
13 is doing anything about it. So that's why that come about.

14 So, so then we did a walk every year, on the 21st
15 of September, that's what we do, we have a walk to create
16 an awareness to stop the sexual abuse of children, or to
17 stop abuse of children --

18 MS. WALSH: Okay.

19 MS. LAVALLEE: -- now, period.

20 MS. WALSH: Thank you. Yes, Billie?

21 And, and I should say that with, with having
22 three of you up there, what I'll do is I will probably
23 address a question to one of you, but then the others
24 should feel free to, to join in, or I might address a
25 question generally and then one of you can indicate you

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1 want to respond.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: Yes, thank you. First, I, I
3 probably need to clarify, from your opening remarks, that I
4 am not here representing a First Nation community. I'm
5 here as, as a grandmother in the Métis community.

6 MS. WALSH: Okay.

7 MS. SCHIBLER: I just wanted to elaborate a
8 little bit more as to what Margaret was saying, because
9 when we looked at, when we looked at this particular
10 situation that she mentioned, we knew that it wasn't an
11 isolated situation. We knew that there was abuses that
12 were occurring against children, sexual exploitation,
13 sexual abuses, incest, that they were occurring in many of
14 our communities, including Winnipeg and that we had been
15 angry and frustrated that we did not see leadership in our
16 communities and that included our own government, our, our
17 mainstream government, doing anything to address these
18 things in, in a way that could ensure the safety of
19 children.

20 When we sat, Margaret and I, and we spoke about
21 this, one of the things that occurred to us is that we, we
22 have come to a time, in our history as a people, that we
23 need to step forward and we need to lead the way and that
24 that is the purpose of our grandmothers' council, is to
25 step forward and lead. And that's why it's important that

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1 the other grandmother councils that have sprung from this
2 council and the grandmother councils that are happening in
3 other countries, with indigenous people all over the world
4 now are coming forward, because it is our rightful place in
5 our indigenous history and, and our ancestry. But it's not
6 just about aboriginal children, it's not just about
7 aboriginal grandmothers. So when Margaret says about,
8 about leading the way and bringing awareness through our
9 medicine walk each year, this year will be our seventh
10 medicine walk and it's really about inviting all to come
11 and walk with us. And it's about empowering grandmothers
12 in all different communities to find their rightful place
13 again as those nurturers, those caregivers, in their
14 families, in their communities and not to sit back and rely
15 on government and leadership to make those decisions and to
16 do what, what we know is right, that it is our place to, to
17 find that voice, to empower others, to find their voice, to
18 be able to step forward for the safety and protection of
19 children. So that was really the whole intent of our
20 grandmother council and that's why we continue today,
21 because there's always a need for it. But it needs to come
22 from a grassroots level and, and it, and it is about
23 empowering others.

24 I, I just want to take a moment to share, briefly
25 what, that our first year, that we came together in the

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1 first year that we were looking at holding our medicine
2 walk. You know, we had talked about many things that we
3 could do as strategies, to try and address this and how do
4 we, how do we address the perpetrators? How do we address
5 the offenders that are offending against our children? And
6 when, you know, we had thought, you know, maybe we should
7 go to the correctional institutions and you know, rally
8 outside and have our voices heard there. And then out
9 of -- it occurred to us that many of those that were
10 incarcerated as offenders against our children were also
11 our children and that many of them had had that history in
12 their own lives.

13 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

14 MS. SCHIBLER: And that year that we began our
15 walk, one of our grandmothers who was a, an elder in the
16 Federal penitentiary here in Manitoba, had sat with the man
17 in that institution and she did a lot of work, as an elder,
18 there and told them about the grandmothers' walk and about
19 what we were doing. And they raised money that year, the
20 inmates did and they also made us a beautiful blanket. And
21 our hearts were touched, our spirits were touched by that,
22 because the message that they gave, when they gave that
23 money and that blanket was that had they have had a
24 grandmother in their life, that could have nurtured them
25 and cared about them and protected them, that their lives

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1 may not have taken the, the path that it did and I thought
2 that was a very powerful statement.

3 MS. WALSH: Thank you. So maybe Anna, can you
4 give us some examples of the kinds of work that the Kookum
5 Council has been doing since it formed?

6 MS. SMITH: Okay.

7 MS. WALSH: You've talked about the walk, but
8 what else?

9 MS. SMITH: We've also gone to different
10 communities to speak to -- invited by different groups out
11 there in the -- there's been other Kookums that have, that
12 organized themselves and asked us to come up. There's been
13 youth groups, schools. We do, every year, workshops and
14 conferences that focus on child sexual exploitation, child
15 sexual abuse, child abuse. We've also had assistance from
16 other people, as well, to do some fundraising because we
17 don't have -- we're, we're not funded. We just kind of do
18 what we do and hope it all and pray it all works out and it
19 usually does, so that kind of stuff.

20 And, and what I wanted to say was that there is a
21 woman at the Faculty of Medicine, the University of
22 Manitoba, that helps us do fundraising, which she takes a
23 hotdog cart and, and raises money and she spends the entire
24 day there, or an entire weekend and that money is taken to
25 a school that the Kookums have chosen to, I, I believe it's

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1 Niji Mahkwa --

2 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah, adopt.

3 MS. SMITH: Yeah, we --

4 MS. WALSH: A school at Dauphin?

5 MS. SMITH: -- have adopted Niji Mahkwa and, and
6 so that we can provide food through the wintertime, so they
7 have hot meals, or you know, having gloves, or just so that
8 they're dressed properly. So that's the kind of work that
9 we do.

10 MS. WALSH: Yes, Billie?

11 MS. SCHIBLER: If I can also just add to that
12 and, and Anna has been really instrumental in, in helping
13 this phase of our grandmothers' work, is that we have also
14 done outreach and we continue to do outreach in the
15 community as, as the grandmothers we partner up with
16 organizations like Nadinawae and they will provide a van
17 for us and they'll take us out as a group, into the
18 community and we, we do outreach to the, the young people
19 who are sexually exploited and are out on the streets
20 working. And we bring them sandwiches and, and coffee and
21 scarves and mitts in the wintertime. It's not just about
22 the girls. It's about our young men as well, who are out
23 there being exploited. And we don't try and, you know,
24 bring them back into, you know, our clutch. What we do is
25 we sit and we'll pray with them. We, we tell them that we

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1 love them and that we care about them and if they need a
2 safe place to be, they can come and they can find us
3 through the Thunderbird House, the Circle of Life
4 Thunderbird House, because we know so many of our young
5 people that are lost onto the streets, they just don't
6 think that there's anybody in their world, and in their
7 life, that care about them, or, or see them as sacred and
8 we see them as sacred. So that's something we do. And I,
9 I just need to acknowledge that while we don't receive any
10 ongoing funding from anyone, that is something that has
11 been supported through the provincial government, through
12 the Department of Family Services, they do provide us with
13 some money, to be able to do that outreach. So --

14 MS. WALSH: How often are you able to do that
15 outreach?

16 MS. SCHIBLER: It depends on how busy we are
17 doing other grandmother work and holding our fulltime jobs
18 and working with our own families, but we try and do it at
19 least once a year, or if, if we're able to, a couple times
20 a year.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: And are your efforts that
22 you're describing to us directed to aboriginal youth in the
23 main?

24 MS. SCHIBLER: Any, any youth that are out there,
25 any youth that are out there lost and, and being exploited.

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1 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: We know that they've been caught
3 up either in gangs, or they've been caught up in
4 addictions. Many of them have had traumas in their lives
5 that they haven't healed from and they don't see themselves
6 as being valuable anymore. And, and so they're easy
7 targets for exploitation. So we, we just come out and we,
8 you know, we try and nurture them as best as we can and we
9 just want to tell them that we love them and that we care
10 about them --

11 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

12 MS. SCHIBLER: -- and that if they're ever ready
13 to, you know, to come and see us, if they ever need to come
14 and see us, that we will help them in any way that we can.
15 And you know, sometimes they just sit and they cry with us
16 and sometimes they just, you know, take what we're offering
17 in the way of hot coffee, sandwiches, mitts and scarves
18 and, and they just thank us and we move on. We don't want
19 to put them at jeopardy, because we know that a lot of them
20 are being put out there to work and but for the most part,
21 those that are exploiting them have been pretty respectful
22 of not approaching when we've been there --

23 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

24 MS. SCHIBLER: -- and, and we haven't been
25 threatened in any way by any of the people out on the

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1 streets that are working them out on the streets. So it's
2 been a pretty safe environment and we are grateful for
3 Nadinawae to spend that time and take us to those places
4 that they know where our young people are.

5

6 BY MS. WALSH:

7 MS. WALSH: Maybe just tell the Commissioner what
8 Nadinawae is?

9 MS. SCHIBLER: Nadinawae is an organization, a
10 grassroots organization that works with youth in the
11 community, many of whom have been out on the streets
12 already, have started, you know, have begun to fall the
13 crack, cracks of the child welfare system, have come from
14 major traumas in their home life, in their family life and
15 where they provide them support, they provide them
16 residence, they provide them resources.

17 MS. WALSH: Anna, you wanted to say something?

18 MS. LAVALLEE: I do.

19 MS. WALSH: Or Margaret.

20 MS. LAVALLEE: I, I just wanted to make a
21 comment. When the first time that we had gone out to, on
22 the streets, the Kookums went out on the streets to give
23 this, give these things to the girls who were working, it
24 was in February. It was a very cold night in February and
25 it was kind of storming and it was a eye opener for me,

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1 because it was late at night and, and I was thinking this
2 is our, our big city. A lot of people are warm in their
3 homes and, and, and safe. These children were not safe and
4 these children needed someone and there were some that were
5 as young as 12, 12 years old and so it was definitely an
6 eye opener for me that there's a big need out there to try
7 to help these kids off of the streets. And consequently,
8 we have done a lot of work with, with those girls and we
9 have a, a program from Thunderbird House called Sacred
10 Buds. The Sacred Buds are for, for the young girls that
11 are up and coming into womanhood and it's our
12 responsibility, as the Kookums, to, to try and meet their
13 needs and answer their questions and in a traditional way
14 and I think that is so, so important for a change in their
15 lifestyle, to have grandmothers coming in and teaching them
16 the rights of passage, for example. They had never heard
17 that before. So we have different topics each time that we
18 meet with the girls and it is something that really touched
19 my, my heart towards the end of the year of this project,
20 when they graduated from the, the program and you could see
21 the effect that it had on them. You could see that they
22 had learnt something and they were excited about it. And
23 they had made skirts, traditional skirts and they were
24 wearing them that night, when the graduated. And people,
25 the parents even came out, some of them, not all of them,

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1 but some of them came out. And so that is something that
2 we think of, of grandmothers that need, we need to do that
3 more and more with the young people. That is why we'd like
4 to make some recommendation -- I don't know if I do that
5 now, or towards the end of the session.

6 MS. WALSH: Go ahead. Go ahead now if you want.
7 I mean, I am certainly going to finish our session with you
8 by asking for recommendations, but specific to what you're
9 discussing right now, please go ahead.

10 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah. I, I wanted to really
11 emphasize and make a recommendation now and, and towards
12 the, the end of the, the end of the session, is to have a
13 place for healing for children and families within the
14 urban area, because I think it's warranted for that, for
15 that kind of, of healing centre and to name the healing
16 centre under Phoenix Sinclair Healing Centre, because we've
17 heard so much about Phoenix. She has been in our minds and
18 hearts for a very long time and it really hurts to see that
19 little girl in the paper all the time, but it's a constant
20 reminder how we fail, how the system fails children. And
21 that's what we hope to happen with this inquiry.

22 There are several other things that we'd like to
23 address.

24 MS. WALSH: Okay. And we'll, we'll, we'll come
25 back to that, thank you.

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1 MS. LAVALLEE: Okay.

2 MS. WALSH: And I know that you wanted to step
3 in?

4 MS. SMITH: I did. I just wanted to expand on
5 what Billie was saying about the Kookums' outreach. Like,
6 we do, as the original Kookums Council, at least twice a
7 year. We try to -- we talked about four times a year, but
8 the Kookums that were, originally sat back in March -- or
9 pardon me, February 2007, they formed Kookums' councils,
10 but they also do outreach. So it's constant. It, it's --
11 like, I just spoke to a woman yesterday that there was two
12 Kookums out last Friday and there will be two Kookums out
13 next Friday. So it's constant, it's not just, you know,
14 the --

15 MS. WALSH: Right.

16 MS. SMITH: -- grandmothers that sit here, but
17 it's all the Kookums' councils in Winnipeg.

18 MS. WALSH: What are you able to say about the
19 impact of this outreach, the kinds of things you're
20 describing to us? Billie?

21 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I, I think -- and one of the
22 things I do need to acknowledge as well is that when, when
23 the Sacred Buds program began to work with the young ones
24 and, and I need to also emphasize that it's not just about
25 aboriginal children --

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1 MS. SMITH: Um-hum.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: -- it's about all, all of our
3 young people --

4 MS. SMITH: Um-hum.

5 MS. SCHIBLER: -- our young, our young girls, our
6 youth that really need to find their way again and know
7 their sacredness and that's what the teachings are all
8 about, is about helping them to know that they are sacred,
9 that they, that they have rights to be kept safe and to not
10 be exploited and that, that they need to celebrate that
11 sacredness in them. And, and you know, as Margaret was
12 saying about, you know, seeing the change in them, seeing
13 the spirit come back into their eyes. Seeing them want to
14 make better choices in their lives, seeing them want to
15 stay away from all of those things that took them down
16 those dark paths and being able to find the strength now to
17 be able to say no, because that's really what it's all
18 about, is about us, as Kookums, helping them to find their
19 voice, to say I'm sacred, I'm taking my power back. I'm
20 saying no to all of these abuses and so that's a powerful
21 piece of the work that we do and the outreach that we do.

22 When Margaret described, you know, some of the
23 things that she saw in that first trip out, we talked about
24 that, because we say, you know, people in the general
25 public have no idea.

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1 MS. SMITH: Um-hum.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: They have no idea what goes on on
3 our streets. They have no idea how many of our children
4 are being used and abused --

5 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

6 MS. SCHIBLER: -- out there and to the degree of
7 which they're being used and abused. They see the murals
8 of our young ones that have been murdered or missing. It
9 doesn't resonate with them. When we have those campaigns
10 that say what if this was your daughter? What if this was
11 your sister? All of those things, people think about it
12 for awhile, but they don't realize that this could be
13 anybody's daughter and this could be anybody's sister, that
14 these kids are out there, it's real, it's live, it's
15 happening all around us. And some of the places that we
16 went to, to do that outreach to, are places that are so
17 remote in our core area, places where there's, like, empty
18 buildings on dark streets, near railway tracks where nobody
19 goes, except those that are being worked on the streets and
20 those that are coming to buy what it is that they have.
21 That's what goes there. So you see the vulnerability of
22 our young people when they're on those corners, when
23 they're out there by those, those empty, abandoned
24 buildings. If they had to call out for help, no one would
25 hear them. No one would hear them.

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1 But we're fortunate in, in some of the work with
2 the Sacred Buds that, you know, a proposal has gone in, for
3 the past couple years, to the Canadian Women's Foundation
4 and they have provided money to us, as grandmothers,
5 through the Circle of Life Thunderbird House, to keep that
6 program running. So I just want to be able to acknowledge
7 them. Migwetch.

8 MS. WALSH: Thank you.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: I, I hear you, that the, these
10 services and these good works that you're doing are for all
11 young people and all young girls that are out there. We
12 also heard this morning from Sherri, something, the
13 Commission counsel, the statistics of the number of
14 children in care and the high proportion of aboriginal
15 children that are involved.

16 MS. SCHIBLER: Um-hum.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Would those that you're
18 encountering on the streets, in these dark corners and so
19 on, are, are they a high preponderance of, of aboriginal
20 young people?

21 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely, yes. Yes, they, they
22 certainly far outnumber any of the other --

23 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

24 MS. SCHIBLER: -- cultural base, but yes, that's
25 primarily. And, and it's not just, as I say, it's not just

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1 girls --

2 THE COMMISSIONER: No.

3 MS. SCHIBLER: -- it's, it's our transgender,
4 it's our, it's our, our young boys that are being exploited
5 out there as well.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: And --

7 MS. SCHIBLER: People don't often think about how
8 many of our young boys have been put out on the streets and
9 have, have been manipulated by predators. It happens all
10 the time.

11

12 BY MS. WALSH:

13 MS. WALSH: So now --

14 THE COMMISSIONER: And, and do you know whether a
15 lot of those young aboriginal children have come from
16 reserve and are mystified by their arrival in the urban
17 environment? Are they -- is, is, is, is, is that the
18 background of a lot of them?

19 MS. SCHIBLER: Some of them. Some of them have
20 come from the child welfare system and --

21 MS. LAVALLEE: Some of them just come in for
22 medical appointments and they stay in the city for
23 awhile and they get exploited by the public system.
24 And --

25

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1 BY MS. WALSH:

2 MS. WALSH: What do you mean when you say that?

3 MS. LAVALLEE: -- it's really, really difficult
4 for young girls to come in for a medical appointment and
5 they, and they get into a taxi and they get sexually
6 exploited during that time. Because we've had people come
7 to us to tell us that.

8 MS. SMITH: And we've also had and know of young
9 people that are recruited from the reserves and brought
10 into the city, exploited in the city and taken back to the
11 communities.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Those are, those -- that's
13 very helpful to me.

14 And Commission counsel will continue with her
15 questioning?

16 MS. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

17

18 BY MS. WALSH:

19 MS. WALSH: This is very much a, a dialogue
20 amongst all of us. So this is a big question, but, in your
21 view, what has led these young people to be so vulnerable?
22 I, I'm sure there --

23 MS. LAVALLEE: History --

24 MS. WALSH: -- isn't one single answer, but if
25 you can --

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1 MS. LAVALLEE: -- history of, of what happened,
2 the colonization, the oppression and some people say it's
3 poverty that leads this kind of happenings with our people.
4 I'm very careful when I say poverty. Within our own
5 traditional laws and our own traditional culture, poverty
6 is not the same definition as it is in English.

7 MS. WALSH: Okay. What -- would you tell us
8 what --

9 MS. LAVALLEE: Poverty --

10 MS. WALSH: -- it is?

11 MS. LAVALLEE: -- if someone is going through
12 that kind of experience in traditional law, is because you
13 have lost your parents or have lost your siblings, or have
14 lost someone through death. That is what we say poverty
15 is, poor families --

16 MS. WALSH: Yes.

17 MS. LAVALLEE: -- that don't have that kind of
18 loving and nurturing that one should have and receive. But
19 poverty, in our definition, in a dominant society means
20 being without money --

21 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

22 MS. LAVALLEE: -- and it's more materialistic
23 than it is what we define poverty.

24 MS. WALSH: And so, within your definition, a, a
25 traditional definition of poverty, are you seeing that as

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1 one of the reasons why you're finding these children on the
2 streets, because they, they have a deficit in their --

3 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

4 MS. WALSH: -- family situation?

5 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

6 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely. I think --

7 MS. WALSH: All right.

8 MS. SCHIBLER: -- I think it's also important to
9 note that many of our young people are very limited in
10 resources, even, even in our, in some of our communities,
11 where they're trying to get from one community to another.
12 There may not be transportation available for them to do
13 that. They go and they try and get rides and they're
14 vulnerable. And we know that a lot of our young people are
15 being exploited out in communities, urban, urban
16 exploitation happens, but rural and remote exploitation
17 happens in large degrees as well. People pick our girls
18 up, our young men up, give them rides, but expect a favour
19 in return. That's happening all the time. And, and so
20 when we talk about restoring the sacredness in our young
21 people, it's because it's been taken by somebody.

22 And when we talk about some of the causes that
23 lead to that, I can assure you that racism is alive and
24 well. People have developed -- and, and nobody wants to
25 talk about that, nobody even wants to --

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1 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: -- acknowledge that, but it's
3 alive and well, I can assure you. And it's alive not just
4 in the child welfare system, but in many of our service
5 systems. It's alive in the work environment. But for our
6 young people, you can be sure that many of our young people
7 know that they are not valued by --

8 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

9 MS. SCHIBLER: -- society. That if you are an
10 aboriginal young girl, that people think you're free for
11 the taking. If you're 12, you're 10, and you're not there
12 with your family, to protect you, you're on your own,
13 you're free for the taking. It's just another aboriginal
14 young girl. It's just an aboriginal boy. Nobody sees them
15 for their sacredness and their value. And we experience
16 that all the time, we hear it from our young people --

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

18 MS. SCHIBLER: -- all the time.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: When you say nobody wants to
20 talk about it, I want you to talk about it here --

21 MS. WALSH: Yes.

22 MS. SCHIBLER: Okay.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: -- because hopefully we've got
24 an avenue to try to make some recommendations to do
25 something about it.

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: Thank you, thank you.

2 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes, thank you.

3

4 BY MS. WALSH:

5 MS. WALSH: So maybe what we can do to address it
6 is a couple of things. Margaret talked about, started to
7 talk about the impact of colonialism and residential
8 schools. So perhaps we can go back to that. And then also
9 to just be more specific about, when you say the sacredness
10 is gone, why is the sacredness gone? And then finally,
11 what are your recommendations to address this very specific
12 issue of racism and how it's affecting children?

13 Maybe, Anna, you want to start?

14 MS. SMITH: Well, as Billie was talking, I was
15 thinking, you know, of different instances where children
16 or youth have experienced being sexually assaulted,
17 exploited, put to the streets, sold for drugs, young --
18 different stuff and it's with, with taxi drivers, you know,
19 police officers. They're everywhere and, and exploiting
20 our, our youth and the attitude is -- and this has been sad
21 and been heard, what's the problem, she's just an Indian.
22 You know and, and that's as recent as about a year ago, six
23 months ago. You know, it's, it, it happens.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: What happens?

25 MS. SMITH: When the attitude towards the youth,

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1 like, the, the young people or the women is what's the
2 problem, she's just an Indian.

3 You know, so and, and speaking with the
4 sacredness of, you know, what Billie was talking about
5 again, is, is the sacredness is gone, the feeling of being
6 sacred. You know, in, in our teachings, every human being,
7 every life and, and it's not just the human beings, but
8 every life is sacred, you know, and there's a purpose for
9 everyone. And it's taken in a snap, it's taken in an
10 instant, you know, from our young people, from our
11 children, when they're raped, when they're molested, you
12 know, when they're physically assaulted. They're little
13 children, they can't defend themselves.

14 So their spirit is affected, their sacredness is
15 affected and that lasts a lifetime.

16 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

17 MS. SMITH: So it takes a lot of healing and a
18 lot of work and then going back and what will help is going
19 back to our traditional laws and our traditional laws say
20 everybody is sacred, so we need to begin from there.

21

22 BY MS. WALSH:

23 MS. WALSH: Billie?

24 MS. SCHIBLER: If I can just follow-up with what
25 Anna is saying, in our traditional teachings about our, our

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1 communities, the children are seen to be the spirit of the
2 community.

3 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

4 MS. SCHIBLER: They are that fire, that sacred
5 fire that sits in the circle. The children are seen as the
6 sacred fire. They are the spirit. And when you don't have
7 the spirit in your community anymore, all sacredness is
8 gone. When we look at our communities and we see what
9 happened as an effect of residential school -- and see, for
10 so many people, they don't understand. They hear the words
11 "residential school" and they start to cringe because they
12 think it's all about, okay, so the, these abuses happened,
13 you know, in these residential facilities and, you know,
14 and people never got over it kind of thing and now the
15 government has had to pay out all this money and yada,
16 yada. They don't understand the full impact of that. When
17 you have communities where your children are taken and
18 placed in residential school, you've taken the spirit from
19 those communities. You've taken the sacredness from those
20 communities. You've taken everything that has given those
21 communities purpose. Our teachings say as long as you have
22 a child in your life, you will always have purpose and
23 meaning for life. So when you take that away from your
24 communities, your communities suffer.

25 MS. WALSH: And many --

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: And we see that.

2 MS. WALSH: -- generations later, is that --

3 MS. SCHIBLER: And we --

4 MS. WALSH: -- impact still felt?

5 MS. SCHIBLER: -- absolutely, because what ends
6 up happening is you lose your ability to, number one, be
7 able to make decisions for the generations to come, because
8 you've lost that spirit in your community. You start to
9 feel the pains and the emptiness that exists within you and
10 you start to abuse yourself and others. And then, when the
11 children come back and the residential schools are no more,
12 you had generations of people that have lost their ability
13 to parent and don't know how to recapture and restore the
14 sacredness. And so we see, we're seeing the residue of
15 that. We see that generational impact of those situations
16 and so now it carries on with our own people abusing their
17 children, not knowing how to protect their children, not
18 knowing the sacredness of their children, because they have
19 lost that in themselves as well. So --

20 THE COMMISSIONER: And do you see any solution to
21 that? And I speak as the first Chief Commissioner of
22 residential school settlements. I was the first
23 commissioner for five years when the program -- so I know
24 about the, the money side of it. But I'm interested in the
25 side of it that you're talking about and how are you going

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1 to get, how -- what, what's the answer, if there is one, to
2 get back what has been taken of that sacred nature of which
3 you speak?

4 MS. LAVALLEE: I think, if we go back and look at
5 our own traditional laws in our society as they were at one
6 time and that's bringing, picking up our sacred bundles. I
7 think, for me, that's the answer. And probably the only
8 answer for that part. But there are other parts where I
9 think children have a right to education. Every child in
10 Manitoba has a right to a good education. Our children
11 don't have that opportunity in communities.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: When you speak in communities,
13 you mean on reserves?

14 MS. LAVALLEE: Reserves. They don't have that
15 opportunity to have the right to have an, a good education.
16 And that happens time and time again when -- I, I had a, I
17 have a granddaughter who lived up in the north, and grew up
18 in the north and she came to live with me and went to
19 college here. And it was very difficult for her, the first
20 year, because the, the standards are so different. And she
21 shared with me that the teacher they had in the high
22 school, before she graduated, in mathematics, was from
23 China and he didn't speak the language very well, so he was
24 very hard to understand and he only passed the ones that he
25 really liked. But she said, we didn't even write an exam.

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1 We were just passed. So that's what I'm talking about.
2 That's what I'm talking about. These kids have a right to
3 a good education, just like the rest of the people in
4 Manitoba.

5 We don't have enough of those things going on.
6 That's why we need to do something about it as Kookums, to
7 be able to bring back those traditional laws that's so
8 needed in our communities. That's part of it. It's, it's
9 a small part, but it's a very important part.

10 And we have to find out our history. Can you
11 believe, in our curriculum, way back when, we didn't know
12 about our history. I knew, when I was going to school, I
13 knew about Jesus Christ and Jerusalem. I knew the rituals
14 of the Catholic Church. I didn't learn much about
15 academics, because I was too busy cleaning up the place in
16 which we lived. That's what we had to learn, you see.

17 But that has to change now. We have to change
18 and we have to keep changing to be able to have a healthy
19 place for children to learn academics. That's one part.

20 And yeah, we do have a happy story, much of our,
21 our, our young people are going back to school and in, in,
22 in, in urban area and they're looking at different careers.
23 They're looking at law, they're looking at medicine.
24 They're looking at nursing. And we have many people
25 graduating now in, in these professions. So that's the

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1 happy story, but we still need to do more of, of our own
2 little ones that are suffering, like people in a situation
3 where Phoenix was and that little girl lost her life
4 because of the failure of, of the system.

5 And we -- you gave us permission to talk about
6 racism. And it's very evident in our province, in our
7 city, of how rampant it is. And racism hurts, it really
8 hurts the people, because we have to face that on a daily
9 basis. We want to implement cultural safety in healthcare
10 systems.

11

12 BY MS. WALSH:

13 MS. WALSH: What does that mean?

14 MS. LAVALLEE: In healthcare system?

15 MS. WALSH: Cultural safety, what do you mean?

16 MS. LAVALLEE: Cultural safety?

17 MS. WALSH: Yes, what do you mean by that? What,
18 what would that look like?

19 MS. LAVALLEE: That means that if anyone is
20 coming to get help in the healthcare system, they have to
21 be safe in that environment. And I could cite many
22 examples of how many people face racism. We need to also
23 have cultural safety in schools. So those are really
24 important for our society to begin that healing journey.

25 And part of that is this, this inquiry,

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1 unfortunately, the loss of a little girl brought this
2 inquiry for people to come and talk about some of the
3 issues that we face on a daily basis. So this is our
4 opportunity to do that. There are many recommendations,
5 there are many issues we have to address and probably we
6 could go on forever with that, but I know you don't have
7 the time. So ...

8 MS. WALSH: Billie?

9 MS. SCHIBLER: If I can just add to a couple
10 things that Margaret was saying. First of all, I, I just
11 want to add to the cultural safety. I think the easiest
12 way to be able to define that is that if you're in a
13 setting and they ask you your cultural background, when
14 you're heart jumps into your throat and you think to
15 yourself, should I? Should I say who I really am? Or what
16 I really am? Is this a safe environment? Will this be
17 detrimental to me, to say that I am aboriginal? Then you
18 know that there's issues around cultural safety. That's
19 what we're talking about. It's not a place and time yet
20 where we can feel the kind of pride that we need to and
21 know that we can walk with our head up and say we're
22 aboriginal people and that that's a good thing. Because
23 people seem to want to look for dysfunctions in us, if we
24 identify that we're aboriginal people, they want to look
25 for the dysfunctions. Where do they exist? How much

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1 healing has your family been through in order to get you to
2 the place that you're at right now? That's what we talk
3 about when we say cultural safety.

4 MS. WALSH: So how is that achieved in, in
5 schools, in healthcare settings? What do we need to do to
6 promote that?

7 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I, I think one of the things
8 is, as, as Margaret was saying, we need to be able to find
9 ways to replace that, that spirit, bring that spirit back
10 to life, bring (phonetic) that, bring that pride about who
11 they are. Help people know their history, know the beauty
12 of their traditions and not be afraid of it. We've got a
13 lot of people now, we've got a lot of diversity within our
14 communities, within our aboriginal people and that's good.
15 Diversity is good. As long as there is a part of you that
16 doesn't still carry a lot of shame around being an
17 aboriginal person. We need to do that healing so that
18 people can celebrate. You know what, I might not practice
19 those ways, but that was a part of me, it's a part of my
20 bloodline. It's a part of my history. When I hear that
21 drum, something wakes up in me and I feel good about that.

22 MS. WALSH: So you're talking about education and
23 healing?

24 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely.

25 MS. WALSH: And just on a very practical basis,

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1 how is that, how, how should that take place? Who, who
2 would deliver that education and that healing?

3 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I think a lot of it needs to
4 be delivered, as Margaret said, in the schools. I think
5 there has to be a lot of that changed in the curriculum.
6 But I think that, I think that everyone has -- I, I --
7 where does it all begin? I don't know. I mean, we have to
8 remember that it hasn't been all that long that we have had
9 programs that will help our people to be able to get the
10 education that they deserve. You know, I have children
11 myself who are adults, that, that the, the school system
12 just fell away for them. And I know that, in the community
13 that we lived in, they were the aboriginal kids. They
14 weren't the mainstream children and I know, I know, for a
15 fact, that the school did not invest in them, because they
16 saw them as aboriginal children. And so, if you don't see
17 the value in our aboriginal people, how well you promote
18 it? And it becomes a, a struggle for many of our families.
19 And when you look at our families that live in the core
20 area of the city, people see them as being lost. How much,
21 how much emphasis goes into helping those families heal?
22 We're only a grandmothers' council. We can't do it all.

23 When we look at the programs that are now being
24 designed specifically for those adults who, those young
25 people under the age of 35, or whatever, who got lost in

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1 those systems, to be able to come back and now try and, and
2 be supported in getting their, their, their education and
3 knowing their identity, there's small numbers of programs,
4 by comparison, to how many of our people are out there.
5 And there's a limited amount of funding. And all of our
6 grassroots programs are vying for funding on annual basis.
7 And so that's where the difference is being made. It's not
8 in the mainstream government services. It's our grassroots
9 services that are --

10 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

11 MS. SCHIBLER: -- making the difference --

12 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

13 MS. SCHIBLER: -- but they have to fight for
14 dollars every year and they have to be able to demonstrate
15 their effectiveness. Well, some of their effectiveness is
16 not going to show up for generations --

17 MS. WALSH: Right. That was the question --

18 MS. SCHIBLER: -- just like the damage is still
19 going for generations.

20 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

21 MS. SCHIBLER: And I think that has to be really
22 recognized. When we talk about culturally appropriate,
23 cultural programs, cultural supports, who defines those
24 cultural programs? It's not us defining them. It's the
25 people that are funding us. That's what, how it's defined.

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1 They're not the experts on what our culture is and yet we
2 have to somehow be able to convince the, the funders, the
3 government, that this is a culturally relevant program,
4 that this is a culturally healing program, but it's got to
5 be based on how they define culture.

6 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

7 MS. SCHIBLER: There's a gap right there.

8 MS. WALSH: When you talk about grassroots
9 organizations, you mean community-based agencies and
10 organizations?

11 MS. SCHIBLER: Community-based organizations,
12 we've got a lot of really good programs out there of, you
13 know, our people leading our people, our people helping our
14 own people to heal. They know. You know, I, I can name
15 some of them. I know you will have heard from some of
16 them.

17 MS. WALSH: Sure, go ahead, give us --

18 MS. SCHIBLER: You know, whether it's --

19 MS. WALSH: -- some examples.

20 MS. SCHIBLER: -- the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata
21 Centre, Nadinawae, Ka Ni Kanichihk, there's several like
22 that. And I, and I, I hesitate to leave any out, because
23 there's some really, really good programs out there.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: The Kookum Council, this is all a
25 volunteer --

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1 MS. WALSH: Yes.

2 MS. LAVALLEE: -- program that we have and we, we
3 go out, like, like Billie and, and Anna said, we go out
4 and, and do outreach and the Kookum are volunteers to go
5 to, like, the school, for example, to have a, a program in
6 the school so that, Niji Mahkwa School, so that they have
7 breakfast and they could have lunch and, and socks.

8 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

9 MS. LAVALLEE: And different little items that
10 the kids needs. Believe it or not, some of the kids come
11 in with the same socks on all year.

12 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

13 MS. LAVALLEE: So this is one of the things we
14 wanted to develop, is to have that kind of change of, of
15 clothing for the kids --

16 MS. WALSH: Right.

17 MS. LAVALLEE: -- in the wintertime. So I think
18 that that program, with the Kookum is very important --

19 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

20 MS. LAVALLEE: -- and it's all volunteer, it's
21 all our time devoted to that.

22 MS. WALSH: Just go ahead, Anna, and then I'll,
23 I'll follow-up with some questions. Go ahead.

24 MS. SMITH: Okay. I just wanted to mention one,
25 one other program that's coming out of the Broadway

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1 Community Centre. It was developed by youth. They
2 recognized that because one of them searched for some place
3 to go for, for traditional teachings, you know, and was
4 lucky enough to connect with some people that helped her
5 along the way and then her partner, in developing this
6 program, also recognized the need that, you know, there are
7 so many youth in the community, the city of Winnipeg, that
8 don't have any way to connect to their own culture, their
9 own tradition. So they developed this program and it was
10 named, but forgive me, I can't say it in English, but it's
11 called Turtle Teachings -- I can't say it in Ojibwe. It's
12 called Turtle Teachings. It's on every Wednesday and these
13 youth ask the people who are traditionalists and know the
14 ceremonies, know the culture, to come in, because all they
15 have is tobacco and they do come in.

16 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

17 MS. WALSH: So you're talking about programs that
18 support building identity?

19 MS. SMITH: Building identity and I was just
20 going to get back to, you know, your question earlier,
21 like, how, how do you begin to heal from that, or how do
22 you begin to, well, heal? And it is, it's building up the
23 spirit, it's building up the identity. It's building up
24 the family and not only the nuclear family, but extended
25 family, community family. And it's just rebuilding, you

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1 know, we're there, but sometimes, because of oppression and
2 because of colonization, residential school, all of it,
3 we're scared, as a people, to speak, you know, not -- I say
4 as a people because there's many that are so filled with
5 shame, you know, as who they are and they don't believe
6 themselves worthy of anything, really, except what they
7 live in today, you know, and that's without hope and that's
8 what they need, hope.

9 MS. WALSH: Billie?

10 MS. SCHIBLER: I think also further to that, the
11 role of the grandmothers, because we, because we are small
12 in numbers and we can't do it all, as I mentioned, is about
13 helping to empower others, helping them to know what their
14 roles and responsibilities are at a community level, at a
15 grassroots level. And it is, it has gained an amazing
16 momentum since we began back in 2007 with that first
17 medicine walk, because we know that now those medicine
18 walks are taking place not only throughout different
19 regions in Manitoba, but they're talking place across
20 Canada, in some of our other provinces. And, and in some
21 of the work that I've been able to do with indigenous
22 peoples, in other parts of the world, it's not that we hold
23 all the answers for them and it's not that they have to
24 replicate what it is that we're doing with our children and
25 our communities. But what we do, in helping to build that

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1 awareness, is help people to know this, you know, this
2 isn't just an aboriginal issue, but everybody has a
3 responsibility to build those circles of care around
4 children. Everybody has the responsibility to build the
5 capacity within families and within communities and that's
6 how the healing will begin, if people step up to their
7 responsibilities, if people in other countries start to,
8 again, try and find their history, trying to know their
9 traditional ways. Everybody has traditions and everybody
10 has to find that pride again, but everybody has to know
11 that we are responsible, within our own families, within
12 our own communities, to help one another and to know that
13 we have a role, all of us, to keep those, those sacred
14 children protected. That's everybody's responsibility.

15 And I know that, for many of our services, and
16 you know, I can only speak right now about our services
17 through, through our agencies under the Métis authority,
18 but our responsibility is to help build that capacity
19 within those families and to design programs that we know
20 are effective, that we know are culturally appropriate, not
21 based on what government has defined as culturally
22 appropriate, but what we know will work with our families
23 and about help them to find their pride again. It's
24 very -- and I think I said this in, in phase 2, it's very
25 easy to be a good parent when you've been parented in a

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1 good way, when you had those supports around you, when you
2 know what it's like to be loved and cared for and nurtured,
3 and protected. When you haven't had any of that, where do
4 you begin? And that's those repairs that we need to make
5 within our families and our communities.

6 MS. WALSH: And I know that we're going to hear
7 from, from you again, in terms of the work that the Métis
8 Federation and Authority are doing in that regard, but you
9 said that, that this is everyone's responsibility. So
10 beyond, looking beyond child welfare agency, because we
11 have heard evidence about that and, and maybe you can't
12 talk about it in isolation, but who else then has
13 responsibility for protecting and promoting children. And
14 specifically, if you can give some examples of what that
15 looks like, what, what it needs to look like?

16 MS. LAVALLEE: Who else has the responsibility?

17 MS. WALSH: Right.

18 MS. SCHIBLER: Can you rephrase that question,
19 sorry?

20 MS. WALSH: Well, beyond, beyond a child welfare
21 agency, you said everybody has a responsibility to protect
22 children, so what does that mean?

23 MS. LAVALLEE: I think in a, in a traditional
24 law, everybody meant the aunts and the uncles were very
25 responsible for looking after the children, the aunties and

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1 the uncles were responsible for that. Also were
2 responsible for discipline and to set boundaries. So mom
3 and dad were always busy doing something or whatever, so it
4 was the aunts and the uncles that did that. And that was
5 one of the laws in communities. But of course, that all
6 went out the door when residential schools started to come
7 in, when the other law started to be implemented, because
8 they didn't think we were doing the right things at one
9 time. That's our history. And, and so much of our
10 traditional laws were kind of put aside.

11 So today, I think everyone, the community, has to
12 bring up, help bring up the children. They -- we have to,
13 to look after other children, so that they don't get hurt.
14 That's what that means. And if you saw a child on the
15 street that was in danger, that's your -- my responsibility
16 to do something about it.

17 MS. WALSH: Right.

18 MS. LAVALLEE: You -- we try to protect the
19 children, that's what that's all about.

20 MS. WALSH: And when we were talking about
21 education and, and curriculum, you were talking about,
22 about having aboriginal content, or information in the
23 curriculum; are you addressing that -- do you think there's
24 a need for, for that to be in the curriculum universally?
25 In other words, you've talked about aboriginal people

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1 needing to have a sense of identity, but is, is it
2 important for non-aboriginal people to have an
3 understanding of what an aboriginal identity is?

4 MS. SMITH: Absolutely, I think so.

5 MS. WALSH: And why is that?

6 MS. SMITH: Before I comment, comment on that and
7 I --

8 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

9 MS. SMITH: -- think it would be equally
10 important for us, as aboriginal people, to understand
11 another person's culture. So it does need to be in the
12 curriculum so that we understand each other. That's the
13 key. Like, we need to understand and, and empathize and
14 care for each other.

15 MS. WALSH: Um-hum. Billie?

16 MS. SCHIBLER: I think it's, it's more than just
17 our own people knowing our own history. I think if we were
18 wanting to expect -- like, we can't do this on our own.
19 Our healing can't happen just on our own. We need to have
20 the understanding, the support, the tolerance of society
21 around us. They have to know and understand our history,
22 to know why we are in the condition that we are in right
23 now and why our healing is necessary, in order to them, for
24 them to totally understand what truth and reconciliation is
25 about. When you have people that are coming, as newcomers,

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1 as immigrants, as, as refugees to our country and part of
2 their orientation is to be told that, that, that Canada's a
3 very accepting place, that there's a lot of tolerance and,
4 and recognition of diversity and, and a celebration of this
5 mosaic of multi-cultures within Canada and you don't have
6 to worry that you would be put at the bottom of the rung
7 because there's already a peoples there and that's the
8 First Nation aboriginal people of this country. And we've
9 been told that by people who have gone through that
10 process, that that's how they were introduced to Canada. I
11 think that's a very sad statement. So when we talk about
12 racism, I think that's a really good example of it. It's
13 there. But it's also a truth. So we know the truths. We
14 know the truths of the effects of residential school. We
15 know the truths of the effects of the loss of culture on
16 our families, on our communities. But in order for us to
17 move beyond that, we have to have other people know our
18 truths as well, so that they can celebrate our
19 reconciliation as well and our healing.

20 I think one of the things I also want to talk
21 about, about the, about the role and responsibility of the
22 grandmothers is that this isn't just a, a female role and
23 responsibility. In our traditions, in our original
24 traditions, it was the women who led. And so even our, our
25 chiefs, in communities, were chose by the clan mothers, who

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1 saw them grow from very small and got to know who were the
2 natural leaders in those, in those communities, as they
3 were children, growing up. They were sanctioned by the
4 clan mothers. So when decisions were made by chiefs and
5 leader and, and council in leadership roles, before those
6 decisions were, were sanctioned, they had to come to the
7 grandmothers, to the clan mothers. We need our men to walk
8 this walk with us, all men, not just aboriginal men. We
9 need all men to walk with us and, and recognize that that's
10 what balance is all about.

11 Nurturing and responsibility to children isn't
12 just a female piece. That is all of our responsibilities.
13 We have many young men who are fathering on their own. We
14 saw that with Phoenix's birth father, who tried --

15 MS. WALSH: Yes.

16 MS. SCHIBLER: -- to take care of her on his own.
17 We know that there needs to be that good balance of
18 nurturing and support that comes from and goes to our males
19 as well. I have mostly sons. I have many of them. I have
20 mostly grandsons, I have many of them. And so, for me,
21 it's important that I help my sons and my grandsons know
22 and understand their role as men and their responsibilities
23 to the children, but not just the children, but to the
24 women as well. When we look around at our communities that
25 have been damaged and are struggling, we always say and

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1 there's, you know, a Lakota saying that, you know, our,
2 our, our, our communities, our communities are not done
3 until our women's hearts are on the ground. And when your
4 women's hearts are on the ground, you know you're in a lot
5 of trouble. And so that means that our nurturers, our main
6 nurturers, those who carry life, have to be honoured,
7 because only then can they honour the lifes (phonetic)
8 (sic) that they carry. So when you have women who aren't
9 being treated well in our communities, who aren't being
10 recognized for their sacredness of the life, life carrying
11 gift that they have, when they have their own children,
12 they don't know how to transfer good caring to their
13 children, because they, themselves have not been treated
14 well.

15 Our communities that are struggling the most are
16 the ones that don't honour their women and don't honour
17 their children.

18 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

19 MS. SCHIBLER: And, and subsequently, don't
20 honour their elders, so you see some major struggles in
21 those communities. But while I say that, I say that is the
22 importance of us having those programs like the Sacred
23 Buds, because they teach our young ones about their
24 sacredness. They teach our young ones about their roles
25 and responsibilities as young men and young women to each

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1 other, to the lives they bring into this word and we need
2 to go back to those traditions. We need to do that.

3 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

4 MS. WALSH: Thank you. Perhaps this is a good
5 point, Mr. Commissioner, to take the morning break?

6 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Oh, yes.

7 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. You, you were -- you're
8 going to leave some time for other questions if --

9 MS. WALSH: Yes, definitely.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: -- if need be? Yeah.

11 MS. WALSH: Definitely.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Fine. All right. We're going
13 to take a 15 minute break and then just have that to
14 ourselves and then we'll resume right after that.

15 MS. SCHIBLER: Thank you.

16 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

17 MS. WALSH: Thank you.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: You, you can go ahead and
19 leave the stand.

20 MS. LAVALLEE: Oh, okay.

21 MS. SCHIBLER: We can leave, we can come down,
22 Margaret.

23

24 (BRIEF RECESS)

25

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1 MS. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. One
2 thing that I did not mention, Mr. Commissioner, when we
3 started, is that Margaret and Anna are mother and daughter.

4 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh --

5 MS. WALSH: So it's --

6 THE COMMISSIONER: -- nice.

7 MS. WALSH: -- nice to see a, a council of, of
8 grandmothers participate in that way is, is --

9 THE COMMISSIONER: They're all grandmothers?

10 MS. SCHIBLER: All grandmothers.

11 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

12 MS. SMITH: Yes.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: Very nice. Great-grandmothers
14 in the crowd then.

15 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

16 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: I know what you mean, I just
19 became a great-grandfather two weeks ago, for the first
20 time.

21 MS. LAVALLEE: Congratulations.

22 MS. SMITH: (Inaudible).

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: I have six great-grandchildren.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Good for --

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1 MS. WALSH: Wow.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: -- you.

3 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

4

5 BY MS. WALSH:

6 MS. WALSH: And one other thing, can I ask you
7 about the beautiful staffs that you each have brought up?
8 What, what do they signify? Why have you brought them with
9 you today?

10 MS. SCHIBLER: They were gifted to us during the
11 first year that we came together as a council. They were
12 gifted to us for our medicine walk and our staffs, when,
13 when we come into places with staffs, it usually represents
14 strength and leadership. And so we walk with them. Each
15 one is adorned based on who we are, in our traditional way.
16 So the colours of our ribbons, the sacred items that are
17 attached to them, our eagle feathers, anything that's on
18 them, represents who we are in our traditional, in our
19 traditional identity.

20 So Anna had identified herself through her
21 traditional name, which translates to?

22 MS. SMITH: Nightly Moon Woman.

23 MS. WALSH: What is that again?

24 MS. SMITH: Nightly Moon Woman.

25 MS. WALSH: Oh, okay.

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: And mine is Bawakakiakway
2 (phonetic), which is Purple Harvest Woman. And --

3 MS. LAVALLEE: Mine is Washashkabeeka (phonetic).
4 That means Water Lily and I'm of Bear Clan.

5 MS. SCHIBLER: And I'm of the Crane Clan.

6 MS. SMITH: And of course, I'm of the Bear Clan.

7 MS. WALSH: Yes.

8 MS. SMITH: Um-hum.

9 MS. SCHIBLER: So when we walk with these, that's
10 what it represents.

11 MS. WALSH: Okay. Thank you.

12 MS. LAVALLEE: It also represents that we're sun
13 dancers. We've danced, I've danced for 19 years.

14 MS. WALSH: What, what is the sun dance?

15 MS. LAVALLEE: It's a sacred dance that we dance
16 each year around June, ours', this coming June again. We
17 dance for four days without food and water and it's all
18 about the sacredness of our life and to give thanks to the
19 creator for giving us this beautiful way of life. And we
20 have probably about a hundred and twenty dancers in our, in
21 our dance group, from young to old.

22 MS. WALSH: All women?

23 MS. SCHIBLER: No.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: No.

25 MS. WALSH: Men and women?

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: Men and women, youth. We have a
2 lot of youth that have now come to, to do that dance,
3 because they want to celebrate the gift of that life that
4 they've been given and they want to find their traditional
5 ways. Because that was one of the ceremonies for us that
6 was outlawed for so long. It had to go underground and,
7 and just like our, our bundles and our pipes had to, had to
8 be put to rest for awhile because, because it was outlawed
9 and we couldn't pick up those, those sacred bundles and we
10 couldn't have our sweat lodges or our ceremonies. So now
11 we're, we're bringing them back together again and you
12 know, for our -- because I belong to two different sun
13 dances. So one's an international sun dance, which brings
14 people from all over the four corners of mother earth
15 together. So you don't just have to be aboriginal to be
16 part of any of our --

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

18 MS. SCHIBLER: -- sun dances. But and the one
19 locally here, up at Sagkeeng, that Margaret and Anna also
20 dance at, they're now coming to bring the grandmothers in
21 to lead the opening each day, to sit with our pipes to
22 begin the ceremony. So our, our male sun dance leaders are
23 also now knowing the importance of returning back to that
24 respectful way of traditions, in helping bringing the women
25 together to lead.

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1 MS. WALSH: So let me ask you this, it sounds
2 like increasingly, there are opportunities for aboriginal
3 people to retrieve their aboriginal values and, and
4 experiences; what are you seeing, in terms of how receptive
5 the youth are, to participating in those traditional
6 experiences?

7 MS. SCHIBLER: They love it. They, they love it.
8 You see them just come alive when they get to know who they
9 are. They come in very reluctantly at first, because
10 they're not sure, they're not familiar, but when they start
11 to know and you know, as we say, I mean, many of our young
12 people out there who are non-aboriginal, are coming to seek
13 these ways because it's helping their spirits to heal as
14 well. So they come and, and they know that there's a place
15 for them, where they're accepted, where they can celebrate
16 who they are and what their life is about.

17 MS. WALSH: And is that what it is that promotes
18 the healing, the, the acceptance?

19 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

20 MS. SMITH: Um-hum. It's part of it.

21 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah.

22 MS. SMITH: A huge part of it.

23 MS. WALSH: Is there an aboriginal perspective on
24 what it takes to protect and, and nurture children? How,
25 how would you describe that, if there is such a

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1 perspective? Maybe, Anna, do you want to start?

2 MS. SMITH: Well, I'm just thinking, my mom is,
3 would be the perfect person to answer to that --

4 MS. WALSH: All right.

5 MS. SMITH: -- because it's -- she talks about
6 the, the nine moons, the nine moons teaching and I think
7 that's, would be relevant here.

8 MS. WALSH: Would you tell us about that,
9 Margaret?

10 MS. SMITH: The nine moons.

11 MS. LAVALLEE: Oh, yeah. Oh dear, we have, we
12 have so many teachings to, to help adults and old people
13 and the very young people to restore their way of life.
14 One of them is the medicine wheel, of course, and the rules
15 and responsibilities of the medicine wheel. And if you
16 want to really learn about it, then they have to be part of
17 that group, a part of that, that nation, to, to come
18 together and learn about it.

19 Then we have another one called the nine moons.
20 If all of us, in our society, in the First Nations and
21 Métis society decided that this was the way they want to go
22 and they want to learn about it, we wouldn't have time to
23 go out and do drugs, alcohol, wouldn't have time for sexual
24 exploitation of, of children, because you'd be so busy
25 learning what there is in that nine moons teaching. And

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1 it's all about life, it's all about life. And it's all
2 about the laws of, our laws.

3 The first one that -- I'll just do the one and
4 there are nine moons. The first one is called learning of
5 the sun. And you have to stay in that moon for 12 years to
6 learn what the sun does for you and what it does for the
7 family, what it does for the earth, what it does for the
8 environment. So that takes 12 years. It -- each moon
9 takes 12 years to learn what those teachings are. So if we
10 were to go back to that and that's what we're talking about
11 all along, was the sacred bundle, to bring it back and
12 teach the young people and the old folks too, about these
13 laws. And it's a door opening to a healthier lifestyle for
14 sure.

15 MS. WALSH: So what do you need to -- are you
16 doing that now? This teaching is going on now?

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes, some of it is going now, but
18 there's just not enough yet. So if we begin doing it all
19 the time, we would have a great time.

20 MS. WALSH: Billie?

21 MS. LAVALLEE: We would eliminate all of our
22 problems.

23 MS. WALSH: Wow.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: Because you know what, in all of
25 the information I have received in the area of health,

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1 because that's been my life all my life --

2 MS. WALSH: Yes.

3 MS. LAVALLEE: -- all my career, we're the
4 highest in suicide among the youth --

5 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

6 MS. LAVALLEE: -- the First Nations and Métis.
7 We're the highest. We're the highest in diabetes,
8 according to that information and research have been done.
9 We're getting to be the highest in, in HIV and all of those
10 diseases that affect the people on cancer, we're highest in
11 that. So that's pretty scary. And especially if you're
12 looking at diabetes among the people, even children have
13 type 2 diabetes now. So we have, we're just beginning to
14 look at those kinds of health issues that are affecting us
15 and that has to change somehow. We have to change that.

16 It -- not, not even looking at the social
17 illnesses.

18 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

19 MS. LAVALLEE: The social illnesses like sexual
20 exploitation, not even looking at that, just looking at
21 the, some of the diseases that affect the people.

22 MS. WALSH: Billie, did you want to address what
23 needs, what you need to, to be able to do this teaching, to
24 address these illnesses?

25 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I, I just wanted to add

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1 further to what Margaret was saying, because I think it's
2 really important, as we talk about some of the damages that
3 have been done to our aboriginal people over history. The
4 things that Margaret is talking about, about health
5 outcomes and that's affecting, like she mentioned, not just
6 our First Nation communities, but our Métis people as well,
7 was when dominant society determined that, that there were
8 certain things that we needed in our lives and in our
9 health that didn't recognize and support our traditional
10 way. And I know that when I lived in Northern Ontario, up
11 in James Bay, we saw that quite a bit, where even when our,
12 our, our seniors, our elders were moving into seniors'
13 homes, that the, that the diet in those homes had to be
14 government approved. You couldn't, you weren't allowed to
15 bring into those facilities the traditional foods of the
16 land and of the people. And it made our old people sick,
17 because they weren't used to that food. They weren't used
18 to that store bought food. In our traditional foods, we
19 had, we -- I'm not sure what's happening. We had
20 everything we needed for the balance in our body. And even
21 if we didn't have milk, we had things that you get from
22 milk --

23 MS. SMITH: Um-hum.

24 MS. SCHIBLER: -- in other foods that we, we ate.
25 And so now that everything's shifted away from our

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1 traditional diets, our traditional ways, we've been, our
2 bodies, genetically, have been very, very affected by the
3 things that are, we know are not good for us, but have
4 become part of mainstream diet. So when you combine that
5 with the fact that yes, now we do feed our children milk
6 and so forth, because we can't get our traditional foods
7 the way that we would have, but you go into First Nation
8 communities and you know that, to buy a jug of milk, is
9 absolutely unaffordable. It's absolutely unaffordable.
10 It's cheaper for you to buy pop and Kool-aid for your
11 children, than to buy a jug of milk. How does this make
12 sense? And I, I think I may have spoken about that in
13 phase 2. I can't recall, where you know, if, if
14 governments can regulate the cost of alcohol through Liquor
15 Control Commissions, why can't they regulate the cost of
16 milk throughout the province, so that the ones that we know
17 are having the most difficulty eating healthy diets are the
18 ones in our First Nation remote communities, our Inuit
19 communities, all of those places. It's unaffordable and
20 it's inaccessible.

21 MS. WALSH: And we're going to talk this
22 afternoon with witnesses specifically about food security
23 and remote communities and Inner-City communities.

24 MS. SCHIBLER: So it comes back to the teachings
25 that we have, when Margaret talks about some of these

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1 things, about when you're, when you're looking at your
2 medicine wheel teachings, when you're looking at any of
3 these traditional teachings, it's about the balance in, in
4 mind, body and spirit. It's about making sure that, you
5 know, you're feeding your body in a healthy way, to be able
6 to feed your mind in a healthy way and then, and you feed
7 your spirit in a healthy way. So all of them have to be
8 connected and they all have to be in balance to be in a
9 healthy way of life.

10 MS. WALSH: Which is, I would say, true for
11 everyone.

12 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely.

13 MS. WALSH: When you're talking about the need to
14 focus on traditional aboriginal values, what does it take
15 to, to bring that teaching to more people, for instance?

16 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I think that Anna and
17 Margaret touched on some of that earlier and you know, when
18 we talk about even recognizing the role of the
19 grandmothers, you know, we've got, when we talk about the
20 balance, we've got a lot of children in our communities
21 that need that circle of care around them.

22 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

23 MS. SCHIBLER: We know we have a role and
24 responsibility as society and, and I just have to clarify,
25 when Margaret talks about a system failing Phoenix, it's

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1 not just about a government system. It's about the, the
2 system of, of people, of society around our children, that
3 they, that we have resources available, we have a lot of
4 elders. They don't have to just be the grandmothers'
5 council. We've got people that sit in seniors' homes that
6 just wait there until they die, where they don't know their
7 purpose in life anymore because they are isolated from
8 families, they're isolated from communities, but they carry
9 a lot of wisdom and they carry a lot of knowledge and
10 history. And they still, many of them, know how to
11 nurture. And so you've got these children that need that
12 and you've got these elders that can give that.

13 MS. WALSH: So how do you make those connections?
14 Or what's been the --

15 MS. SCHIBLER: We've seen it.

16 MS. WALSH: -- impediment?

17 MS. SCHIBLER: We've seen it happen. We've seen
18 programs and I remember years ago, with one of the agencies
19 that I worked with, Northwest Child and Family, where we
20 had a Kookums program, where we had, in the, in, around
21 Stella Walk and Charles Walk, where we had a seniors' home
22 there, right at Dufferin and we had families that were
23 higher risk in the community, because they didn't have the
24 support system naturally around them, and so we would
25 connect these young moms, these young dads, up with some of

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1 the seniors and they would come in and they would help at
2 bath time, getting the kids ready for bed. They would help
3 mom during times where she was feeling stressed, or having
4 to do things to keep her household going. They would come
5 in, they would read stories to the children. They would
6 just be that extra support. Those natural supports are
7 there, we just --

8 MS. WALSH: They just need --

9 MS. SCHIBLER: -- need to --

10 MS. WALSH: -- some organization?

11 MS. SCHIBLER: -- we just need to facilitate it.

12 MS. WALSH: Okay. Let me ask you this, you said
13 people are sometimes afraid, for instance, in a healthcare
14 setting, to self identify as aboriginal because they're
15 expecting that the person listening to them, or treating
16 them is going to think, okay, well, what has this person
17 overcome, or what are their deficits? Let's start with the
18 strengths that you see in the aboriginal community. Tell
19 us about the strengths and any recommendations you have to
20 support those strengths. Who wants to start? Anna?

21 MS. SMITH: Okay.

22 MS. WALSH: Your mom says it's okay?

23 MS. SCHIBLER: She had the light bulb come on.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: I give her permission.

25 MS. SMITH: I'm, I'm thinking about the different

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1 organizations that are out there and, and people that lead
2 them and also volunteer a lot of their time. And, and like
3 Billie were (sic) saying, there's a lot of stuff that is
4 happening. Like, Thunderbird House, for example, is
5 desperately trying to organize the elders and, and to have
6 a core group of elders, so that when a school calls and
7 says, you know what, we need a Kookum, we need a Mooshum,
8 then they will send, call up this grandmother, or this
9 grandfather to go and sit with them and, and for whatever
10 it is that they need. And of course, it goes back to
11 funding, you know, like, how do we get these Mooshums and
12 these Kookums out there, because they need to be driven. A
13 lot of them can't walk properly.

14 MS. WALSH: Right.

15 MS. SMITH: You know, it takes time for them to
16 go. Some of them just don't have even bus fare to get out
17 there. So it's there, you know, the, the, the people are
18 wanting to help, but a simple thing like just
19 transportation, getting them there, or even feeding them,
20 you know, when they are there. That kind --

21 THE COMMISSIONER: That, that --

22 MS. SMITH: -- of stuff.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: -- that goes to Commission
24 counsel's question as to how to facilitate this.

25 MS. SMITH: Yes.

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1 THE COMMISSIONER: And, and what, have you any
2 specific recommendations how to facilitate that engagement
3 of the elders with the young people?

4 MS. SMITH: Specific to the Commission?

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, well --

6 MS. SMITH: Like, just support. I, I think that
7 because Thunderbird House is already trying to create a
8 pool of, or grandmothers and grandfathers, to go into the
9 community, so it's, it's just funding.

10

11 BY MS. WALSH:

12 MS. WALSH: Funding and, and which would
13 facilitate a coordinator who --

14 MS. SMITH: Exactly.

15 MS. WALSH: -- organizes the whole program, gets
16 the, the elders where they need to be and ...

17 MS. SMITH: Yes.

18 MS. WALSH: Okay.

19 MS. SMITH: And then there's the, the program
20 that I talked about earlier where the young people have
21 done that. They initiated it. They've been in contact and
22 they're -- people are donating in kind, you know, like, to
23 -- right now, this group is out in, in a vision quest and
24 coming of age ceremony and they've taken some children out
25 and some youth out into the community where, where this is

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1 happening and it's people that just donated gas money for
2 them to go and --

3 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

4 MS. SMITH: -- you know, just so that the young
5 people can experience it, you know. And, and that's a
6 right of passage for them and --

7 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

8 MS. SMITH: -- there's, like, all these blocks
9 that these youth and, and elders and you know, they're
10 overcoming it.

11 MS. WALSH: So the blocks to, to furthering some
12 of these good programs are funding, coordination?

13 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

14 MS. WALSH: Okay.

15 MS. SMITH: Yes, they are.

16 MS. WALSH: Margaret?

17 MS. LAVALLEE: Some years ago, well, many years
18 ago, when I was attending Brandon University, that's when I
19 started to search for my true identity and I -- we used to
20 have youth and elder workshops, that was very big in them
21 days for the elders to come and spend time with university
22 students. It was very successful because we all wanted to
23 know our history. What happened before colonization? What
24 happened? How did we live? How did we survive? So these
25 elders would come and teach us and that was beginning of my

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1 own healing, my own journey into what we are today, what
2 we're looking at today. And that, the strength that we had
3 when I was going to university, the strength was from the
4 elders, giving us that, that knowledge. And that's what
5 we're trying to do today. The, the program that we talked
6 about, like, the Sacred Buds program, the Ma Mawi Wi Chi
7 Itata programs, all of those programs are very, very
8 important and they are strength for the community and they
9 are good people that work in these communities. But we
10 also have a lot of issues to address and not one program
11 can address all of these issues and help the children that
12 are in trouble, or the families that are in trouble.

13 We have a lot of, of young moms and dads now that
14 have -- my son, for example, he's a hockey coach --

15 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

16 MS. LAVALLEE: -- in the core area. Him and his
17 wife are hockey coaches. So they go and pick up kids --

18 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

19 MS. LAVALLEE: -- six o'clock in the morning, to
20 get them to go play hockey and the kids really love the
21 hockey. And they have to pick them up because sometimes
22 mom and dads go out and just can't get up the next morning,
23 or whatever. So that's their job. So those kinds of
24 little groups are going out in the core area of Winnipeg
25 and doing that kind of work, that kind of volunteer work,

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1 for the kids to have an opportunity to play hockey, an
2 opportunity to play baseball.

3 MS. WALSH: Right.

4 MS. LAVALLEE: So all of those things are
5 starting to happen, so there are strengths in the community
6 and it has to come from our own people to do that.

7 MS. WALSH: Okay. Thank you. Billie?

8 MS. SCHIBLER: And I think one of the other
9 things about that is, is having those safe places for our
10 young people to go to. And we've got some wonderful
11 programs, Winnipeg Girls and Boys Club offers some of that.
12 Rossbrook House, many of those places where, where the kids
13 know they can go. We need more of those kinds of places
14 where kids can go in the middle of the night. There's
15 things happening in their home. They're not safe and they
16 don't know where to go and, and they need to be able to
17 know that there are safe places. And, and they need to be
18 able to know that there are safe places that don't
19 necessarily mean that you have to be in care of the child
20 welfare system. If you're 10 years old and you live in a
21 family situation like that, you know how to take care of
22 yourself. You've had to do it a long, long time. So you
23 want to go someplace where you can escape the chaos and the
24 craziness that's going on in your house, but you also know
25 what CFS is about and you don't want any part of that. So

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1 where you going to go? You have to have a safe place to
2 go.

3 I think a lot of those kinds of discussions, a
4 lot of those kinds of decisions are things that when we
5 talk about the value and the knowledge and the wisdom that
6 our elders carry, that our councils carry, that any,
7 anything that happened in our traditional societies around
8 that, we need to start to implant that back in the way
9 things are done. We had, as a grandmothers' council, the
10 opportunity to sit with our previous minister of, our
11 former minister of Family Services. He would call on the
12 grandmothers and see us as a stakeholder, to come forward
13 and have these kinds of discussions. That hasn't happened
14 for a long time now and of course, he's not in that
15 position anymore. So we're saying that when government is
16 making their decisions, when, when people who are, have
17 decision making powers come together, they should be making
18 that part of their process. Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs,
19 they bring us as the Kookums together. They sit with us.
20 They, they see us as important stakeholders. That needs to
21 happen in all areas where those decisions that are
22 affecting our communities and our children, that they see
23 the importance of having that consultation with us. That's
24 about going back to traditional ways. That's about
25 recognizing that just because you work in government

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1 offices, doesn't mean you hold all the wisdom and
2 knowledge. Just because you hold the purse strings,
3 doesn't mean you have all the wisdom and knowledge.

4 When we talk about the intent of devolution and
5 the changes in child welfare systems, that was supposed to
6 be a part of it. When we talk about our own people making
7 decisions about our own people, that was supposed to be a
8 part of it. That didn't occur the way it was meant to --

9 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Uh-uh.

10 MS. SCHIBLER: -- occur. It's still -- it --
11 only a beginning phase of that happened. And so when we
12 still have to, as I spoke earlier, provide evidence that we
13 are able, in our communities and our own services, to
14 provide the culturally relevant programs, according to
15 somebody else's value base and their interpretation of and
16 definition of culturally relevant. They're not sitting in
17 consultation with us. They're not sitting in consultation
18 with the grandmothers and grandfathers out there.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Who is "they" that are --

20 MS. SCHIBLER: The decision makers, government,
21 anybody that has the --

22 MS. LAVALLEE: The politicians.

23 MS. SCHIBLER: -- power to be able to determine
24 whether or not our programs get funded, whether or not
25 those grassroots programs get funded, to determine what it

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1 is our communities need and what our families need. That's
2 got to be part of the consultation.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: And, and are you talking about
4 the need, as you see it, province-wide, or more urban
5 oriented?

6 MS. SCHIBLER: I would say federally, but most
7 definitely province-wide, because this is a, a provincial
8 inquiry and I, I do want to acknowledge you and, and, and,
9 and thank you, wholeheartedly, on behalf of the Kookums,
10 that you saw this as being an important part of the
11 process, because, because we know that that's the right way
12 for you to do it and we appreciate that.

13 MS. WALSH: Thank you. I could ask questions for
14 a very long time, but I'm mindful of the hour and I want to
15 leave time for others to ask questions. So I will stop
16 there and we'll let others ask some questions. And, and
17 then, if, at the very end, if there are still
18 recommendations or information that you want to, to tell us
19 about, I'll be back on my feet.

20 MS. SCHIBLER: Thank you.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Gindin, please?

22 MS. LAVALLEE: Should we (inaudible) the
23 recommendation yet?

24 MS. SCHIBLER: Yeah, no, she's going to come
25 back --

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1 MS. LAVALLEE: Okay.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: -- after.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: Are you comfortable to
4 continue for a little while?

5 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah.

6 MS. SCHIBLER: Yeah, she just wanted to know if
7 we were going to get a chance to do recommendations.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, oh, sure, sure.

9 Mr. Gindin?

10 MR. GINDIN: Thank, thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

11 Good morning.

12 MS. SCHIBLER: Good morning.

13 MS. SMITH: Good morning.

14 MR. GINDIN: It's almost good afternoon. But my
15 name is Jeff Gindin and I represent Kim Edwards and Steve
16 Sinclair and I just wanted to ask one particular issue and
17 all of you, of course, can feel free to respond.

18

19 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. GINDIN:

20 MR. GINDIN: But Ms. Schibler, you mentioned, in
21 your evidence earlier, when you were talking about the role
22 of fathers and you gave the example of Steve Sinclair, in
23 fact, from this very case. And the evidence we've heard is
24 that Steve Sinclair, who himself was a victim of the child
25 welfare system, was left to take care of two children under

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A. SMITH - CR-EX. (GINDIN)

1 the age of 15 months, when he himself, was 20 years of age.
2 And the fact that, I think everyone agrees, that he could
3 have used a little more assistance and support during a
4 period of, like that. Are there programs that you're aware
5 of, or, or are there recommendations you have that would
6 specifically help someone like Steve in a situation like
7 the one he was in?

8 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I know at, through the MMF,
9 we have a fathers' program --

10 MR. GINDIN: Um-hum.

11 MS. SCHIBLER: -- and it works specifically with
12 those young dads, some of them of which have their own --
13 independently are, are caring for their own children and it
14 works to try and help them to know and understand and
15 strengthen them. Helps them with many, many issues that
16 they may be facing as, as young fathers. So we know that
17 those are, are programs that are being offered, but again,
18 that always face those, those continued challenges around
19 how do they, how do they ensure funding for the future? So
20 a lot of, we've seen a lot of good programs, over the
21 years, that we've worked in and around, child welfare and,
22 and the health system, we've seen them fall apart because
23 there wasn't a continued funding for them.

24 MR. GINDIN: I think we all know that there are
25 probably more programs for the single mother --

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1 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

2 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely.

3 MR. GINDIN: -- than there are for the single
4 father?

5 MS. SCHIBLER: And I think you're absolutely
6 right, Mr. Gindin, because we know that there's more and
7 more fathers stepping into the role of, of primary
8 caregivers.

9 MR. GINDIN: So you would agree then, that
10 there's more that we can do in this area?

11 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely. And that's where that
12 mentoring is going to be really, really important as well.

13 MR. GINDIN: Um-hum.

14 MS. SCHIBLER: And that's why we say it's not
15 just a female thing, it's got to be where our male
16 counterparts are also there to be good role models and to
17 help those young fathers in their roles and
18 responsibilities.

19 MR. GINDIN: Thank you.

20 MS. SCHIBLER: Thank you.

21 MR. GINDIN: Those are all my questions.

22 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr. Gindin.

23 Anyone else wish to have questions for the panel?

24 MR. PAUL: No questions.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms. --

B. SCHIBLER - CR-EX. (GOERES)
M. LAVALLEE - CR-EX. (GOERES)
A. SMITH - CR-EX. (GOERES)

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1 MS. GOERES: Good morning, Mr. Commissioner, my
2 name's Ursula Goeres, I'm with the law firm of Brodsky and
3 Company and I'm here this morning as counsel for Ms.
4 Schibler. And I have one question --

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

6 MS. GOERES: -- that I'd like to direct to Ms.
7 Schibler.

8

9 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. GOERES:

10 MS. GOERES: Billie, given all the work that you
11 have done and the insights that you have, concerning the
12 child welfare system, do you remain hopeful that positive
13 steps that will be taken that will, first of all, honour
14 the life of Phoenix Sinclair, and secondly, bring about
15 greater protection for the children of Manitoba?

16 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely, I do remain hopeful
17 and I think that this process right here, this inquiry, is,
18 is one of the avenues that is going to move things further
19 ahead. And I'm hoping that a lot of it will happen within
20 this province, but I know that it will be greater than this
21 province, because other provinces are looking to see what
22 the results of this inquiry are about and how those
23 recommendations are going to impact them in the work that
24 they do. And then there's so much opportunity here,
25 through this inquiry, but in this province, who started a

B. SCHIBLER - CR-EX. (GOERES)
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1 process of devolution, to really be on the, on the cutting
2 edge of the way things need to be done out there, in
3 recognition of the truth and reconciliation, the healing,
4 but also just doing things in a much better way around
5 child welfare services and what that needs to look like.
6 So I'm feeling quite hopeful about that.

7 MS. GOERES: Thank you so much. That's my only
8 question.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, counsel.

10 And is that because you know that similar
11 problems exist in those other provinces that you say have
12 their eyes on us?

13 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely. Absolutely. And then
14 we know that, that certainly the issues that are facing
15 our, our overrepresentation of aboriginal people in all of
16 those service systems, particularly child welfare, that
17 that's an issue straight across the country and people know
18 that. And even though we're a small representation of the
19 overall population in this country, we're overrepresented
20 in every one of those systems and other systems related
21 too, because it's part of that.

22 THE COMMISSIONER: Such as overrepresentation in
23 corrections --

24 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: -- and substance abuse?

B. SCHIBLER - CR-EX. (GOERES)
M. LAVALLEE - CR-EX. (GOERES)
A. SMITH - CR-EX. (GOERES)

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: And the, and some of the
3 others were already mentioned, the suicide rate, all going
4 back and attributable to the reasons you put on the table
5 earlier this morning.

6 MS. SCHIBLER: And, you know, and I want to add
7 to that is that we know that there -- I mean, we, we've
8 talked about addictions are on the rise and how so many of
9 our, our, our people are needing to go into programs that
10 really help them find, find a way to be able to have their
11 spirits, their spirits healed and made well, because that's
12 really what happens with the addictions. The addictions
13 are a way for people to fill a void of a trauma, something
14 that has happened in their life, that has almost stuffed,
15 snuffed out their spirit. And so they start to medicate,
16 they, they self-medicate and they use that addiction, in a
17 way, to be able to survive, to be able to face another day.
18 And so if we want to see people healed from their
19 addictions, we need to find a way to be able to heal their
20 spirits and make them feel good about themselves. So they
21 have to replace that addiction with something that, that
22 heals them and is, it feels good for them every day. So a
23 lot of the things that we talked about, about the programs
24 and the identity and all of those things, is one way of
25 doing it. But we also know that we don't have enough

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 resources.

2 People who have suddenly come to a realization
3 that they can't live like this another day and they come
4 and they want help and they say I'm ready to stop, I need
5 help, shouldn't be told that in two weeks you can come for
6 an intake assessment and then usually it'll take two months
7 before you're going to be able to get into a program.
8 That's not what they need. Today they are ready to make
9 that change. There shouldn't be those kind of waiting
10 lists. We need way more resources than we have available
11 right now.

12

13 RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. WALSH:

14 MS. WALSH: So this, this is another opportunity,
15 Margaret, I think you should start, to tell the
16 Commissioner, share with the Commissioner, your
17 recommendations for better protecting Manitoba children.

18 MS. LAVALLEE: Wow.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: You're on.

20 MS. LAVALLEE: I have lots.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, you -- we've got time.

22 MS. LAVALLEE: Okay. I think we need to have a
23 change in child welfare legislation for, specifically for
24 First Nations and Métis. I don't know so much about Inuit,
25 because I think Inuit have their own system. But for sure,

1 First Nations and Métis people. Okay.

2 And, and the other one that we had talked about
3 was having a healing centre for families and children to
4 come to and learn about their traditional laws. And it has
5 to be on the traditional laws. And I think, by having a
6 place like that for children and families, we would
7 probably help a lot of families heal in that process. I
8 think that's a recommendation I want to make. And it's
9 named after Phoenix Sinclair, because we have --

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Here in Winnipeg?

11 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah, yeah. And, and I think that
12 somehow, to honour her spirit. We have talked about her
13 for so long that no one has ever honoured her spirit in, in
14 -- that I know of, maybe they have, but I don't -- I know
15 that in, in the traditional law, to honour a spirit that's
16 gone on in such a violent way, they have to be, things done
17 for four days, to honour that spirit that's gone on. And I
18 don't know if that was done for, for Phoenix.

19 And we'd also like to recommend an aboriginal
20 child advocate in the province, or --

21 MS. SCHIBLER: Or a Federal children's
22 commissioner that is specific to our aboriginal children,
23 the Métis, First Nation, Inuit, because their, their needs
24 are so unique, because of the overrepresentation and
25 because of the fact that there is decisions that are made,

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 not only provincially, but federally, around these
2 children. I, I know that there's been a lot of talk, in
3 the past, around having that Federal children's
4 commissioner, but I think there's got to be one that we've
5 talked about as, as the Kookums, that represents those
6 children who are overrepresented in child welfare across
7 Canada.

8 MS. LAVALLEE: And then from child welfare, it
9 goes on to jails and penitentiaries usually. So then if we
10 put a stop to it before it leads to that, then we would be
11 doing something for the communities.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: How --

13 MS. WALSH: Can --

14 THE COMMISSIONER: -- with whom would that
15 Federal commission have, have jurisdiction with respect to
16 children on reserve? Or are -- how are, how is, how are
17 they going to interface --

18 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: -- with provincial
20 responsibility for off reserve children?

21 MS. SCHIBLER: I think if they are -- I think it,
22 it comes down to the same limitations that I spoke about
23 when I talked about my concerns about the mandate of the
24 children's advocate. I think when we start to define
25 things in silos around Federal, provincial, urban, rural,

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 remote, all of those things, then we start to lose
2 momentum. I think that, we've already seen that that
3 doesn't work very well, particularly when we face the
4 Jordan's Principle kind of situation --

5 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

6 MS. SCHIBLER: -- where people stop dead at their
7 part because it crosses over into another jurisdictional
8 responsibility. I think that when we talk about a
9 children's commissioner, when we've spoken about it, we've
10 -- or even provincial advocates, we've spoken about those
11 who can talk about all those children, all of those
12 children, whether they're seen to be a Federal
13 responsibility or a provincial responsibility, where
14 they're the ones that keep Federal government, because
15 there is no Federal accountability to children, really,
16 when you think about it, there's nobody as a children's
17 advocate that has that Federal responsibility to keep
18 Federal government on target with their decision making and
19 yet we talk about how leaders need to make those decisions
20 for the next seven generations, always keeping in mind the
21 children of the next seven generations. We don't see that
22 happening in Ottawa. We don't see the grandmothers'
23 council sitting there. We don't see the children in the
24 centre, as the spirit of that, of that gathering, to make
25 sure that when they make their decisions, they're always

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
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1 bearing in mind that their decisions need to be made for
2 these children and those to come. Those are the things
3 that are missing. So a, a commissioner for children has to
4 be able to have that fluid type of jurisdiction that can
5 speak on behalf of all those children.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: Let me ask you this, apropos
7 to that, has Jordan's Principle worked, or do you know?

8 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I would say --

9 MS. LAVALLEE: Some people say it, it does.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: It has been --

11 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: -- the --

13 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah.

14 THE COMMISSIONER: -- different levels of
15 government --

16 MS. LAVALLEE: Yes.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: -- for what was intended?

18 MS. LAVALLEE: Yeah.

19 MS. SMITH: For the most part, it varies.

20 MS. SCHIBLER: And --

21 MS. SMITH: You know, you can cite some that
22 haven't.

23 MS. SCHIBLER: -- I would say that the one thing
24 that has worked about it was that has opened up awareness
25 about an issue that was long existing and it's, and it's

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
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1 now one that we can phrase when we see that those
2 jurisdictional disputes are happening and there's service
3 gaps. But has things flowed well, does it continue to flow
4 well? No, we still have those kinds of situations. We
5 still have situations where there's, where there's lack of
6 resources in First Nation communities and those children
7 have to be brought into the care of the provincial system
8 and able to, you know, to enable them to be able to access
9 services. Those kind of things still happen. And then
10 there is those, those disputes, those jurisdictional
11 disputes that still occur.

12

13 BY MS. WALSH:

14 MS. WALSH: When you talk about an aboriginal
15 children's advocate, whether provincial or Federal, would
16 you see that individual having jurisdiction over more than
17 just child welfare matters?

18 MS. SCHIBLER: Absolutely. I think it's
19 essential. I think that that's where, even as I spoke in
20 my role as, as former children's advocate --

21 MS. WALSH: Yes.

22 MS. SCHIBLER: -- that that, that jurisdiction
23 has to be inclusive. If we want to, if we want to really
24 build healthy young people, if we want to really ensure
25 better outcomes for our young people, they have to be able

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
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1 to work in the stream of health, in education, in child
2 welfare, in, in youth justice. They have to be there,
3 sitting together and in a good way, making those kinds of
4 informed decisions and knowing what each other's
5 responsibility is. Because when we talk about that, that
6 circle of care, we came at it from a grassroots level and
7 we spoke about it from, you know, what we, as grandmothers
8 and what community members and neighbours and family
9 members need to do. But that circle of care has to still
10 be a circle. It can't be a broken circle. It still has to
11 be a circle, even when we're talking about government,
12 whether it's Federal, or provincial, it's still got to
13 be -- or First Nation leadership, it's still got to be a
14 continual circle.

15 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

16 THE COMMISSIONER: Let me ask you this, relating
17 to Manitoba only and leaving the rest of Canada aside for
18 the moment, based upon your experience as child advocate in
19 this province, why can't a beefed up child advocate's
20 office, with its own standalone legislation, do the job for
21 all Manitoba children, aboriginal children and
22 non-aboriginal children, without the need for a separate
23 advocate for aboriginal children, or can, could that
24 work?

25 MS. SCHIBLER: I would have to say -- and this is

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
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1 not meaning to undermine or be disrespectful at all to our
2 current children's advocate because she's a fine woman and
3 I commend her for the work she does, but I would say that
4 if you have someone in that role who's advocating on behalf
5 of the overrepresentation of the aboriginal children in
6 that, in any of those systems, in any of those systems,
7 that it has to be somebody that fully understands the
8 impact of the history of the people, that fully understands
9 what it's like to walk a mile in those moccasins and can
10 bring those issues to the forefront. I'm not saying she's
11 not able to do that. I'm not saying that any other culture
12 couldn't do that, but I think we talked about that and
13 explained that earlier, that when you're talking about how
14 do you bring awareness about, it comes best from those who
15 have had those life experiences.

16 MS. LAVALLEE: Um-hum.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: But if you had that kind of a
18 person in the role, it may be that the one office with
19 standalone piece of legislation might be able to do the job
20 in Manitoba?

21 MS. SCHIBLER: I'm not saying that it's
22 impossible, and it may be, probably could be the, the
23 identified place for that to begin. The -- my only fear
24 would be is I know how, how overworked that office is
25 already and it would, and we wouldn't want to see any of

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 these things watered down. So it would have to have the
2 resources available and it would have to be supported. It
3 would have to be recognized and it would have to have the,
4 the authority in its mandate to be able to ensure that the
5 work its doing is being addressed.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: Would you have any
7 recommendations as to how the, such legislation could be
8 beefed up, over and above what it is today, within the
9 narrow ambit, if you like, that you operated? Would you
10 have any recommendations, or would you give them to me
11 subsequently?

12 MS. SCHIBLER: I, I, I would and I do. One of
13 the things I would certainly say is, is echoing what
14 Margaret says, that if we look at a new legislation that
15 was developed in consultation with elders and, and
16 aboriginal people who have been historically affected, that
17 there would be, that those words would be reflective of our
18 needs and not just be government's interpretation of our
19 needs. I think that's going to be really, really
20 important.

21

22 BY MS. WALSH:

23 MS. WALSH: So what, what is -- and I was going
24 to follow-up on Margaret's recommendation. What would this
25 legislation address?

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: I think it would address certainly
2 decision making that, that puts our, our children first, in
3 the ways that we think services need to be delivered. It
4 would address giving that decision making authority the
5 funding decisions to be able to flow through our people,
6 Métis, Inuit, First Nation people, being able to make those
7 decisions that are reflective, that are culturally
8 appropriate by our, our terms.

9 MS. WALSH: Don't the, doesn't the Authorities
10 Act already do that?

11 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, in the Authorities Act, it
12 says that the authorities have the responsibility to
13 develop culturally relevant services. What it doesn't say
14 is that the authorities have the ability to be able to
15 ensure that those services are delivered. So we can
16 develop until the cows come home, but if we don't have the
17 funding and we have to try and convince government that our
18 programs are relevant for our needs, in order to be able to
19 receive the funding, then, then it kind of cuts the legs
20 out from underneath the intent of that, that piece of
21 legislation.

22 MS. LAVALLEE: The other issue I think too, is
23 looking at the, the, the policies and procedures that is
24 implemented in child welfare. I don't think -- maybe I'm
25 wrong in that, but I don't think they have the appropriate

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
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1 laws implemented that would help aboriginal families and
2 children. Because it isn't run by aboriginal laws, it's
3 run by government. So we don't have aboriginal laws
4 implemented in these institutions.

5 Residential school failed miserably and we see
6 the evidence of that today. We see families so distorted
7 and we see the atrocities that, that happened in
8 residential school because they don't have the parenting
9 that one needed. Can you imagine if you had a child, four
10 years old, and it was made compulsory for that child to
11 leave your home and placed in a, in a residential school,
12 the loss my parents felt when they lost us into residential
13 school? So those are atrocities placed on parents at that
14 time. So we have a lot of healing to do and that's why I
15 really emphasize aboriginal laws implemented, if we ever
16 have a, not an institution, a place of healing for families
17 and children. They have to be implemented and they have to
18 be practiced, otherwise, it's going to fail.

19 So Child and Family Services now is struggling
20 of the consequences of the residential school and
21 (inaudible).

22 MS. WALSH: Right.

23 MS. LAVALLEE: We have to change those, those,
24 those kinds of thinking now. We have, right now, 12,000
25 children in care.

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 MS. SCHIBLER: Ten.

2 MS. LAVALLEE: Ten thousand children in care. So
3 we're going back into history. And history tells us that
4 hundred and fifty thousand children were taken away, across
5 Canada. Fifty thousand of them didn't make it home.
6 They're buried somewhere. So we cannot keep repeating that
7 history. We have to put a stop to it.

8 MS. SCHIBLER: I, and if I can just add to that,
9 I think when we, when we talked about legislative changes
10 and so forth, I, you know, I'm just always reminded of
11 comments that I hear from people, from families, that have
12 received services, even since devolution. I heard this
13 when I was the children's advocate, I hear it now, as, you
14 know, as a service provider in the community, that the only
15 thing that really occurred with devolution is that people
16 shifted over to aboriginal services but it's the, it's now
17 just brown faces running the same kind of system. Because
18 they're not seeing it reflected in the practice and the
19 policies and, and the legislation of what truly our
20 families need for their healing.

21 MS. WALSH: So the, the legislative change that
22 you're talking about, is that something that you see could
23 be done within the context of the Authorities Act? Or is
24 it a standalone piece of legislation?

25 MS. SCHIBLER: Well, I, I think it can be done

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

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1 within the context of the Authorities Act, most definitely,
2 as long as there's a recognition that, you know, it's, it's
3 got to be more than just words on paper. It's got to be
4 more than just the legalities of, of the legislation, that
5 there has to be other things that flow from that greater
6 system, to help empower, to help ensure that our
7 authorities are able. We, we can define culturally
8 appropriate services, we can say what we know our families
9 need and our communities' needs. We hear it from them. We
10 know it. We've lived it. But we need to have the other
11 things from that greater system and those decision makers
12 flow to enable us, to help us have the capacity to be able
13 to fully implement that.

14 MS. WALSH: Do you have any other questions, Mr.
15 Commissioner?

16 THE COMMISSIONER: No, I, I think this has been
17 most helpful this morning and I -- when you're through, I'm
18 going to thank the panel, as you may wish to do and, and
19 we'll conclude.

20 MS. WALSH: And, and I have no further questions
21 and as the Commissioner says, I want to thank you for being
22 so generous with your spirit and your wisdom this morning,
23 thank you.

24 MS. LAVALLEE: Thank you (inaudible).

25 THE COMMISSIONER: And I can only echo what

B. SCHIBLER - RE-EX. (WALSH)
M. LAVALLEE - RE-EX. (WALSH)
A. SMITH - RE-EX. (WALSH)

May 27, 2013

1 Commission counsel has said and express my appreciation for
2 the time and effort you put into this and hopefully you'll
3 see something reflected in our report that --

4 MS. SMITH: Okay.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: -- addresses some of the
6 matters you've put on the table and the solutions you've
7 offered. Thank you sincerely.

8 MS. LAVALLEE: Migwetch.

9 MS. SCHIBLER: Thank you, migwetch.

10

11 (WITNESSES EXCUSED)

12

13 THE COMMISSIONER: We'll rise now and reconvene
14 at two o'clock.

15 MS. WALSH: Yes, thank you.

16

17 (LUNCHEON RECESS)

18

19 MS. WALSH: Good afternoon, Mr. Commissioner.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: We're ready to proceed.

21 MS. WALSH: We are. Our next witness is Dr.
22 Shauna MacKinnon.

23 THE CLERK: If you could just stand for a moment.
24 Is it your choice to swear on the Bible, or affirm without
25 the Bible?

1 THE WITNESS: The Bible's fine.

2 THE CLERK: Okay.

3 THE WITNESS: The Bible.

4 THE CLERK: Just take your Bible in your right
5 hand, if that's okay? State your full name to the
6 court.

7 THE WITNESS: Shauna MacKinnon.

8 THE CLERK: And spell me your first name?

9 THE WITNESS: S-H-A-U-N-A.

10 THE CLERK: And your last name please?

11 THE WITNESS: M-A-C-K-I-N-N-O-N.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you.

13

14 **SHAUNA MACKINNON**, sworn, testified

15 as follows:

16

17 MS. WALSH: Mr. Commissioner, we'll start by
18 filing all of the documents that are going to be exhibits
19 associated with this witness, so that we don't have to
20 interrupt the flow of evidence.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

22 MS. WALSH: The first is Dr. MacKinnon's CV,
23 mostly because then that will show you her various
24 publications, et cetera.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. Be Exhibit --

1 THE CLERK: Exhibit 84.

2

3 **EXHIBIT 84: CURRICULUM VITAE OF**
4 **DR. SHAUNA MACKINNON**

5

6 THE CLERK: Sorry.

7 MS. WALSH: That's okay.

8 THE CLERK: It's a lower table now.

9 MS. WALSH: It is.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

11 MS. WALSH: Not a problem. (Inaudible). Then
12 the next exhibit is a report entitled: State of the Inner-
13 City, 2009, It Takes All Day to Be Poor, published December
14 2009.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 85.

16 THE CLERK: Exhibit 85. Does it include this
17 cover sheet?

18 MS. WALSH: We don't -- no, that was just
19 Marcie's. I understand the purple folder is for the
20 Commissioner.

21 THE CLERK: Is for the -- yeah.

22 MS. WALSH: Right.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

24 THE CLERK: Exhibit 85.

25

1 **EXHIBIT 85: REPORT ENTITLED STATE**
2 **OF THE INNER-CITY, 2009, IT TAKES**
3 **ALL DAY TO BE POOR**

4

5 MS. WALSH: You ready for another one? I'll just
6 pass them this way.

7 And Dr. MacKinnon, these will come up on the
8 monitor that's by your desk.

9 You ready for the next one?

10 THE CLERK: Yes, please.

11 MS. WALSH: Next --

12 THE CLERK: Exhibit 86.

13 MS. WALSH: -- 86, this will be 87 coming up.

14 THE COMMISSIONER: What's 86?

15 THE CLERK: No, (inaudible).

16 MS. WALSH: Eighty-four --

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Eighty-six is next.

18 MS. WALSH: -- oh, okay.

19 THE CLERK: Eighty-four was the CV, 85 was It
20 Takes All Day to Be Poor and this is 86.

21 MR. OLSON: Wasn't 86 (inaudible)?

22 MS. WALSH: Yeah. Have I not ... We did 38;
23 right? And then 42, We're In It For the Long Haul.

24 THE CLERK: That's the next one.

25 MS. WALSH: We haven't done it yet?

1 THE CLERK: No, (inaudible).

2 MS. WALSH: Okay. So the next one is, We're In
3 It For the Long Haul, State of the Inner-City, December
4 2010.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: That'll be Exhibit 86.

6 THE CLERK: Exhibit 86.

7

8 **EXHIBIT 86: WE'RE IN IT FOR THE**
9 **LONG HAUL, STATE OF THE INNER-**
10 **CITY, DECEMBER 2010**

11

12 THE CLERK: I'm just concerned because the actual
13 document is not marked. I think (inaudible) because of the
14 folder, you won't know what it is.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Do you want to mark that one?

16 THE CLERK: We'll mark that one as well, just in
17 case it comes out of the folder.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, I understand.

19 MS. WALSH: I don't know why they have to be in
20 folders. I don't know that they have to stay in their
21 folders. I think the folder might just have been for
22 convenience.

23 THE CLERK: Okay.

24 MS. WALSH: I think that's easier.

25 THE CLERK: (Inaudible) now.

1 MS. WALSH: Yeah, yeah. Okay. You ready for the
2 next one?

3 THE CLERK: Yes.

4 MS. WALSH: Next one is called: Breaking
5 Barriers, Building Bridges, State of the Inner-City Report,
6 2012.

7 THE CLERK: Exhibit 87.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: There isn't one for 2011 then?
9 2009 is It Takes All Day to Be Poor. We're in for the Long
10 Haul is 210 (sic).

11 MS. WALSH: Right.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: And, and now we're going to
13 212 (sic)?

14 MS. WALSH: Yes.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Right?

16 MS. WALSH: Yes.

17 THE CLERK: So that's Exhibit 87.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: That'll be 87, won't it?

19 THE CLERK: Eighty-seven, yes.

20

21 **EXHIBIT 87: BREAKING BARRIERS,**
22 **BUILDING BRIDGES, STATE OF THE**
23 **INNER-CITY REPORT, 2012**

24

25 MS. WALSH: Do you want to take these out of the

1 folders?

2 THE CLERK: Okay.

3 MS. WALSH: You don't need the folders.

4 THE CLERK: Yeah, unless he wants the folders.

5 MS. WALSH: I don't think he wants the folders.

6 That's 87.

7 THE CLERK: That's Exhibit 87.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

9 MS. WALSH: The next one is called: The View
10 From Here, Manitobans Call for a Poverty Reduction Plan,
11 June 2009.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 88.

13 THE CLERK: Exhibit 88.

14

15 **EXHIBIT 88: THE VIEW FROM HERE,**
16 **MANITOBANS CALL FOR A POVERTY**
17 **REDUCTION PLAN, JUNE 2009**

18

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

20 MS. WALSH: And finally --

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

22 MS. WALSH: -- I don't think we need to actually
23 make this an exhibit. It's a piece of legislation, the
24 Poverty Reduction Strategy Act. So long as you've got it,
25 Madam Clerk, on your stick, to bring up when we want to

1 refer to it. It was number 21 of the ...

2 THE CLERK: That's what I have for legislation.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, now what is the next
4 document? You're not marking it, but it's, what is it?

5 MS. WALSH: It was a copy of a piece of
6 legislation --

7 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes?

8 MS. WALSH: -- the Poverty Reduction Strategy
9 Act.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: It --

11 THE CLERK: Oh, here it is.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: -- is it an, an enacted piece
13 of legislation?

14 MS. WALSH: It is, Manitoba.

15 THE CLERK: I've got it.

16 MS. WALSH: You do.

17 THE CLERK: On screen, document 40.

18 MS. WALSH: Okay.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Is it an exhibit?

20 MS. WALSH: Forty? It should be 21.

21 THE CLERK: Oh, this one? Okay.

22 MS. WALSH: Um-hum.

23 THE CLERK: Twenty-one, I see it.

24 MS. WALSH: Okay. All right. So we're set.

25 THE CLERK: Okay.

1 MS. WALSH: Thank you.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: Property Reduction Strategy
3 Act, enacted when?

4 MS. WALSH: When was it enacted? Two thousand
5 (inaudible). It was assented to June 16, 2011.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: Is that when it was enacted?
7 I don't need the date, just the, the year.

8 MS. WALSH: It's 2011.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

10 MS. WALSH: All right.

11 THE COMMISSIONER: Now we're late, we're a little
12 late getting started. I guess, if need to be, we may have
13 to sit a little late this afternoon, to try to get through
14 today's agenda.

15 MS. WALSH: Okay. Thank you.

16

17 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. WALSH:

18 Q Dr. MacKinnon, let -- sorry, we have, we have a
19 microphone that's moving into my space on its own. It's
20 just -- it can only be easier after this.

21 THE CLERK: I don't know (inaudible). I already
22 got it propped up on (inaudible).

23 THE COMMISSIONER: It's, it's the --

24 THE CLERK: I've got it propped up on those
25 things. Okay. That's better.

1 MS. WALSH: Okay.

2 THE CLERK: A little more this way?

3 MS. WALSH: No, no, then it's in my line of
4 vision.

5 THE CLERK: Okay.

6 MS. WALSH: Okay. All right.

7

8 BY MS. WALSH:

9 Q Let's start with, with your background. You have
10 been the director of the Manitoba office of the Canadian
11 Centre for Policy Alternatives since 2005?

12 A Right.

13 Q What is that centre?

14 A We do research on social an economic issues and
15 we do our research through a social justice lens and we're
16 a national organization and I was the director of the
17 Manitoba office.

18 Q Okay. And we'll come back to the work of the
19 centre in a, in a moment. As of July of this year, you
20 will be joining the Faculty of the Institute of Urban
21 Studies at the University of Winnipeg?

22 A Actually Urban and Inner-City Studies. It's a
23 bit different, but yes --

24 Q Okay.

25 A -- at University of Winnipeg.

1 Q And what will you be teaching or doing there?

2 A I'll be working on the Selkirk Avenue campus,
3 which is the off, out, outside of the regular campus and
4 I'll be working with students there, teaching poverty
5 related courses, inner-city studies courses and then doing
6 research on inner-city and poverty issues.

7 Q Selkirk Avenue being in the inner-city?

8 A That's right, yes.

9 Q Okay. You worked as project manager for the
10 Province of Manitoba's Community and Economic Development
11 Committee of Cabinet Secretariat for a period of five
12 years, from 2000 to 2005?

13 A Correct.

14 Q And you worked as a counsellor, or an instructor
15 in the Engineering Access Program at the U of M from 1999
16 to 2000?

17 A Correct.

18 Q You have worked in community development
19 programming for the Interlake Reserve Tribal Council from
20 '97 to '99?

21 A Correct.

22 Q Prior to that, you were a community mental health
23 worker in the Thompson Regional Health Authority?

24 A Yes.

25 Q You have also worked in a variety of positions in

1 the area of community and resource development in Manitoba
2 Child and Family Services?

3 A Correct.

4 Q And that was from 1990 to '95?

5 A Correct.

6 Q You have taught a number of courses at the
7 University of Winnipeg's Faculty of Urban and Inner-City
8 Studies?

9 A Yes.

10 Q What are some of the courses you've taught?

11 A I've taught courses on women in the inner-city,
12 poverty and policy in the inner-city and introduction to,
13 to inner-city issues.

14 Q Okay. You've also taught in the Faculty of
15 Social Work at the University of Manitoba?

16 A Correct.

17 Q What did you teach there?

18 A Primarily social policy courses, various social
19 policy courses.

20 Q You have your Bachelor of Social Work from the
21 University of Manitoba and you completed your Masters of
22 Social Work at the U of M in 1997?

23 A Correct.

24 Q And in 2012, you completed an inter-disciplinary
25 doctorate at the University of Manitoba?

1 A Correct.

2 Q What was the focus of your PhD?

3 A My -- the focus of my PhD was looking at policy
4 and the experience of aboriginal adult learners.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Aboriginal what?

6 THE WITNESS: Adult learners. So people who went
7 back to school as adults to, to pursue their education.

8

9 BY MS. WALSH:

10 Q And if we pull up your CV, which is Exhibit 84,
11 you summarize, at page 2 -- oh, sorry, you don't have these
12 as per the exhibits --

13 THE CLERK: (Inaudible) yeah, I --

14 MS. WALSH: So --

15 THE CLERK: -- have it here.

16 MS. WALSH: -- you're good?

17 THE CLERK: Um-hum.

18 MS. WALSH: Okay.

19

20 BY MS. WALSH:

21 Q You summarize your experience in a way that I
22 thought was helpful. You state:

23

24 "In total I have had 20 years of
25 practical, hands-on experience in

1 community development, in both
2 First Nations communities and the
3 inner city of Winnipeg. I am very
4 familiar with and have very close
5 working relations with a wide
6 variety of Winnipeg inner-city
7 community-based organizations,
8 including Aboriginal
9 organizations."

10

11 A Correct.

12 Q You've been involved in a number of research
13 projects; can you tell us about some of the current
14 projects you're involved in?

15 A Sure. Right now, I'm working on a research
16 project with an organization called Pathways to Education
17 in the inner-city and we work with --

18 THE COMMISSIONER: What, what, what kind of
19 education?

20 THE WITNESS: It's called Pathways to Education
21 and they do -- they're a community-based organization that
22 works with adolescents who are having challenges in the
23 high school, primarily aboriginal adolescents.

24 I've, also continue ongoing to do to work on, on
25 aboriginal issues in the inner-city, Urban Circle Training

1 Centre. I'm doing some, I have done research with them.
2 They do training with adult learners, on Selkirk Avenue.
3 And these are people who have dropped out of high school
4 and have gone back as adults.

5 And doing also research looking at solutions to
6 the challenges that many aboriginal people have with labour
7 market attachment. So looking at what different models
8 might be used to help the transition from training to
9 employment.

10 That's sort of a variety of things.

11

12 BY MS. WALSH:

13 Q Okay. You've supervised a number of students,
14 graduate students and, and other students and I noted that
15 one of the projects that you supervised related to early
16 childhood education?

17 A Correct.

18 Q Okay. You've written and published a number of
19 articles and chapters in books on topics such as aboriginal
20 adult education and poverty, housing and unemployment and
21 social determinants of health?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you've also looked at inclusion issues in
24 Canada's labour market, as you've identified?

25 A Correct.

1 Q Anything else about your background that I've
2 missed?

3 A No, I think that's fine.

4 Q Okay. Thank you. So let's go back to the work
5 of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. You said
6 that it's an organization that uses a social justice lens
7 in its --

8 A Um-hum.

9 Q -- research; what does that mean?

10 A Well, we always approach our, our research from
11 the perspective of looking at how to improve, increase
12 quality in our society. So we, we also, in that regard,
13 look at how we can do research collaboratively with, with
14 organizations and individuals who are not always included
15 in research. So a lot of our work is done -- it's
16 community-based research led by organizations that we do
17 research with. We do both qualitative and quantitative
18 research. I primarily have focused on qualitative
19 research.

20 Q What, what's the difference?

21 A Sure. Well, quantitative research is, is, you
22 know, sort of your traditional mode of doing research where
23 you're, you know, looking at statistics and, and perhaps,
24 you know, longitudinal studies that you can quantify data.
25 We do that, but qualitative research often is used and I

1 certainly have used it as a way to sort of tell the deeper
2 story about the issues and to look, it, it's helpful to,
3 better to looking, better to help find solutions to issues.
4 So it's one thing to sort of paint the picture, but to
5 really delve into how you solve problems, qualitative
6 research, I find, to be more useful.

7 THE COMMISSIONER: Is the Centre for Canadian
8 Studies a national body?

9 THE WITNESS: Yes, we're a national organization
10 and I've done most -- my work at the Manitoba level, so
11 we're a branch of the national organization --

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Is, is there a branch --

13 THE WITNESS: -- in Manitoba.

14 THE COMMISSIONER: -- in, in most provinces?

15 THE WITNESS: Not all provinces. So there's a
16 national office in Ottawa, we have an office in Nova
17 Scotia, one in Saskatchewan and one in B.C. and then one in
18 Toronto.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Who's the CEO of the Ottawa
20 office?

21 THE WITNESS: Bruce Campbell.

22 THE COMMISSIONER: That's head office?

23 THE WITNESS: That's right.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: Right.

25

1 BY MS. WALSH:

2 Q In terms of qualitative research, which you say
3 is more community-based and community-inclusive, we will,
4 later on in our discussion, I'll ask you to, to highlight
5 some examples of qualitative research that, that you think
6 is important for us to hear about. So we'll come back to
7 that.

8 A Sure.

9 Q Does a, a social justice lens differ from, say, a
10 charity-based approach?

11 A Absolutely. So from a social justice
12 perspective, we're looking at how do we increase the
13 quality and so we look at things and government policy,
14 also empowering communities. Whereas a charitable model is
15 not essentially, you know, particularly interested so much
16 in equality, it, it's more, it tends to be more focused on,
17 you know, band-aid solutions to problems.

18 Q Okay. Who funds the work of the, the CCPA?

19 A We have a membership base, but a lot of our work
20 is supported through research grants.

21 Q And what have your responsibilities, as executive
22 director, been?

23 A Pardon me?

24 Q Your responsibilities as executive director, what
25 have they been?

1 A Well, research, but as well as, you know, seeking
2 funding through research grants, supervising staff.

3 Q And so we'll be going through some of the
4 research projects today in our discussion.

5 Turning to the subject of poverty, how do you
6 define poverty?

7 A Well, we -- I define poverty sort of more broadly
8 than just looking at income. So I, I would define poverty
9 more in the context of inclusion and exclusion.

10 So looking at income, for sure, as a critical
11 piece of, of poverty, but also looking at what people have
12 access to in society and compared to what other people have
13 access to. So more broadly looking at people's
14 participation, their engagement and also just their sense
15 of feeling that they're part of society, so the level of
16 power that they feel that they have, influence, if they,
17 you know, feel that participating in the electoral system
18 is of benefit. All those sorts of things that other people
19 often take for granted, but people who are living in
20 poverty feel so far removed from that they don't
21 participate.

22 Q So you're talking about deficits, in terms of
23 social exclusion, not just income?

24 A Absolutely.

25 Q From looking at your research, there are a number

1 of different measures that have been used to determine
2 poverty level, the low income cutoff, market basket
3 measure; what do these measurements talk about?

4 A Well, there's that are, you know, tend to be used
5 in, here in Canada. We don't have an official measure, but
6 we've got the low income cutoff, as you mentioned, both
7 looking at it before and after tax. The low income cutoff
8 is basically a, a, an, a, a number that has been
9 determined, based on people's spending habits. So looking
10 at what people tend to spend their money, household
11 expenditures. And so looking at identifying, depending on
12 household size, how much people -- income they have, in
13 regard to what they're spending.

14 The market basket measure is an, a different
15 measure. It looks at a basket of goods that people, that
16 governments, basically, develop a basket of goods that they
17 believe people require to have a certain standard of living
18 and then there's a, a, an income level set as -- in
19 response to that.

20 And then the, the, the other measure that's used
21 is the low income measure, which is entirely different
22 again. It just basically looks at the median level, the
23 median income that everyone in, of, of, of Canadian society
24 and basically half of that income would be considered low
25 income.

1 So they're all different and I mean, my
2 perspective is, has really been, you know, picking one and
3 measuring it over time, to see progress, because there's --

4 Q Yeah.

5 A -- constant, you know, everybody -- there's,
6 there's, there's merits to all of the measures, but there's
7 also challenges with all of the measures.

8 Q Are there other aspects of poverty that are
9 important to study?

10 A Absolutely. I mean, I, again, I think that the,
11 looking at the measures tells us something. It tells us
12 how many people are living, you know, economically, under
13 a, a level that's not acceptable, depending on what you
14 deem acceptable. But again, it's, it's much, much more
15 complicated that. And I think the most important thing
16 that we need to look at is the depth of poverty and the
17 length that people are living in poverty.

18 Q So what does that mean?

19 A Well, I mean, how far below the line are, are
20 people living?

21 Q Okay.

22 A And how long are they living in poverty? And so
23 the bigger, the biggest challenge is, of course, you know,
24 living in poverty for several generations. The longer
25 people are living in poverty, the more difficult it is to

1 escape poverty. The fewer people you have in your life
2 that are not living in poverty, you're less likely to have
3 role models or see a, a life that's different than what you
4 have become used to. So it's like, I think, more accurate
5 to look at sort of the layers of deprivation, or the layers
6 of disadvantage that people have, not just income.

7 Q Okay. Thank you. The phrase "poverty and social
8 exclusion" is a phrase that's, appears in your work; what
9 does that mean?

10 A Well, again, it's, it's the, the reality that not
11 having access to the kinds of things that most of us,
12 certainly in this room, have, can take advantage of. So
13 when I think about the poverty, the kind of poverty that
14 I've become familiar with, with the research that I do in
15 the inner-city, it's people who feel that they're not
16 really part of society. And any access that they have is
17 often, you know, what's given to them, sort of as in,
18 charitably. As one individual I interviewed, in one of the
19 research projects that I did, it was really about choices,
20 having no choices. So, for example, not having sufficient
21 income to go to the grocery store, to buy the food that you
22 need, but having to go to the food bank and, and, and you
23 know, getting the food that is made available to you.
24 Simple things like that we, we take for granted. So again,
25 it's, it's the, the less people are engaged, the less that

1 they have access to, access to recreation, I mean, all the,
2 you know, there's -- all the things that we, we enjoy, the
3 less that you have access to, the further disengaged you
4 become and a sense of hopelessness, helplessness often sets
5 in.

6 Q So these are all aspects of, of our community
7 that you have studied; why is it important to look at these
8 areas?

9 A I think it's important to look at it because we
10 can't simply think that these issues are quickly resolved.
11 So as much as I would be the first person to support
12 increasing people's income, I also am well aware of the
13 fact that there are also, there are many, many other
14 complications that people endure, as a result of their
15 poverty, that we also need to support. And so we need to
16 fully understand that, if we're going to resolve some of
17 the issues that we have in our community.

18 Q Okay. And we'll explore that some more as we go
19 through your evidence.

20 If we can pull up Exhibit 85, which is number 38
21 on your list, the 2009 State of the Inner-City report.

22 Now, what did this report focus on?

23 A Well, this report -- so this, just to give you a
24 bit of background, the State of the Inner-City reports,
25 we've now done eight of them.

1 Q Okay. And "we" being, this comes from the --

2 A The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives,
3 right.

4 Q Good, thank you.

5 A The purpose of this project, ongoing project, was
6 to really -- a collaborative project with community-based
7 organizations in the inner-city and, and this is very much
8 a participatory action research project. So the community
9 groups that we work with essentially identify what they
10 want to do research on every year and then we basically
11 build a research project around what they would like to do.

12 So in this particular one, we did, you know, your
13 -- looked at income over time and how incomes had changed,
14 looking at trends, to see how we'd been dealing with
15 poverty in the inner-city. But we also talked to people
16 living in poverty, got them to keep journals about what
17 life was like for them, living in poverty.

18 The title, It Takes All Day to Be Poor was really
19 a, a phrase by one of our community partners and she, she
20 uses, used that to explain basically that people spend so
21 much energy just trying to get through all the systems,
22 dealing with their poverty. So we tried to capture some of
23 that in the report.

24 Q The second Section of the report, tracking
25 poverty --

1 A Um-hum.

2 Q -- from '96 to 2006, looks at poverty over time,
3 as you said. The source of the data that you used then was
4 community consultation, or?

5 A Well, some of the data we used through
6 consultation, but some of it was Census Canada data that we
7 looked at, 1996 through to 2006, at that time, that was the
8 data that was available to us.

9 Q And so what does the report say about household
10 poverty in Winnipeg and in the inner-city in particular?

11 A Well, what we found over time that there's been
12 improvements, in terms of if you look at the -- we use the
13 LICO by the way, the low-income cutoff after tax and before
14 tax. But we've seen some progress for sure, but what we've
15 also are seeing a continued trend in, again, not surprise
16 to anybody, that in our community, in, in Winnipeg,
17 poverty's very much concentrated in the inner-city. So far
18 higher levels of poverty in the inner-city. Also, very
19 much aboriginal, people living -- aboriginal people are
20 living in, in poverty, you know, are far more likely to
21 live in poverty than non-aboriginal people and again,
22 aboriginal people living in the inner-city. So there's
23 certainly, you know, the data clearly shows a story of, of
24 poverty that is spacialized (phonetic) (sic) and racialized
25 (phonetic) (sic) in, in our community.

1 Q So who's living in poverty and where they're
2 living?

3 A That's right.

4 Q And what does it tell us about unemployment and
5 labour force participation among people living in the
6 inner-city?

7 A Well, similarly, it shows that people in the
8 inner-city are less likely to be attached to the labour
9 force. So, you know, far higher unemployment rates and
10 labour participation rates and aboriginal people are less
11 likely. So, you know, the similar trend.

12 Q Is unemployment the answer to poverty?

13 A Is, is employment?

14 Q Yes --

15 A The --

16 Q -- or employment, yes, sorry.

17 A -- it's part of the answer, it's not the only
18 answer.

19 Q Okay. What else do we need to look at?

20 A So, so many things, you know, so employment, what
21 kind of employment? The reality is that many people who
22 have been -- are so far behind in their education that we
23 try to quickly train them and get them into employment,
24 they end up in low wage work and they're not really
25 escaping poverty at all. In many cases, it makes the

1 situation worse, especially when people have difficulties
2 with childcare. So you know, people need to access to
3 childcare. I mean, as, as -- and this is particularly an
4 issue for aboriginal families who tend to have more
5 children.

6 Housing, when we -- the years of interviewing
7 that I've done with people living in poverty in, in
8 Winnipeg, housing comes up as the biggest issue for people.
9 So access to housing that's affordable, that's safe and
10 that's consistent. People moving all the time.

11 So, you know, employment is important, but just
12 because somebody has employment doesn't mean that they
13 don't have all the other issues still complicating their
14 lives.

15 Q And did your study bear out what you said about
16 inter-generational poverty?

17 A Absolutely. This study and, and many other
18 studies and, and work that we've done certainly bears out
19 that the longer people are living in poverty, the more
20 difficult that it is to escape. People who, again, have
21 few -- no -- there are, there are many people that, that,
22 that we've worked with, over the years, that have known
23 nobody that's worked and so they just have no sense of what
24 that means. And so there's a whole, you know, a, there's
25 a, there's a challenge that comes along with that as well.

1 So yes, absolutely, the longer people are living in poverty
2 and there's all sorts of research that bears that out as
3 well, external to our research.

4 Q So the impact of never seeing somebody who goes
5 to work?

6 A Absolutely.

7 Q In the course of your studies, have you looked at
8 programs aimed at alleviating poverty?

9 A Um-hum. Yes, several.

10 Q And what do those programs need to have to be
11 effective?

12 A Well, there's several great programs in the
13 inner-city, but they need to be properly resourced and
14 that's a challenge. The -- you know, most of them are not
15 resourced ongoing, so they're, you know, every year,
16 looking, you know, applying for, for funding, high turnover
17 of staff, because they're not able to pay, you know,
18 adequate wages, you know, so that, and with that then comes
19 a capacity issue, not be able to pay great wages, it's
20 harder to find good staff and so there's a lot of work that
21 needs to be done to train staff. Once they're trained
22 often they're gone and often governments, a lot of the
23 folks that I've worked with over the years in inner-city
24 organizations were then hired for jobs in government.
25 Which is great for them, it creates opportunities for them,

1 but the, the challenge is, is that you've got organizations
2 that know what to do, they know what needs to be done, but
3 they've got many, many challenges, you know, for all sorts
4 of reasons, funding, high turnover.

5 The other challenge is, again, this is an issue
6 of, I, I believe, of, of inadequate resources, often, is
7 the issue of collaboration across organizations. Lot of
8 these organizations could certainly, and they would be,
9 they would agree that they could be working more
10 collaboratively, to look at, you know, what everybody can
11 bring to the table, to, to have more comprehensive
12 solutions. But they're all so busy scrambling, and often
13 competing for resources, that it makes it really difficult.

14 Q So let's, while you're talking about this,
15 because this is something we're interested in --

16 A Um-hum.

17 Q -- certainly, is this notion of collaborating
18 across organizations and I guess, between community-based
19 organizations and other community organizations and
20 community-based organizations and government departments.

21 A Sure.

22 Q Can you talk a bit about the, the significance of
23 those kinds of partnerships?

24 A Yeah, I think they're critical in, in -- I know
25 one example I could use is, again, building around the

1 education theme, I mean, there's, you know, common -- I
2 think people tend to agree that education is an important
3 indicator of people's success, their moving out of poverty.
4 And aboriginal people continue to have lower levels of
5 education. So, in the inner city, there's you know, very
6 much, you know, a focus, people -- there's organizations
7 focused in that regard.

8 So you have organizations that are teaching --
9 so, people who have dropped out of school and gone back as
10 adults, to get their grade 12 and then look for other
11 opportunities. You've got organizations like the Pathways
12 to Education that I mentioned, that is working, trying to
13 keep high school students in school. It's a very high
14 dropout rate in the inner city and especially aboriginal
15 students. Certainly a, a, an understanding that we need to
16 do more with -- in the early years. Aboriginal children,
17 for example, are, are -- there's Healthy Child Manitoba,
18 I'm not -- I think they might be --

19 Q Yes.

20 A -- here as well, talking about -- they've talked
21 about -- or they've demonstrated that aboriginal kids are
22 behind before they even get started.

23 So, you know, at all of these levels, we know
24 that we need to be intervening to address education. So
25 it's looking at -- okay, so if we all agree, how could we

1 be working together to have better success? Or there,
2 there's some -- a lot of research now on models called
3 collective impact models. So looking at -- as a community,
4 identifying a goal, bringing everybody to the table, school
5 system, governments, organizations, all of those that have
6 a role and looking at, okay, what do we bring to the table
7 and how can we intervene, and at what level? And so that
8 you're supporting entire families of people, and again,
9 over the long term. It's got to be -- there, there -- this
10 -- there tends to be sort of this idea that we can quickly
11 turn things around, so let's train people quickly and get
12 them to work and that, that just doesn't work either, when
13 you're talking about people who have been marginalized for
14 so long.

15 Q So a couple of things, further to what you've
16 just described. That kind of integration, or
17 collaboration, from a practical perspective, how is that
18 coordinated?

19 A Well, the way its been done in other places that
20 have had some success, and there's a couple of examples in
21 the U.S. and in, in poor geographic communities and urban
22 centres, they identify what they call is a backbone
23 organization. That is identified and resourced, again,
24 it's being resourced, it can't be something that already
25 exists, that's resourced to, to do that, that coordination,

1 to bring people, organizations regularly to the table.
2 Because the reality is, if you don't have that, it's not
3 going to happen, because everybody's busy. They're all
4 doing, you know, what they do. So unless you have an
5 organization that's resourced and tasked with bringing
6 everybody together, it's not going to happen. So you do
7 have to invest resources into something like that as well.

8 Q In terms of, you said it's not going to happen
9 overnight, a, a fix --

10 A Um-hum.

11 Q -- a solution, in terms of evaluating the
12 efficacy of a program like that --

13 A Um-hum.

14 Q -- what do you need to do?

15 A Evaluation is a, is a whole other difficult issue
16 and organizations talk about this quite a bit. The, the,
17 the pressure that they have in, again, quantifiable
18 outcomes. And, and, and that's fine, you can -- you know,
19 we do need to demonstrate, you know, some successes and
20 there's some things that we can quantify. But the
21 evaluation model can also be looking at other things. And
22 so it's looking beyond -- so, for example, just graduation
23 rates for high school kids, you know, how many kids are
24 coming into a program, how many are graduating within three
25 years? If you do that, for example, with Pathways to

1 Education program, you're not going to have very, you're
2 not going to show very good outcomes, because these kids
3 often take a lot longer than three years to get through
4 school. Some of them will drop out and they'll come back
5 and you know, it could take five years, could take six
6 years. That's the reality and we have to be, we have to
7 accept that reality and, and, and change the, the way that
8 we evaluate.

9 But it's also looking at what else is happening.
10 And so, not only for that individual where -- who the
11 intervention might be focused on, but what else is
12 happening in a family, in a community. And so there's,
13 there are other benefits, the unintended benefits that we
14 talk about. And so we did a, a project, a few years back,
15 called: Is Participation Having an Impact? And we, you
16 know, quite simply asked people, who are participating in,
17 in the organization, what are you getting out of this?
18 What's it mean for you? And we had, you know -- so the
19 outcome is often, you know, that governments are looking
20 for is work; right? People getting off of social
21 assistance, that's what seems to be what everybody is
22 wanting to see. But we had, you know, many women talk who
23 were still on social assistance, having participated in a
24 program, you know, three, four years, still on social
25 assistance, but they talked about other things, like, well,

1 I've learned a lot about my culture. I'm getting my kids
2 now involved in, you know, Powwow club. I'm hoping that
3 they will become proud of their culture, unlike myself, who
4 was, you know, I, I was taught to shame, be shameful of my
5 culture. And so, you know, so that sort of long term
6 building self esteem at a younger level. So the, the
7 program might have been intended for the parent, but
8 there's other things happening. So it's just, again, you
9 know, evaluation models need to be looking beyond just the
10 measurable outcomes and what else is going on for families
11 and communities.

12 Q And in terms of a timeframe for evaluating
13 programs aimed at education and poverty?

14 A It just needs, it needs to be longer. There
15 needs to be, again, an acceptance of the fact that, you
16 know, people who have been living in poverty for several
17 generations are not likely going to move along the
18 trajectory the way that we did.

19 Q Right.

20 A So the idea that, again, that many people had
21 talked about was recognizing -- and these are people that I
22 interviewed that had gone back as adults, to get their high
23 school, talked about there was really no discussion about
24 education growing up. It wasn't discouraged or encouraged.
25 It, it just wasn't really a priority for families, because

1 they were -- poverty was, you know, sort of the priority
2 and dealing with their poverty, their, and their hunger and
3 their housing were the priorities. So it wasn't really
4 something that was talked about. And so, whereas, I
5 compare it to, you know, in your typical middle class
6 family, over the dinner table, you know, parents are asking
7 their kids, what, what did you do at school today? You
8 know, what are, what are, what, what are you interested in?
9 What are you thinking about doing when you graduate? These
10 discussions don't happen in families that are struggling
11 just to survive and often whose parents have had a really
12 bad experience themselves with education, as is the case
13 that we know for, for many aboriginal people.

14 So the reality of that is that often when people
15 go back to school as adults, they're just, for the first
16 time, thinking about these things. So how is it that we
17 expect them, in six months, to go, get their high school
18 and figure out what they're going to do with their lives?
19 It's just not, it's just not realistic. So it's just so
20 complicated.

21 Q Yes, thank you. You talked a bit about social
22 assistance and what did, what have you studies told you
23 about how, how that's working, in terms of, of getting
24 people out of poverty?

25 A Yeah, the social assistance, I mean, anybody you

1 talk to who is living in poverty will likely have a lot to
2 say about social assistance, the challenges. Again, and I
3 don't mean to suggest this as being, you know, the, the
4 social assistance workers per se, I mean, they too, I mean,
5 not properly resourced, often themselves not given, you
6 know, proper direction, not knowing policies and there's a
7 lot of subjective decisions, arbitrary decisions being made
8 by workers as well. So, you know, there's a whole, a bunch
9 of issues there. But it's the, the trying to get through
10 the system, trying to get the support, even trying to talk
11 to a worker, the income levels themselves, extremely low.
12 You know, housing is one that we talk about in particular,
13 being, being a huge problem, the low level of income people
14 get to, to pay for their housing.

15 The expectations, again, around work, but again,
16 always this sort of short term employment training, to
17 quickly get people into the workforce and often results in
18 either low wage work, you know, part-time work, temporary
19 work. So again, you know, not investing in people as much
20 as is necessary to move them permanently off of social
21 assistance.

22 Q What about other supports that people need to be
23 able to, to get out to work?

24 A Well, that also another challenge, especially
25 childcare.

1 Q You talked about housing. If we pull up, let's
2 see, it's Exhibit 86, it's number 42 on your list. We're
3 in it for the Long Haul. This looks at the impact of
4 rising rents and condo conversions on inner-city
5 neighbourhoods. What, what were the findings of this
6 report?

7 A Well, this is an ongoing issue again and we
8 talked about it in many reports. We focused on it on, in
9 this one, but again, the fact that the shortage of housing
10 is a, is a, is a significant issue for people living in
11 poverty. People can't find decent housing. The issue
12 around condo conversion is huge, as well as the issue
13 around rental units being renovated and then the, so
14 landlords renovating units and then increasing the, the,
15 the rent significantly, as, as a means of sort of getting
16 around rent regulations. Those are big issues for people.

17 There's also a lot of racism in regards to
18 accessing housing. So many, many people that we've talked
19 to -- I'm not sure if I, if we talk about it in this
20 report, but will talk about, you know, phoning to find out
21 about, looking for housing, calling and there's an
22 apartment available and when they get there, it's no longer
23 available and people feeling very much that as soon as they
24 saw that they were aboriginal, they, they -- so this is the
25 feeling that people have. Of course, you know, they can't

1 prove this, but this is certainly something that people
2 talk about a lot.

3 Just a, you know, you, not being properly
4 repaired, housing, you know, so a lot of concerns around,
5 you know, slum landlords. Shortage of social housing,
6 although I have to say that there have been improvements in
7 the last few years in that regard, an increase in social
8 housing in a -- and rehabilitation in social housing, which
9 is having a positive impact, but ...

10 And then the issue of constantly moving, which
11 again, is an issue --

12 Q What's the impact of that on families?

13 A That's a, has a, a significant impact on kids in
14 school, they're constantly moving, not getting, not
15 feeling, becoming connected to a school, not becoming, you
16 know, connected to a, a group of peers. Being able to be
17 invisible in school, so then they eventually, as soon as
18 they can, drop out, because nobody really notices them
19 moving from school to school and of course, just the stress
20 on, on families constantly moving.

21 So housing is a real, real critical issue for the
22 long term impact. There, there's certainly -- if we want
23 to look at reducing poverty and increasing inclusion,
24 housing has to be on the top of the list of things that we
25 address.

1 MS. WALSH: And we will, Mr. Commissioner,
2 ultimately ask this witness for some very specific
3 recommendations at the end of her, her testimony, so we
4 will get the benefit of that.

5

6 BY MS. WALSH:

7 Q In terms of social assistance benefits, there are
8 specific rates --

9 A Right.

10 Q -- allotted for housing; what do you know about
11 those rates?

12 A Well, they're far too low. I mean, they haven't
13 really been increased in any substantial way since about
14 1992, I think. They've gone up, like, 10 dollars here, 10
15 dollars there, but they're still far, far below what people
16 are able to pay. And then as people know, I mean, it's,
17 it's common knowledge that the rents have increased
18 significantly here in, certainly in Winnipeg and so they've
19 not kept pace.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: It's common knowledge what?

21 THE WITNESS: Pardon me?

22 THE COMMISSIONER: You said it's common
23 knowledge ...

24 THE WITNESS: That the rents have increased
25 significantly.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, yes.

2 THE WITNESS: Yeah, and just the social
3 assistance allowance just has not kept pace nearly, not
4 even close.

5

6 BY MS. WALSH:

7 Q So do you know what families do, in terms of
8 strategies, to, to meet their rent?

9 A Sure. Well, they often use their food money to
10 pay for their rent, which again, is, reflects on the use of
11 food banks. Food bank use is, you know, has gone up
12 considerably and there are a lot of people who will, you
13 know, that's how they, they feed themselves, because
14 they're using their rent money, or their food money to pay
15 for their rent.

16 Another thing that happens is overcrowding. So
17 people are, you know, having, living, multiple families in
18 small spaces and you know, so just whatever to survive.

19 And then there's, again, families that are, you
20 know, moving constantly, you know, you know, you'll hear,
21 I'm sure, more about the whole issue of couch surfing. I
22 mean, it's not only individuals that are couch surfing,
23 basically sleeping on -- you know, moving, staying with
24 family or friends for short periods of times, but families
25 as well living that way.

1 Q I'm going to let you finish with specific
2 recommendations, but while we're talking about housing,
3 what's, what are some of the solutions to these issues that
4 you're describing?

5 A Well, one of the, the -- well, there's
6 essentially -- we need more housing, so that's a challenge.
7 We need more social housing that -- social housing is the
8 housing, housing that has some sort of a subsidy attached
9 to it that makes it affordable for people. So we need more
10 social housing. Also need more housing in the private
11 sector, because most people on social assistance still do
12 rent in the private market.

13 The problem with that is, is that it's not, it's
14 not profitable to build apartments for poor people and so,
15 you know, you can't fault the private, private market
16 developers for not being interested in developing units for
17 low income people.

18 We also need to look at tightening up the
19 regulations on what landlords are able to -- there's,
20 there's a case to be made for being able to increase the
21 rents as people renovate their units and so, you know, most
22 people would, would not have a problem with that. But the
23 problem is, is that there's -- the way that's being done
24 and it's not being regulated. So very small repairs will
25 be done and then rents increase significantly and making it

1 not affordable.

2 And then of -- so -- and of course, the other is
3 we need more social assistance money for people who are
4 living in the private sector.

5 Q What kind of an increase have you looked at for
6 social allowance rates?

7 A Well, interestingly, in the past, I guess it's
8 the past year or so, groups have decided -- so this has
9 been not -- I mean, this is not new, that organizations
10 have been calling for an increase in the social assistance
11 allowance rate for housing. It's, it's been for a long
12 time. But of course, the response from governments is that
13 it's too expensive, you know, can't afford it and so, and
14 we're focused on other things, like employment. So, so
15 this, in the past year, several organizations decided,
16 well, we're going to, you know, put forward a, a proposal
17 on, on something that we think is a reasonable request and,
18 and, and put a, a price on it. And you know, find out how
19 much it costs. So organizations have been really rallying
20 around that, the request to increase it to 75 percent of
21 the median market. It's not enough, but, but the argument,
22 or the, I guess the, the idea was that well, let's put that
23 forward because it would be, you know, far better than what
24 people are getting now and it would be, you know, for those
25 people who are concerned that people would be too reliant,

1 you know, or get too comfortable on social assistance, it
2 would address that. So 75 percent of the median market, we
3 were able to cost that out, ask, you know, government was
4 able to give us a cost on it and we estimated it as
5 approximately 20 million, a little bit more, or a little
6 bit less, depending on who, whose numbers you look at.
7 But --

8 THE COMMISSIONER: That's an annual increase?

9 THE WITNESS: Yes, 20 million would be the cost.
10 So that hasn't happened.

11

12 BY MS. WALSH:

13 Q So 75 percent of the median market --

14 A That's right.

15 Q -- so that would be -- the allowance you would
16 receive would be 75 percent of what it costs to rent --

17 A At the median market rent.

18 Q -- something that fits in the median level --

19 A That's right.

20 Q -- in the medium range?

21 THE COMMISSIONER: And the medium level is the,
22 is the same number above as below, or is --

23 THE WITNESS: That's right.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: -- yes --

25 THE WITNESS: Yeah, right. And so we have

1 estimates of what that would be, depending on the size of
2 the housing, of course --

3 THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah, yeah.

4 THE WITNESS: -- it, it differs. And so it would
5 be anywhere from an increase, depending on family size, you
6 know, between 65 and, I think, 200, was sort of the amount,
7 depending on, on who --

8

9 BY MS. WALSH:

10 Q Dollars per month?

11 A Yes. The province, this year, increased it \$20.
12 So --

13 THE COMMISSIONER: To what amount?

14 THE WITNESS: They -- \$20 a month increase. The
15 province, in this budget.

16 THE COMMISSIONER: Took, took it to where? The
17 20 took it to where?

18 THE WITNESS: They gave a 20 dollar increase a
19 month for people on social assistance, for their
20 housing.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: But what is the basic social
22 assistance allowance?

23 THE WITNESS: Oh, I -- there's -- it depends on
24 the family size and I --

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

1 THE WITNESS: -- don't have that data
2 available --

3 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay.

4 THE WITNESS: -- but --

5 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. I --

6 THE WITNESS: -- that was the increase.

7

8 BY MS. WALSH:

9 Q But the figures that you're aiming towards, you
10 say, would be anywhere from sixty --

11 A Sixty-five to 200, I think, a month, is what
12 would be needed to --

13 Q Depending on --

14 A -- bring people up to --

15 Q -- the family size?

16 A Yeah.

17 Q Okay.

18 A Depends on the, the housing, the number of, you
19 know, bedrooms.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: I understand.

21 MS. WALSH: Okay. Let's pull up Exhibit 87,
22 please, which is number 39 on your list. This is called:
23 Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges and this is the state
24 of the inner-city report from 2012.

25

1 BY MS. WALSH:

2 Q So what is this report? What did it focus on?

3 A Well, this report, again, based on what our, the
4 partner organizations wanted to do this year, did two
5 different things. One chapter is about just the challenges
6 that organizations have in, you know, the ongoing
7 challenges around funding, you know, partnerships with
8 governments and the things that they feel need to happen to
9 help them be more effective.

10 And the other piece that we did was we also have
11 a film on this other chapter. We brought in, together some
12 youth from the inner city, aboriginal youth, with youth of
13 similar age from outside of the inner city. So some from
14 Grant Park High School and some from Collège Béliveau in
15 Windsor Park and we brought them together, first we did
16 some workshops with them, with some elders, to talk about
17 the inner city and what their perceptions were of the inner
18 city and for the aboriginal kids, what their experiences
19 were. And then we brought them together for a day at
20 Thunderbird House on Main Street, to spend a day with
21 elders, to talk about the inner city, racism, just their
22 perceptions on things. So that was -- and so we tell that
23 story in this report. So those are the two.

24 Q So let's talk about each aspect --

25 A Sure.

1 Q -- in a little bit more detail.

2 If we can turn to page 12 of the report?

3 Now, this is in the first part where the
4 directors of community-based organizations --

5 A Um-hum.

6 Q -- talked about accountability and
7 sustainability --

8 A Right.

9 Q -- and, as you say, they, they talked about what
10 they needed. And if we scroll down a bit, you can see,
11 they itemize a number of things:

12

13 "Programs that are comprehensive,
14 flexible, responsive, and
15 persevering.

16 Program models that view children
17 in the context of their families
18 rather than narrowly focusing
19 on ..."

20

21 A Um-hum.

22 Q

23 "... policies and programs
24 targeting children exclusively."

25

1 What's the significance of that?

2 A Just all of them generally, or just that
3 particular one?

4 Q That second one.

5 A Okay. What's the second one again? Sorry.

6 Q

7 "... [looking at] children in the
8 context of their families ..."

9

10 A Oh, well, just again, the idea that, you know,
11 you can't -- children have parents and they, they live in,
12 in families and so you can't, you know, just focus on, on
13 children, without looking at the context of their families.
14 I mean, it's just the ongoing issue that we have is that
15 there's sort of a, this idea that we can just pick on one
16 thing and focus our energy on that. So for awhile, it was
17 early learning. Everybody was focused on early learning.
18 Early learning is incredibly important, but if you've got
19 parents who can't find a place to live, are, you know,
20 under all sorts of stress, have addiction issues, all the
21 other stuff that comes with the pressures for many people
22 and you just focus on early learning, you know, it's going
23 to be all for naught. And so this is just the idea that
24 you have to, again, look at the, the complete context and,
25 and have more holistic solutions.

1 Q In terms of some of the challenges then that are
2 listed on the next column, can you talk a bit about those?
3 For instance, number 3, for instance, true collaboration --

4 A Right.

5 Q -- is needed?

6 A Yeah, that was really interesting. Organizations
7 -- the, the, the, the EDs that we, we spoke with talked a
8 lot about this idea of partnerships and you know,
9 everybody's, you know, happy to have a partnership. But
10 the reality is, is that there's a power and balance in
11 these partnerships and you know, there's a lot of
12 expectations put on the community-based organizations and
13 the, you know, funders have all the power. And so they're
14 not really partnerships at all.

15 And so they talked a lot about that, how they
16 wanted to see, you know, better collaboration and they
17 wanted to see -- they talked a lot about this whole idea of
18 accountability and that how, you know, they don't, they
19 don't have problem being accountable to the funders, but
20 they also feel that there needs to be some accountability
21 in, in reverse. And so governments need to be accountable
22 to them, when they decide, for example, to pull some
23 funding for something, you know, arbitrarily, you know,
24 they're, they're not accountable to, to organizations for
25 that, in terms of what the impact's going to be on the

1 community. So that was something they talked a lot about
2 as well, in terms of the whole idea of collaborating.

3 Q And again, something that you talked about:

4

5 "Funders must take a broader view
6 - Recognize there are no quick
7 fixes, no single solutions."

8

9 A Yeah, absolutely.

10 Q I won't go through every aspect of the report,
11 but it is there for us to consider.

12 In terms of the second part of the report, the,
13 the Bridging the Gap, what was the gap that needed to be
14 bridged, when you were talking to the youth?

15 A Basically -- this, this was a very interesting
16 project. The kids, the kids were really talking about the
17 divide in the city. We have this divide and certainly they
18 look at it as, you know, the south side of the tracks and
19 the north side of the tracks. A lot of the kids in the
20 North End don't ever go south of the tracks, because they
21 feel, well, I mean, they, they, they feel they become the
22 focus of attention. They talk a lot about the police and
23 you know, what their, their experiences with the police and
24 being targeted, based on what they look like, a lot of
25 those sorts of things. But they also -- so they talked

1 about their perceptions of the inner city and many of them
2 were negative perceptions. But they also talked about some
3 positive things. The youth from the -- outside the city,
4 again, had similar perceptions, but what was interesting is
5 they actually saw more positive things than the inner-city
6 youth saw themselves. So there was a really interesting
7 bringing these kids together and having dialog and I think
8 what was most interesting about it was that the aboriginal
9 kids, I think, because it was held in their community, in,
10 with their elders, there was a certain balance that was
11 created and the kids from outside of the inner city came
12 into their space and so there was a sharing of dialog that
13 went on that was, I think, not likely would have happened
14 if it would have been somewhere else.

15 But there was, I think there was also, in terms
16 of the breaking the barriers, the aboriginal kids, I think,
17 learned that the non-aboriginal kids from the south side
18 were not as, were not judging them as negatively as they
19 thought they were. So again, it's idea that we learned
20 most from this was that we really need to have this, more
21 of a communication and it's starting with youth, aboriginal
22 and non-aboriginal youths, communicating together to learn
23 about each other.

24 Q The 2009 report, The View from Here, Exhibit 88,
25 it's number 41 on your list.

1 What was this report about?

2 A So that report came about after quite a few years
3 of community organizations were really putting, trying to
4 put pressure on the province to come out with a poverty
5 reduction plan. So that, initially, it was Québec, had,
6 had a, had some legislation on poverty which had folks in
7 Manitoba starting to think, well, we should get, we should
8 look at that as well. Then later on, Newfoundland came out
9 with a poverty reduction strategy. So there was sort of
10 this movement towards poverty reductions strategies
11 happening. There was talk in Nova Scotia and Ontario at
12 the time. Manitoba was not keen at all on putting together
13 a poverty reduction plan. Their argument was that we don't
14 need a plan, we're doing lots of things and we can tell you
15 what we're doing, but, you know, we don't need to have a
16 formal plan.

17 So, as a result of that, groups came together and
18 thought, well, we're going to come up with a plan then that
19 we're going to tell you we think you should implement. So
20 groups got together. There were several consultations that
21 were led by the social planning council and you know,
22 basically went to different communities, to ask people what
23 their priorities were, what they wanted to see happen. So
24 we did our own consultation process. We also went to
25 different community organizations to see what they thought,

1 given their expertise, so the Childcare Association and
2 various others. And so, from that, we put out this with
3 some specific things that we would call, we called on the
4 province to, to do.

5 Q So it does have seven recommendations and we'll
6 come back to them.

7 A Sure.

8 Q Since the report was written, Manitoba has passed
9 legislation --

10 A Yes.

11 Q -- the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act?

12 A Um-hum.

13 Q So that was something that you had hoped to
14 see --

15 A Um-hum.

16 Q -- occur?

17 A Yes.

18 Q What's your understanding of, of the purpose and
19 effect of the legislation?

20 A Well, well, you know, it's not been around that
21 long, it's yet to be seen. There is, built within that,
22 expectations around going to the community and you know,
23 evaluating, based on some indicators. So, you know, it's a
24 step in the right direction. And so, of course, the other
25 piece of that was the, the All Aboard strategy that goes

1 along with it. Again, there's, there's some benefit to it.

2 We would have preferred to have seen some really
3 solid timelines and target around poverty reduction, as we
4 put forward in our report, but there's resistance to that,
5 to setting targets, targets and timelines.

6 Q Okay. So let's go back to the recommendations in
7 The View from Here.

8 A Um-hum.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: In Exhibit 88?

10 MS. WALSH: It's Exhibit 88, yes.

11 THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah.

12

13 BY MS. WALSH:

14 Q Now, the executive summary starts at small Roman
15 numeral nine and lists seven recommendations. I want to go
16 through each one and ask you what progress, if any,
17 Manitoba --

18 A Sure.

19 Q -- has made on the recommendations and --

20 A Okay.

21 Q -- what, if anything, remains to be done.

22 A Sure.

23 MS. WALSH: You've got this, Mr. Commissioner?

24 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

25 MS. WALSH: Okay.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Starting on page --

2 MS. WALSH: It's in the executive summary --

3 THE COMMISSIONER: -- 9, I guess?

4 MS. WALSH: Yes.

5 If we can keep going please? We're almost there.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: Roman 9, is it?

7 MS. WALSH: Roman 9, yes.

8 Next page and we're there. Good, perfect, thank
9 you.

10

11 BY MS. WALSH:

12 Q So starting with number 1 --

13 A Um-hum.

14 Q -- ensure that -- it deals with housing:

15

16 "Ensure that accessible, safe, and
17 affordable housing is available to
18 all Manitobans."

19

20 A So, in that regard, the Province has stepped up,
21 in terms of increasing the supply of social housing. Can't
22 remember what year, a few years ago now, they committed to
23 the, what equals 300 -- I think they had a, a total of 1500
24 units, but it, it came out to the same as what we asked
25 for, the 300 units each year, for five years. They've

1 recently actually increased that. So they are doing some
2 work there.

3 The bigger issue, I have to say, around housing,
4 social housing, is the Federal Government. There's just a
5 lack of -- there's just no commitment at all from the
6 Federal Government. The Provincial Government, in all
7 fairness, is not going to be able to address the shortage
8 of housing without the Federal Government, so that, there's
9 been no movement there. But certainly the Province has
10 stepped out, in terms of creating of new social housing
11 units.

12 Q Okay. In terms of, of concrete recommendations
13 for what remains to be done then, you're saying more
14 housing needs to be built?

15 A Yes, absolutely, it's no, it's nowhere near
16 enough. Our request there was quite a small request, 300
17 units a year, again, trying to be reasonable, to get things
18 moving, but it's, it's not enough, but they certainly have
19 stepped up, for sure, but we do need more as well.

20 Q Stepping outside this specific recommendation --

21 A Um-hum.

22 Q -- you had other recommendations relating --

23 A Yes.

24 Q -- to housing? If you want to just --

25 A That's right.

1 Q -- remind us of those --

2 A Right.

3 Q -- please?

4 A So increasing the EIA allowance. So we talked
5 about the -- we didn't have the 75 percent of the median in
6 this report, but we did talk about increasing the shelter
7 allowance. And so that, again, there's just been, you
8 know, minimal movement on and so that is an area that
9 absolutely needs to be addressed.

10 Q Okay. Scrolling down then to the second
11 recommendation please?

12 Income security.

13 A Um-hum.

14 Q

15 "Ensure that all Manitobans
16 receive a sufficient income to
17 meet their basic needs and ..."

18

19 A Yeah.

20 Q

21 "... participate fully in
22 community life."

23

24 A Yeah, there's not been movement there. You know,
25 there's some things happening, discussion, as a result of

1 the work of the, the ombudsman's report, but I don't think
2 anything's actually been formalized at this point. The
3 issues for social assistance, people on social assistance
4 remain pretty much unchanged.

5 Q So in terms of practical recommendation, what
6 does that look like?

7 A In -- it means -- it, it looks like increases in
8 rates generally. Again, a broader basket of supports for
9 people. The education, what people are -- I'm not too
10 sure, I think there might be a separate one on that, I'm
11 not sure, but allowing people a longer time to, to, to go
12 to school. So this, you know, two year limit and sometimes
13 longer and it's all arbitrary and it's just not, it just
14 does not work. There continues to be this idea that -- and
15 that people are, need to be responsible for their own
16 education. The, the reality of that is, is you know, we
17 can say that all we want, but it's not going to happen.
18 If, if, if, if people aren't supported, they're not going
19 to go.

20 The idea for people on social assistance to take
21 out a, a, a significant loan, like a student loan, is
22 overwhelming and they just wouldn't do it. They would stay
23 on social assistance before they would go into debt to, for
24 education, because they just can't see the long term
25 benefit for themselves. So things like that, I think, are

1 the most critical, supporting people, again, over the
2 longer term while they're on social assistance.

3 Q So okay, because in terms of -- like,
4 practically, what does that look like? If you're saying
5 somebody's not going to be able to go get a, a loan, or
6 isn't going to know how to do that --

7 A Yeah.

8 Q -- how, how are they enabled to do that?

9 A Well, practically, I mean, again, you know,
10 people may or may not agree with, with this and it has been
11 done in the past, it used to be that people who were the,
12 like the ACCESS programs for education, that people on
13 social assistance would receive social assistance for the,
14 to, to obtain their university degree through the ACCESS
15 program. That doesn't exist anymore. People are expected
16 to take out loans.

17 So there are a lot of people who came through
18 those ACCESS programs back when they were fully developed
19 and lot, lot of funding were available and many of those
20 people are community leaders now in the organizations that
21 we work with. So there's a, there's a strong case to be
22 made to simply support people with a living allowance while
23 they get their education and even if it takes six years.

24 Q Was that provincial funding?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Okay. So if we scroll down to the third one
2 please?

3 And you're right, there may be some overlap.

4 A Yeah, I think there's probably overlap.

5 Q But this was education:

6

7 "Ensure that ..."

8

9 A Yeah.

10 Q

11 "... all Manitobans have
12 access ..."

13

14 A Yeah.

15 Q

16 "... to quality educational
17 programs through which they can
18 develop the skills and knowledge
19 that is required to gain
20 meaningful employment and
21 participate in society as informed
22 citizens."

23

24 Now, you've got a number of points --

25 A Um-hum.

1 Q -- underneath there, so --

2 A Yeah, and so one -- those, lot of those relate to
3 the childcare. So having more spaces available and so
4 there has been some improvements there, again.

5 Q If you were to make a specific recommendation as
6 to what needs to be done, or two --

7 A I, I think --

8 Q -- recommendations --

9 A -- that -- the, the childcare one is a bit of a
10 challenge, I mean, because it's, it's about spaces, but
11 it's also about adequately paying people who are providing
12 childcare.

13 Q Yes.

14 A One of the, one of the arguments to be made here,
15 especially when we're talking about aboriginal children, is
16 that we need more early learning providers that are
17 aboriginal. And so we need to, to support aboriginal
18 people to become childcare providers, or early learning
19 professionals. But we, we need to also make sure that
20 they're paid adequately and that's still an ongoing
21 challenge. So and people recognize that as an, an
22 important piece. So it's sort of, you know, twofold there.

23 Head-start programs, again, is another area
24 where, where people believe that we need to see more. So
25 programs in schools, for aboriginal kids, that are

1 aboriginal-focused, built from a cultural identity place.

2 I don't know if we talk about this in here, but
3 I'm going to say now because I think it's a critical one.
4 It may come up, but I'm not sure. The other thing that
5 absolutely has to be done in, in my view, is government
6 needs to recognize the importance of cultural reclamation
7 for aboriginal people within training of all levels. Right
8 now there --

9 Q What does that mean?

10 A -- are organizations that are --

11 THE COMMISSIONER: Recognize the importance of
12 what?

13 THE WITNESS: Of cultural reclamation or, and
14 healing for aboriginal people, people having training, or,
15 or not training, but being, learning about their culture,
16 their history and history of colonization and the impact of
17 residential schools, all those things. We've seen a
18 profound impact of that when it is done in training
19 programs. The problem is, is nobody wants to fund it. So
20 the expectation is, is that well if that's going to happen,
21 you're going to have to figure out some other way to do it.
22 But it's a critical piece at all, all ages.

23

24 BY MS. WALSH:

25 Q So that, that's my next question is what does

1 that look like? Where, where is that reclamation
2 delivered?

3 A It has -- delivered at the, in the community-
4 based organization level is where we've seen it work well.
5 So a very good example is Urban Circle Training Centre.
6 They have, within that program, what they call a life
7 skills program. They call it a life skills program because
8 they were able to get funding for it that way.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: At Red River, did you say?

10 THE WITNESS: This is Urban Circle Training
11 Centre. They're on Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg.

12 But they have fully integrated identity, cultural
13 identity, learning about history, colonization, residential
14 schools and from what -- I mean, and, I mean, there's
15 others that do it, but this is an, an example of one that's
16 been doing it for a long time. It's quite powerful. It's,
17 again, the idea that people, you know, what people will
18 tell you is that I had to learn who I was and where I came
19 from, before I could move forward and so that whole idea of
20 healing.

21

22 BY MS. WALSH:

23 Q So who -- for example, the, the centre, who do
24 they deliver their training to?

25 A To the, this is to the students that attend. So,

1 so an individual who enrolls at Urban Circle Training
2 Centre, for example, to go back to get their grade 12, part
3 of that, part of what they do there is they have a course,
4 or not a course, it's ongoing programming, where they learn
5 about their culture and their history. So it's part of
6 what they teach. So it's not like a one-off class or you
7 know, go to a workshop, or, it's fully integrated into
8 everything that they, they do.

9 Q And you're saying you need to see this more
10 universally --

11 A I think it needs to be --

12 Q -- applied?

13 A -- absolutely, it needs to be -- certainly at the
14 high school level, I mean, so, you know, Pathways to
15 Education is now looking how do we integrate that? Because
16 they're seeing that the, the high school kids that they're
17 working with have no attachment -- or I should -- not all,
18 but many of them have no attachment to their history, to
19 their culture and they're very lost and so it's -- they see
20 a, a hunger for it, an interest in it. But there's no
21 capacity to, to, to do what needs to be done if there's no
22 funding for it.

23 Q So you see it being delivered in, in the
24 schools?

25 A In schools, in community-based organizations. It

1 has to be fully integrated in, at every level. And so
2 head-start programs do a lot of that sort of thing at a
3 very early age, which is good, but we don't have -- you
4 know, there's not enough of these programs.

5 Q Is this training something that would be
6 delivered only to aboriginal people?

7 A Well, interesting that you, you ask that, because
8 that is the challenge that, that this comes up. So we're
9 talking about -- so for Urban Circle Training Centre, they
10 focused on aboriginal people, so it's very easy for them to
11 do it. So for an organization, for example, like Pathways
12 to Education, it's not specifically aboriginal focus, so
13 that is the question, well, do we -- if we fully integrate
14 this into Pathways to Education, is it then excluding, you
15 know, the kids who aren't aboriginal? I think a lot of
16 people would argue that they -- it's not excluding anybody.
17 They're learning about a culture that is part of the
18 history of our community --

19 Q Right.

20 A -- and so, you know, there's nothing exclusive
21 about it is all, it's something that everybody could
22 benefit from.

23 MS. WALSH: Mr. Commissioner, I have about 10, 15
24 minutes left in my questioning of this witness. I don't
25 know if you want to take the afternoon break at this

1 point?

2 THE COMMISSIONER: If you recommend we take it
3 now.

4 MS. WALSH: We could.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: You have one more witness
6 today?

7 MS. WALSH: We do, yes.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. We'll, we'll take
9 a 15 minute break now.

10 MS. WALSH: Okay. Thank you.

11

12 (BRIEF RECESS)

13

14 MS. WALSH: So if we can go back to that, the
15 executive summary from The View from Here, please. We were
16 at number 4.

17

18 BY MS. WALSH:

19 Q So this is under the heading Neighbourhood and
20 Community Approaches:

21

22 "Ensure low-income communities
23 have sufficient resources to
24 enable their residents to actively
25 participate in the improvement of

1 their lives and the communities
2 they live in."

3

4 So what's this recommendation aimed at?

5 A This particular recommendation is really around
6 the idea that community-based approaches are approaches
7 that people like, but they're not adequately resources.
8 And so they want to see more support for community-based
9 projects. So, for example, the first one talks about
10 Neighbourhoods Alive! It's a provincial initiative that is
11 held in quite high regard in the, in communities. It's
12 very much focused on inner-city communities. They've,
13 they've been, past years, expanded that program, but they
14 haven't increased the amount of money. So it's expanded to
15 more neighbourhoods, but it's less monies per
16 neighbourhood. And so that, those sorts of -- again, just
17 needs to be greater investment in, in those sorts of
18 organizations.

19 Increasing the number of adult learning centres,
20 those are centres such as Urban Circle Training Centre and
21 there are others. But the idea that the -- it is a common
22 trajectory for aboriginal people to drop out of school and
23 go back as adults. They seem to like to, when they go
24 back, to go to a smaller environment, where they, they
25 have, you know, it's, it's more comfortable, they're around

1 other people with similar experiences and they seem to do
2 better in those sorts of environments and so more of those
3 sorts of models need to be available for people.

4 Q So adult aboriginal education --

5 A Right.

6 Q -- centres?

7 A Yeah --

8 Q Okay.

9 A -- in smaller settings for people to back and
10 learn and then, again, looking at how to establish those,
11 where there's childcare available. So, for example,
12 there's been one recently established in Lord Selkirk Park,
13 which is a --

14 Q Right.

15 A -- housing development; right? And so they have
16 childcare available, as well as ability to get their grade
17 12.

18 And again, people talked a lot about the idea of
19 parent-child centres in high needs schools being available
20 as well. So we -- there was a target on that. As far as I
21 know, there hasn't been -- I, I can't speak to that one for
22 sure, in terms of what's been done in that area.

23 But there's been a few more adult learning
24 centres developed, such as the Lord Selkirk Park, but more
25 of that needs to be done yet.

1 Q Okay. Moving on, transportation:

2

3 "Ensure that accessible and
4 affordable public transportation
5 is available to all Manitobans."
6

7 A This is one that comes up a lot for people,
8 again, just the, the inability to get around. It's
9 something that we take, take for granted, not having access
10 to, you know, not having sufficient money to take the bus,
11 for example. So we talked about having it possible for
12 people to have, to, to, to have free bus service in off-
13 peak hours. That hasn't been done. It's something that
14 has been done in other places and Brandon had it at one
15 point. I'm not sure if it's still available in Brandon.
16 But the idea to give people, you know, the ability to get
17 around and, and take advantage of, you know, different
18 recreation opportunities around town, so that would be a
19 very helpful thing which we haven't yet seen.

20 Q Do you know, does social assistance provide an
21 allowance for bus passes?

22 A No, they'll provide bus passes for people if
23 they're looking for work and, or bus tickets and that, for,
24 but they're not, people don't get a bus pass on social
25 assistance.

1 Q Disability supports:

2

3 "Ensure that all persons with
4 disabilities in Manitoba achieve
5 full inclusion in the social,
6 cultural, political and economic
7 spheres of society"

8

9 So what, what's the specific recommendation?

10 A This was one that was raised again by the groups
11 that we were involved with at, involved in disability
12 organizations, again, you know, the continuing barriers
13 that exist for people with disabilities. I can't speak to
14 what -- there has -- there is something -- there has been
15 some progress in this regard and I'm not specifically clear
16 about what it is. It's not an area that I'm, have
17 expertise in. But you know, it's ongoing, continues to be
18 an ongoing theme, nonetheless, for people, disabilities,
19 that barriers continue to exist.

20 Q So one of the barriers that contributes to, to
21 poverty issues?

22 A Absolutely, yes.

23 Q And inclusion issues. And then the last one,
24 Health:

25

1 "Ensure that publicly funded
2 physical and mental health
3 services are accessible to all
4 Manitobans."

5

6 A This too is an ongoing issue. I mean, and I
7 can't remember, there's --

8 Q Can we scroll down please?

9 A -- if we outline specifically. You, you mean,
10 one of the issues, for sure, is people with mental health
11 issues and families with mental health issues, is it, and
12 is an ongoing issue, not, not recognized. And I know that
13 there's been some work done, in terms of housing, which I'm
14 sure you'll hear about, making housing more accessible to
15 people with mental health issues.

16 But generally speaking, access to health is a
17 challenge for people who are living in poverty.

18 Q Why is that?

19 A Pardon?

20 Q Why is that?

21 A Well, I mean, the people that we've talked to,
22 when we did our social determinants of health book, we
23 talked about a lot, a lot of this issue. People are often,
24 you know, less likely to talk to their physicians, or their
25 medical professionals about what their issues are, or

1 they're, they're not, they're not going to be as assertive
2 about what their health concerns are. They're often just,
3 you know, pushed through more quickly, more likely to be
4 given medication to get them through, out the door quicker.
5 People will talk about the number of -- how easy it is, on
6 Main Street, for example, to go in and get prescriptions.
7 And so, this, this continued resistance to look at, again,
8 all of the determinants of health and treat them
9 appropriately. So looking at, you know, if somebody comes
10 in, presenting with an illness, what's going on with their
11 housing? What's going on -- you know, there's, there's
12 often other things going on. Do they have a proper bed to
13 sleep in, on, is that why they have, you know, is their
14 back pain as a result of that? So, you know, people just
15 aren't -- all the challenges for people living in poverty
16 aren't, aren't looked at, when it comes to the presenting
17 symptoms of --

18 Q So practically --

19 A -- health.

20 Q -- speaking, what would, what could be done to
21 address that kind of accessibility issue?

22 A You know, there are some excellent physicians in
23 this city, for sure, who do look at the social determinants
24 of health in, in, in their clinics and so more of that is,
25 is really required. They're -- increasingly, I think that,

1 in medical school, they are looking at the social
2 determinants of health. But it still tends to be, you
3 know, more the medical model that is the focus. So part of
4 that is really an education for medical profession, more
5 than, you know -- and, and so I don't know how that
6 would actually be a, you know, something that could
7 be prescribed. But certainly, it does go, get back to
8 the education of people who are providing medical
9 services.

10 Q So even having an awareness of, of these --

11 A Absolutely.

12 Q -- various issues is important --

13 A Absolutely.

14 Q -- for service providers?

15 A Absolutely. And we are increasingly seeing that
16 more generally and there are, again, some people and some
17 clinics in the city that are really good, but, you know,
18 it's just not as -- we're not doing as, as well as we could
19 be.

20 Q In making these seven recommendations, was any
21 thought given to the lives of children in particular? Were
22 their needs taken into account in formulating these
23 recommendations?

24 A Yeah, I would say that in all that we do, we, we
25 think about families more broadly, so children in the

1 context of families and their parents. We didn't -- you
2 know, we certainly looked at education in terms of specific
3 things, in terms of early learning, but I would say, more
4 generally, that we looked, we looked, we put our
5 recommendations forward in the context that, you know,
6 children are poor because their parents are poor and so we
7 need to look at, look at how we, we address poverty more
8 generally.

9 MS. WALSH: Okay. There is -- Mr. Commissioner,
10 you identified that we didn't file the 2011 state of the
11 inner-city report and I think we should, actually. I did
12 want to refer the witness to one aspect of it --

13 THE COMMISSIONER: That --

14 MS. WALSH: -- so that would be our next exhibit.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: That'll be Exhibit 89.

16 THE CLERK: That's correct.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, before -- while we're
18 doing that, witness, the, this one we've just been
19 discussing, the call for a poverty reduction plan, who,
20 who, who, who did you give that to? Where -- what was the,
21 what was the circulation?

22 THE WITNESS: We provided that to government, so
23 to, certainly to the premier and to the appropriate
24 ministers and you know, to, we also always provide things
25 to the opposition parties and so we generally, you know,

1 try to distribute it broadly.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: It was mainly directed to the
3 Provincial Government?

4 THE WITNESS: To -- that's right, yes. It was
5 very much focused on the Provincial Government, the is
6 particular document.

7 THE COMMISSIONER: And they did react to the
8 point of passing legislation?

9 THE WITNESS: Yeah, they did react and they did,
10 there are a few things that they did move forward on,
11 specifically the housing targets.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

13 THE WITNESS: Lots more to do, but they certainly
14 have done some things.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Right.

16 THE CLERK: Exhibit 89.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 89.

18

19 **EXHIBIT 89: STATE OF THE INNER**
20 **CITY REPORT, NEOLIBERALISM "WHAT A**
21 **DIFFERENCE A THEORY MAKES"**

22

23 MS. WALSH: So that's number 43, if you want to
24 pull that one up on your screen, please.

25

1 BY MS. WALSH:

2 Q Dr. MacKinnon, when you were talking earlier
3 about assessment, you said that, that you had a, an
4 appreciation for qualitative assessment, or evaluation and
5 talked about the significance of that. And I know that
6 there is one aspect of -- there's a quote from this report
7 that stuck with you.

8 If we can turn to page 38 please, of the report?
9 It'll say page 38 at the bottom, so I think maybe --

10 THE CLERK: (Inaudible).

11 MS. WALSH: There we go. There. If you can go
12 back up to the top of the page? There we go.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: What page is that?

14 MS. WALSH: It's, it's page 38 --

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Thirty-eight?

16 MS. WALSH: -- on the actual report.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

18 MS. WALSH: The second column, at the top, Mr.
19 Commissioner.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

21

22 BY MS. WALSH:

23 Q So Dr. MacKinnon, if you can identify the, the
24 aspect of this quote and, and the significance of it that
25 was profound for you?

1 A I think what's significant about this quote is
2 this is an individual who went to Urban Circle Training.
3 Earlier in here, there's a quote from her that talks about
4 the significance of her learning about her culture and her
5 history and feeling proud to be an aboriginal woman, as a
6 result of that. And then this quote speaks to what
7 happened to her after. She got her grade 12 at Urban
8 Circle Training Centre. She went on and got her, her
9 Bachelor's degree -- or, well, she continued on, after she
10 got her grade 12, and took another course there. And then
11 she went on and got her Bachelor of Social Work degree at
12 the University of Manitoba ACCESS program, in the inner
13 city. And then since then, she talks about other family
14 members that went back, as a result. And so what she says
15 is, you know, she then had, you know, children, her, her,
16 her sibling went back to university, her children went on
17 to, to school, went back to school and got, were in
18 university and then she talked about how now she has
19 grandchildren that are in school and are talking about
20 going on to university. So the, sort of the breaking of
21 the cycle for this family and she talks about it, it being
22 the norm now, going to school and being educated and, and
23 seeing that, that there's, there's opportunities out there
24 for, for, for them. So it's, it took, you know, seven
25 years for this woman to, to go back and get her grade 12

1 and, and eventually, but there's a whole family now for
2 whom the cycle of poverty is, has likely been broken. So I
3 think that is what all of this is about, is recognizing the
4 benefit of investing over the long term in people and
5 recognizing that, you know, the payoff will come for, for,
6 for the next generation.

7 Q And that concept of, of seeing the cycle of
8 poverty being broken is, is extremely hopeful to see,
9 because, of course, these are issues of longstanding and,
10 and it's easy to be cynical about whether they can be
11 addressed?

12 A Absolutely, and so this is a good example of how
13 they absolutely can.

14 Q So finally, do you have any other
15 recommendations, suggestions, for the Commissioner, to
16 address the, the results of the, the many studies that
17 you've done, looking at the state of inner-city life and
18 aboriginal people living in the inner city? Anything that
19 we haven't covered?

20 A There's one more that I'd just like to point out,
21 because it is one that we've been working with a lot of
22 organizations with more recently and, and have, have done
23 some preliminary work on. But it really is based on what
24 we're, we know and it's common, again, knowledge in our
25 province, that the, the, the, the labour market of our

1 futures, it's aboriginal people. There's a growing
2 population. It's a younger population and, and you know,
3 you know, this is being talked about at, at, at several
4 levels. But one of the challenges is that, because we have
5 this continued barriers, the reality that for many, not
6 all, but for many aboriginal people who have had no
7 attachment to the labour market, that the idea of work is,
8 is, is something that they're not, you know, that they're
9 not always used to. So the idea of having a, a, an, an
10 ability to transition people into employment and to support
11 people through that, that, through that transition and I
12 don't just mean the people who have gotten some, have
13 received training and, and are now seeking work, because
14 also employers. Because there's a whole, you know, there's
15 expectations often for employers that people will have
16 received training and they will come to work and you know,
17 they will, you know, adapt to the culture of work. But
18 that's not a, a simple transition for many people to make.
19 And so we really need to do more and that's another thing
20 that there's absolutely no funding for, this sort of
21 transition through employment. And so the, the -- often
22 what happens is, is work, work breaks down and people end
23 up either quitting their jobs, or losing jobs. So that's
24 another really important piece that we need to take
25 seriously. But again, it requires funding from government

1 to make that happen.

2 Q So does that, is that a sort of, like a, a
3 mentoring program or something?

4 A The model that we talk about is called a labour
5 market intermediary and it's been done in other places.
6 It's, it's been fairly successful in the U.S. We, we've
7 been talking about it specifically to, to, to try doing
8 this with a, the aboriginal population, so a labour -- an
9 aboriginal focused labour market intermediary. It would be
10 a community-based organization that the governance
11 structure would be, would involve employers, training
12 organizations, government. But it would be outside of
13 government. It would be a place where people would feel
14 comfortable to go to that have not worked before. But
15 also, it would have on staff that would continue to be the
16 liaison between, to work with the, the trainee as they sort
17 of establish themselves in the workplace. So there
18 currently isn't anything like that and there seems to be
19 resistance, again, to support something like that.

20 Q Resistance from employers?

21 A From the -- no, no, from the government, just in
22 terms of supporting, putting resources towards. I think
23 the, I think it'd be fair to say that they would argue that
24 they can do that themselves. We would argue that it needs
25 to be done at the community level, again, supported by

1 employers, with government people at the table as well.

2 Q So would that address issues, for instance, if,
3 if you've never seen anyone in your family go to work, I
4 would think that it would be hard to get up and go every
5 day?

6 A Absolutely, yeah. I mean, and, I mean, and
7 again, this is something that, you know, we, we take for
8 granted. But many of us, if we look back at our own work
9 histories, we, you know, we saw somebody going to work
10 every day, or we often got our first job because of someone
11 that we knew, that was able to connect us to a job. And
12 people who live in poverty, especially those in inter-
13 generational poverty, don't have those sorts of networks
14 and often, you know, just don't have, haven't had exposure
15 to that world. So we, you know, we need to recognize that
16 there's a transition that needs to happen and individuals
17 have to be supported. But as to employers --

18 Q Right.

19 A -- who have committed to hire, hiring them.

20 MS. WALSH: Thank you, that's very helpful.

21 Mr. Commissioner, those are my questions.

22 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you.

23 Anyone out in the gallery wish to ask questions?

24 No, it would appear not.

25 All right, witness, thank you very much for

1 coming --

2 THE WITNESS: Thanks.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: -- and you've been of
4 assistance to us and I appreciate --

5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: -- your attendance.

7 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

8 MS. WALSH: Thank you.

9

10 (WITNESS EXCUSED)

11

12 MS. WALSH: So we'll call our next witness, Lyna
13 Hart.

14 THE CLERK: All right. If you could just stand
15 for a moment please?

16 THE WITNESS: Sure.

17 THE CLERK: Is it your choice to swear on the
18 Bible or affirm without the Bible.

19 THE WITNESS: Oh, I'm okay.

20 THE CLERK: Either way, which would you like, the
21 Bible or no Bible?

22 THE WITNESS: It doesn't matter.

23 THE CLERK: It's up to you.

24 THE WITNESS: Yeah, the Bible's good.

25 THE CLERK: Okay.

1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

2 THE CLERK: Just take the Bible in your right
3 hand right there and just state your full name to the
4 court.

5 THE WITNESS: My name is Lyna Hart.

6 THE CLERK: And just spell us your first name.

7 THE WITNESS: L-Y-N-A, Hart, H-A-R-T.

8 THE CLERK: Thank you.

9

10 **LYNA HART**, sworn, testified as
11 follows:

12

13 THE CLERK: Thank you, you may be seated.

14 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

15 MS. WALSH: Sorry, just trying to organize the,
16 the documents that I'm going to file as exhibits with Ms.
17 Hart's examination. So before we, we begin, I have a
18 number of documents to file that we will be referring to as
19 exhibits.

20 And Ms. Hart, they're going to appear -- whenever
21 I refer to them, they'll appear on the monitor in front of
22 you and if you feel that you want to have a hard copy, if I
23 refer to something, we can give you the hard copy.

24 THE WITNESS: All right.

25 MS. WALSH: The, the next document would be the

1 ombudsman's report on Manitoba's employment and income
2 assistance program, dated May 2010.

3 THE CLERK: That's Exhibit 90.

4 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Exhibit 90.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

6 THE CLERK: Exhibit 90.

7

8 **EXHIBIT 90: OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT ON**
9 **MANITOBA'S EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME**
10 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, DATED MAY 2010**

11

12 MS. WALSH: And then the 2012 Report Card on Goal
13 20/20, Half the Hunger, Winnipeg Harvest Inc., Fighting
14 Hunger and Feeding Hope.

15 THE CLERK: Exhibit 91. Exhibit 91.

16 THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 91, 212 (sic) report
17 card on Goal to 2020, Half the Hunger.

18

19 **EXHIBIT 91: THE 2012 REPORT CARD**
20 **ON GOAL 2020, HALF THE HUNGER,**
21 **WINNIPEG HARVEST INC., FIGHTING**
22 **HUNGER AND FEEDING HOPE**

23

24 MS. WALSH: Then the next exhibit: A More
25 Inclusive and Generous Canada, the 2012 Acceptable Living

1 Level.

2 THE CLERK: Exhibit 92.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: Ninety-two. Thank you.

4

5 **EXHIBIT 92: A MORE INCLUSIVE AND**
6 **GENEROUS CANADA, THE 2012**
7 **ACCEPTABLE LIVING LEVEL**

8

9 MS. WALSH: Next is the Special Rapporteur's
10 report on the right to food, May 2012, from the United
11 Nations.

12 THE CLERK: Exhibit 93.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 93. Thank you.

14 THE CLERK: Exhibit 93.

15

16 **EXHIBIT 93: REPORT ON THE RIGHT**
17 **TO FOOD, PREPARED BY SPECIAL**
18 **RAPPORTEUR, OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER**

19

20 MS. WALSH: And finally, Hunger Count 2012, a
21 Comprehensive Report on Hunger and Food Bank Use in Canada
22 and Recommendations for Change.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 94.

24 THE CLERK: Exhibit 94.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

1 THE CLERK: Exhibit 94.

2

3 **EXHIBIT 94: HUNGER COUNT 2012, A**
4 **COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON HUNGER AND**
5 **FOOD BANK USE IN CANADA AND**
6 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE**

7

8 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. WALSH:

9 Q So we'll start, Ms. Hart, by going through a bit
10 of your background, so that the Commissioner knows who you
11 are and, and where you speak from.

12 A Okay.

13 Q You are an elder?

14 A Yes, I am.

15 Q And you're employed by Southeast Resource
16 Development Council as the acting tribal nursing officer --

17 A Yes.

18 Q -- is that right? You also work as the tribal
19 home and community care HIV, AIDS and aboriginal diabetes
20 initiative coordinator?

21 A Right.

22 Q That's quite a mouthful. You've worked in the
23 University of Manitoba's ACCESS program as nursing ACCESS
24 program coordinator?

25 A Yes, I, I have.

1 Q Okay. And you've worked as a health care aide
2 instructor through Red River College's distance education?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. You also work as a, you describe yourself
5 as a facilitator and counsellor with aboriginal women?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you are a board member of the food bank,
8 Winnipeg Harvest?

9 A Yes.

10 Q What are some of the other boards that you are
11 involved with?

12 A Oh, my goodness, the, the Assembly of Manitoba
13 Chief (sic) Health Information Research Governance
14 Committee that governs all of research in First Nation
15 communities. I'm the southern co-chair.

16 Q You're involved with the Nursing Leadership
17 Council of First Nations and Inuit Health Canada?

18 A Yes.

19 Q You're a member of which Cree Nation?

20 A Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, formerly called
21 Nelson House.

22 Q You're also a survivor of residential schools?

23 A Yes, I am.

24 Q Okay. And you were recently featured in a film
25 about residential schools?

1 A Yes, it was about my life in residential school.

2 Q That was the film called, We Were Children?

3 A Yes.

4 Q You graduated from Red River College's Southern
5 Nursing Program in 1990?

6 A Yes, I did.

7 Q Have I missed anything about how you want to
8 describe yourself?

9 A I'm a grandmother and a great-grandmother.

10 Q Okay. Now, you -- you're on the board of
11 Winnipeg Harvest?

12 A Yes, I am.

13 Q I also understand that, that you've had personal
14 experience with using a food bank?

15 A Yes, I have.

16 Q And --

17 A In --

18 Q -- how did that happen?

19 A -- in 1990, I went through a separation with my
20 partner. I always firmly believed that, you know,
21 relationships last forever, but it doesn't happen that way,
22 life happens and rather than, you know, fight for, you
23 know, dividing up everything, I just thought I didn't want
24 to bother with it. Like, all of the articles, you know,
25 between his and hers, that wasn't important at the time. I

1 needed to be away and I became homeless and I lived in my
2 van. I didn't have a place to go and I didn't want to go
3 and impose on my mother, because she's an elder and she has
4 limited amount of funding. And somehow, a friend, another
5 nurse, heard about my predicament and she asked me to come
6 and stay with her. And she was through the situation that
7 I was in and so she was fully aware of, you know, what it
8 feels like not to have anything except, you know, the, your
9 clothes and your personal belongings.

10 Q And so that, that was the time period in which
11 you relied on the food bank?

12 A Yes, I did. It was very difficult, but I had to
13 hold my head up high and I had to go present myself to the
14 food bank and I did and I received the package of food that
15 I needed in order to survive for a little while and
16 thinking in my mind with the promise that I would give
17 back. And a lot of people, you know, have a lot of
18 misconceptions as to who uses the food bank. There's
19 people from all walks of life. You know, when a
20 predicament happens, or something happens in their life and
21 you know, they're without income, that they need to rely on
22 the food bank. So it's just not, you know, people that are
23 suffering from poverty.

24 Q So when we talk about the food bank, from its
25 website, which is a, a public document, Winnipeg Harvest

1 has its mission statement, where it describes that, itself
2 as:

3

4 "... a non-profit, community-based
5 organization committed to
6 providing food to people who
7 struggle to feed themselves and
8 their families."

9

10 And it says:

11

12 "We are also committed to
13 maximizing public awareness of
14 hunger while working towards long-
15 term solutions to hunger and
16 poverty."

17

18 And I want to spend some time today with you,
19 talking about Winnipeg Harvest and the work it does. What,
20 what is food security?

21 A Food security is that all people, at all times,
22 will have access to food. And I really believe that people
23 have the right to food.

24 Q And then to be, to have insecurity, food
25 insecurity means, means what?

1 A Well, for me, when I take a look at food
2 insecurity and I'm just going to give an example, in terms
3 of First Nation communities, people in First Nation
4 communities, food travels from a long way, like, sometimes
5 you get, you know, food from Chile, or you get food from
6 Mexico. So what happens is, by the time that it reaches a
7 First Nation community, what happens is that it's not, it's
8 nutritionally deficient and it's put on the shelf and
9 that's what people have access to. And when you talk about
10 that food insecurity, if a person is suffering from a
11 chronic disease, such as diabetes or cancer, then they
12 don't have adequate nutrition for their bodies to heal.

13 Q Okay. In terms of Winnipeg Harvest, as an
14 organization, again, its website talks about the fact that
15 it runs with the help of, of volunteers and that it had
16 more than 347,000 volunteer hours in the year April 2011 to
17 March 2012, which is the equivalent of a hundred and
18 seventy full time jobs.

19 A Um-hum.

20 Q How does that compare to the size of its staff?

21 A It compares in a ration about seven to one, which
22 means for every seven volunteers who have -- we, Winnipeg
23 Harvest has one paid staff member. This hope that has
24 touched countless people and explains why so many of our
25 current and former recipients are fiercely loyal volunteers

1 and that's, you know, where I fit in as well.

2 Q So that's an interesting point, is that it has,
3 as an organization, it relies heavily on volunteers --

4 A Um-hum.

5 Q -- I think it's fair to say that a good
6 proportion of its volunteers are former clients, or current
7 clients?

8 A Yes.

9 Q What does that signify to you?

10 A What it signifies for me that it's very holistic
11 when people have healed from whatever it is that they're
12 suffering from, like, when you take a look at all walks of
13 life of people, a lot of people have historical trauma that
14 is associated with their lives and you know, for some
15 unfortunate reason, they end up in poverty. People come
16 from all over the place to Winnipeg and I'm talking not
17 just about aboriginal people that need to come here in
18 order to take, to get their medical needs met, but people
19 that are, you know, fleeing from war torn countries. And
20 when you take a look at all those things and you -- it's
21 reciprocal, in terms of Winnipeg Harvest. They get, but
22 they also give back.

23 Q And is that important?

24 A Yes, it's very important, in order to be healthy,
25 in terms of your, your body, mind, spirit and emotions.

1 Q Tell us about the, the numbers of people that
2 Winnipeg Harvest is feeding?

3 A Oh my goodness, on an average, 63,482 individuals
4 a month, with nearly 50 percent of them being children.

5 Q So what was that number? Over 64,000?

6 A Sixty-three four eighty-two.

7 Q Almost, almost 64,000 --

8 A Yeah.

9 Q -- 63,000 --

10 A Um-hum.

11 Q -- a month?

12 A Yes, a month.

13 Q And almost half of them are children?

14 A Yes.

15 Q That represents an increase from previous years?

16 A Yes, it has.

17 Q How significant an increase?

18 A I'll give an example. We have a parent-child
19 assistance program within our tribal council and it was, it
20 now translated itself as the Star program. And within the
21 Southeast Tribal Councils, there's fly-in communities and
22 there's drive-in communities. And within the fly-in
23 communities, it's very difficult to find -- to be able to
24 purchase baby formula. And with the (inaudible) program,
25 like, what they do is that they want to increase

1 breastfeeding, but sometimes it's difficult when you suffer
2 from chronic disease and you're unable to breastfeed your
3 child. And then you take a look at the Northern Store that
4 supplies the baby formula, it's very, very expensive. And
5 so when taking a look at that, Winnipeg Harvest, through
6 their baby formula program, Hunger for Hope provides the,
7 the baby formula to the people in the north.

8 Q So that's an example of, of one of the solutions,
9 or one of the ways in which Harvest is supporting the
10 population, at least in terms of emergency food?

11 A Yes.

12 Q So if you say over 30,000 children and I'm,
13 again, I'm referring back to their website, over 30,000
14 children are clients of the food bank on a monthly basis?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And Winnipeg Harvest also supplies food to over
17 300 agencies?

18 A Yes.

19 Q So that would include daycares and school
20 programs and other food banks across the province; is, is
21 that right?

22 A Yes, it is right. And what I like about the food
23 that it, it provides the schools also, in turn, have a, you
24 know, access to Winnipeg Harvest, where they come and they
25 help sort out the food and they take tours. I had my

1 grandchildren, as part of Mulvey School, come with me into
2 the food bank and they've helped sort food out.

3 Q And, and that's, that's another thing that
4 happens at Winnipeg Harvest, is not only does it have
5 volunteers, but many of their volunteers are children?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Which leads me to, to the next question, Harvest
8 often says it's more than just a food bank; what does it
9 mean when it says that?

10 A There's a lot of mentorship and apprenticeship
11 programs at Harvest that are offered to the volunteers and
12 clients, to give them life skills and tools that they need
13 to become employable. Training opportunities include safe
14 food handling certification course, forklift training,
15 computer, cooking classes, nutrition classes, gardening,
16 non-violence crisis intervention, hunger and poverty
17 awareness and, and more.

18 Q So those are all in addition to, to providing
19 emergency food to individuals and food to agencies, Harvest
20 has a number of training programs and, and some of them, or
21 many of them related to employment?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And how is Harvest funded?

24 A Harvest is, gets its revenue in terms of grants
25 and donations, no government funding, per se and does not

1 receive any money from the United Way. It relies strictly
2 on donations to keep trucks moving and the food flowing to
3 the hunger. For each dollar donated, Winnipeg Harvest can
4 distribute \$20 worth of food.

5 Q And that's because it is able to rely on so many
6 volunteer hours?

7 A Yes.

8 Q That's, that's where that 20 -- where that
9 formula, one dollar translates into \$20 comes from?

10 A Yes.

11 THE COMMISSIONER: Plus, I assume that you get
12 food, besides donations, at a reduced price from grocery
13 stores and so on; is that --

14 THE WITNESS: Yes.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: -- yes. That, then that comes
16 into the equation that you just mentioned.

17 THE WITNESS: Yes.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah.

19

20 BY MS. WALSH:

21 Q Going back to, to talking about Harvest being a
22 place where you can see children actually making a
23 difference and, and volunteering, you know that I've, I've
24 spent a fair bit of time there and would you agree that,
25 that there's a, a spirit at Harvest that belies the, the

1 underlying reason for its existence?

2 A Yes. Previously to my being at Harvest, Dave
3 Courchene was there and in taking a look at all of the work
4 that we were doing within Harvest, myself, you know, being
5 a spiritual advisor, is trying to -- and also with my
6 background in health and nursing and nutrition and all of
7 that, when you take a look at, at Harvest, from my point of
8 view, I, I believe that it takes a look at all of this
9 (inaudible) in terms of holistically. That's how I feel
10 when I'm in there, it takes a look at body, mind, spirit
11 and emotions.

12 I've had a chance to educate people on a
13 PowerPoint presentation on residential schools. I educate
14 the board on my film, We Were Children, and about the
15 residential school era. So it's just much more than that
16 and they're always willing to provide a listening ear and
17 want to, you know, take a look at everything from a, more
18 than a general perspective. It's looking at everything in
19 terms of more than just Winnipeg. And when I take a look
20 at that, like, Food Banks Canada, I went to the first AGM
21 and I was really amazed at all the food banks coming
22 together and I never ate so much chocolate. That's just
23 another aspect of it that I found that people really cared.
24 I, I didn't find that, you know, with my presenting myself
25 as an aboriginal people, that there was any thought other

1 than what we needed to do as a people. Like, there was no
2 racism. Everybody was vying for the same thing and you
3 know, if they saw you, like, coming in for lunch, they
4 would invite you to a table and then we'd talk about all
5 the different work that we do. And I'm always learning,
6 not just from, you know, the board or the staff. I'm
7 learning from the volunteers as well and it's, you know,
8 good to sit with them and have a meal to, to say, okay, you
9 know, what's their perspective and what's their take?

10 Q And --

11 A And to me, that's, that's holism and holistic
12 approach.

13 Q -- the holistic approach creates an environment
14 that is, I guess you've described it as, as a welcoming
15 environment, or --

16 A Oh, yes.

17 Q Having said that, is having to rely on the food
18 bank, as nice as Harvest might be, what is that like? Is,
19 is that a, an attractive thing to have to do?

20 A Well, I said I had to hold my head up high in
21 order to go in there because, you know, there was a lot of
22 different emotions, but I knew I needed help and I didn't
23 have a income at the time. So I had to be able to feed
24 myself in order to go and apply for a job that I needed.
25 And I was, I was in between jobs, because I had just

1 finished a contract, but I didn't have any income coming in
2 when I went through the difficulty.

3 Q I'm thinking more in terms of how, how does going
4 to Winnipeg Harvest to, to get food, compare to the
5 experience of being able to go to the grocery store?

6 A It's a very difficult thing to do and when I
7 think back to when I went to Harvest, I felt shame when I
8 first went there and when I took a look at the other people
9 that were there, I said I'm, I'm no different and I think
10 that's, that's the biggest -- it's an eye opener.

11 Q Um-hum.

12 A And I realized that it impacts a lot of people,
13 not just people living in poverty.

14 Q And when you go to Winnipeg Harvest, can you
15 just, like, shop as though you're shopping at a grocery
16 store?

17 A No.

18 Q So how, how do you get something?

19 A You get your, you get your, the packages that are
20 sorted out and since I've been there, serving as a board
21 member, I make sure that, you know, there's food there that
22 has to help somebody that, you know, is suffering from
23 chronic disease and that they have the adequate nutrition
24 that they need. But at the time that I received my little
25 package, I had my break, I had my peanut butter and I had,

1 you know, cans of soup and you know, it's not looking at
2 all the four groups like they, they tell you, in terms of
3 public awareness that you need to eat from the four groups
4 in order to remain healthy.

5 Q And you can't go very week --

6 A No.

7 Q -- to the food bank?

8 A No.

9 Q You can only go, I think, twice, twice a month?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And is there much in the way of choice, or you
12 have to take what, what's offered?

13 A You have to take what's given to you.

14 Q Okay.

15 A People are getting more knowledgeable too, in
16 terms of what to give to the food bank, because a lot of
17 times, there's a call that's put out on what kind of food
18 is needed.

19 Q In terms of reasons why people need the food
20 bank, we've heard about, from the previous witness, she
21 talked about people using their food budget to pay for
22 rent?

23 A Exactly.

24 Q And that, that's something that, that you're
25 aware of through your experience with the food bank?

1 A Yes. But also happens in First Nation
2 communities, because they don't receive adequate social
3 assistance and they have to use their money for other
4 things that come up, like, emergencies and that and you
5 know, when you take a look at the income assistance, it
6 doesn't factor in all of those.

7 Q Certain costs in a person's life are fixed?

8 A Yes.

9 Q So then the food, the food budget becomes the
10 source of discretionary income?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And I know that Harvest has worked with the
13 ombudsman's office on this issue.

14 If we can pull up Exhibit 90 please? Document
15 19, and go to page 4, the executive summary.

16 This report from the ombudsman's office sets out
17 findings and conclusions of an investigation that the
18 ombudsman did into the Employment and Income Assistance
19 Program. The report contains 68 recommendations for
20 administrative improvement and it says that it was:

21

22 "... undertaken in response to a
23 complaint from twelve community
24 organizations, many of whom have
25 clients who are also participants

1 in the [Employment Income
2 Assistance] Program."

3

4 And I gather that Winnipeg Harvest was one of
5 those organizations who participated?

6 A Yes.

7 THE COMMISSIONER: Is your sole involvement in
8 Harvest, at the moment, as a volunteer on the board?

9 THE WITNESS: Yes.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

11

12 BY MS. WALSH:

13 Q And if we go to page 66 of the report, the
14 findings, the recommendation is:

15

16 "... that the department institute
17 a formal documented process for
18 reviewing and making
19 recommendations for periodically
20 updating basic and shelter rates,
21 income and asset exemptions, and
22 other income assistance allowances
23 in a logical and equitable manner.
24 It is recommended that in that
25 process, program staff be

1 consulted."

2

3 And that, that's based on the finding of the
4 adequacy of, of rates, relating to income assistance and,
5 and shelter rates?

6 A Yes.

7 Q What are some of the other reasons that leave
8 people insecure when it comes to, to food?

9 A An example of that is if a, there was a house
10 fire and the people are, you know, without lodging. If
11 people are suffering, like, say, from cancer and oftentimes
12 they have to transition into palliative care. And when
13 they're in palliative care then, you know, they lose their,
14 their house as a result of it, because they're not there to
15 be able to make the payment.

16 Q Are there transportation issues associated with,
17 with food insecurity?

18 A Yes, there are.

19 Q Can you tell us a bit about that?

20 A People have to travel a long distance. Extra
21 Foods just had recently closed on Main and you have the
22 local corner stores, but often, oftentimes, what happens is
23 that they set their own food prices and oftentimes you're
24 faced with a glass and you can go and look at the food and
25 look at the expiry dates and all of that.

1 And there's an organization and I can't think of
2 its name off the top of my head, but Tara (phonetic), from
3 that organization, takes a look at food security and is
4 part of the group that's working in the inner city to take
5 a look at all of those things.

6 So what they do is they provide the
7 transportation and they used to the Extra Foods, but now
8 they have to go further away to be able to purchase their,
9 their food that they need. And what happens is that
10 they'll have to go to Wal-Mart, or they have to go to
11 Sobey's, or they have to go to Safeway. And I know, beside
12 Extra Foods, there is a, a Safeway there. And when you
13 take a look at all of that, it's very difficult to get
14 around. So what happens is that they have to either pay
15 somebody to take them for food shopping, or they have to
16 use a cab. And so the money that they have to use, they'll
17 use it from their food money in order to be able to do the
18 things that I stated that, in order to go to further, to
19 Wal-Mart --

20 Q Because something like Wal-Mart --

21 A -- which is on --

22 Q -- is not in the inner city?

23 A No.

24 Q Let's look at the ALL report, the Acceptable
25 Living Level report, which is Exhibit 92.

1 It's number 34 on your list.

2 Now you, you had an opportunity to participate in
3 this, in the preparation of this report?

4 A Yes, I did.

5 Q Tell us what this report is?

6 A I'll tell you from the example, in terms of a
7 First Nation community called Little Grand Rapids, which is
8 a fly-in community. And the Northern Store is located on
9 one island and the community is located on a different
10 island. And I had, I was lucky to get a, a student, a
11 nutritionist from the University of Manitoba, so I grabbed
12 her when I needed to. And I, since I started working at
13 the tribal council in 2002, I always took a look at the
14 food prices and took pictures and the price of food is
15 very, very expensive in the Northern Store. And in order
16 to get there, to the Northern Store, people have to rely on
17 other people providing transportation, in terms of a
18 vehicle to get from point A to point B and then they have
19 to rely on a cab, which is a boat, to get across to the
20 Northern Store. So, you know, you're spending maybe \$50 in
21 order to do that and go to the Northern Store and shop.

22 And the times that they have to go shopping in
23 Winnipeg, that takes a toll, in terms of the weight on a
24 plane that you're allowed to carry food. So a lot of the
25 people from those fly-in communities, they use the winter

1 roads and that's when they start, you know, stockpiling
2 their foods and they help each other out.

3 Other than that, you know, it's just relying on
4 the things that I had stated, in terms of the example.

5 Carrie Spence (phonetic), which is the U of M
6 student, what she did is, I, I gave her a, a case study and
7 I told her, you know, you're a single parent, you're
8 suffering from diabetes and you can't breastfeed your child
9 and you have three children all under the age. And I told
10 him, I, what I told her to do is research, in terms of what
11 she got in, in allowance, social allowance and what she got
12 in child tax. And I said, what I want you to do is see if
13 you can adequately go and shop at the Northern Store and
14 compare it to what you'd receive in Winnipeg. And in doing
15 that, you know, she started taking pictures, because it was
16 a long time between 2002 until 2011 or '12, that, when she
17 came to work with us, she was able to log everything down,
18 so we were able to get the comparison between purchasing
19 food in Winnipeg and purchasing food in the Northern Store.
20 And --

21 Q What was the result?

22 A -- the prices were very high and she could not
23 use what she was receiving, in order to be able to provide
24 for her and her children. A lot of people think that, you
25 know, housing is free in First Nation communities and it's

1 not. Like, you know, you have to pay your rent and then
2 you have to pay for, you know, your utilities and all that,
3 so nothing is free.

4 Q In terms of, of this Acceptable Living Level
5 Report, it looks at how much disposable income a family
6 needs to buy certain goods and services?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And looking at page 9 of the report, it says that
9 it's:

10

11 "... real measure of living costs,
12 based on a realistic understanding
13 of the actual cost of living in
14 Winnipeg."

15

16 A Yes.

17 Q So my understanding is that, from the report, is
18 that participants looked at what it takes to reach a
19 certain level of, of living, how much that costs and they
20 have a number of categories. If we want to go to page 8 of
21 the report, that shows the budgets and the categories. So
22 this shows, this graph, I think it's a little too big now,
23 because I don't think -- can you see the whole thing? No.
24 This --

25 A I need it --

1 Q -- shows the acceptable living level for a family
2 of three?

3 A -- oh, I was just telling her I need it just a
4 little bit bigger, because --

5 Q A little bigger?

6 A -- I don't have my reading glasses.

7 Q Ah hah, okay. So this shows from the period '97
8 to 2012, because it was measured on four separate
9 occasions, every three years there's been a measurement
10 done. Well, except there was a gap between '03 and, and
11 2012. But the categories that are looked at include the
12 cost of food, personal care, clothing, shelter, health
13 care, childcare, transportation, household operations,
14 education, communications, risk management, banking,
15 household furnishings and recreation. So it shows that for
16 a family of, if we can just scroll down, one adult, two
17 children, the acceptable living level has increased, if you
18 want to go down to the, the chart below, you can see the,
19 the increases. For instance, one adult, two children, has
20 increased from \$26,945 in '97, to just over \$38,000 in
21 2012.

22 So what this report is, is doing, if I'm correct,
23 is showing what, what it costs to live, including all those
24 categories that, that we looked at, and then the increases
25 since they've started measuring these goods and services --

1 A Yes.

2 Q -- is that a fair description of what the report
3 is doing?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And if we go to page 23, in terms of the
6 conclusions, it says:

7

8 "Not having enough money for basic
9 necessities, or enough money for
10 activities which encourage social
11 inclusion, is a primary factor in
12 creating a cycle of homelessness
13 that has touched generations of
14 people living in Winnipeg."

15

16 A Yes.

17 Q And is that, is that something you, you agree
18 with as a --

19 A I agree.

20 Q -- conclusion? Let's pull up the report of the
21 U.N. Special Rapporteur, which is number 36 on the
22 documents. It's Exhibit 93.

23 Last May, in May 2012, Olivier De Schutter, the
24 U.N. Special Rapporteur, on the Right to Food, came to, to
25 Canada?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And he visited, among other places, Winnipeg
3 Harvest?

4 A Yes.

5 Q You were there?

6 A Yes, I was, I lobbied for him to come. I knew
7 that in sitting on some of the committees here, in the
8 province of Manitoba, that it wouldn't address the needs
9 that I needed, so I made my way to Food Secure Canada. The
10 only aboriginal people that was with Food Secure Canada at
11 the time, they are guided by, by an elder, but he wasn't
12 involved when we sat together. And all of the people
13 wanted him to, you know, go to different parts of Canada
14 and I had to make a stance and I said, you know, there are
15 a lot of issues that are, that are affecting the people
16 here in the province of Manitoba. So I stood up and I said
17 that, you know, we need the U.N. Special Rapporteur to come
18 to Manitoba, because we have a lot of issues and I gave
19 them the examples of the fly-in communities and I had all
20 the pictures of the food prices and what it takes for a
21 person even just to get access to food. And I was really
22 happy that he came and with the, with the Assembly of
23 Manitoba Chiefs, it became very political for him to go to
24 different areas and I wanted to make sure that he went to
25 the four arrows, which is, you know, St. Therese,

1 Wasagamack, Red Sucker and Garden Hill, that he had a
2 chance to visit there, because of all of the things, the
3 issues that affect the people like being able to access
4 clean water. And I wanted him to see that. And then he
5 was supposed to go to the flooded communities and he didn't
6 get a chance to go. He went to Turtle Lodge and then he
7 went to Peguis. And so, I thought, okay, I need to make
8 sure that I'm focusing the work that I'm doing and I live
9 here in the city of Winnipeg and I had to make sure that he
10 was involved with the work that I was doing because food
11 insecurity involves everyone and I was really happy that he
12 came to Winnipeg Harvest, you know, that made me -- it
13 touched my soul, the, the very depths of my soul, because
14 he needed to see, firsthand, what was happening in the
15 urban area, but also in the communities that I had named.

16 And as Winnipeg Harvest does, it, you know, makes
17 an invitation to all organizations that work in the city of
18 Winnipeg and to be able to present and part of our
19 presentation had to do with chronic disease and disability
20 and then you know, the rest of the people that are
21 mentioned, like Ka Ni Kanichihk and some of the aboriginal
22 organizations in Winnipeg, but taking a look at, at it from
23 a larger lens.

24 Q And then he prepared the report that we see on
25 the screen, that we've marked as Exhibit 93?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And I think you told me that, that when he came
3 to Winnipeg Harvest, one of the things he commented on was
4 that this was his first mission to a rich country?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And if we look at page 5 of the report, for
7 instance, one of his findings, under the heading Social
8 Protection, the last sentence of that first paragraph, he
9 says:

10

11 "Poverty affects some 3 million
12 Canadians, of whom more than
13 600,000 are children. In First
14 Nations families, one in four
15 children live in poverty."

16

17 And then if we scroll down, he says:

18

19 "Fifty per cent of those living on social assistance are
20 food insecure."

21

22 And he talks about his concern:

23

24 "... that the levels of social
25 assistance are insufficient to

1 meet basic goods and services for
2 an adequate standard of living."

3

4 Is that finding consistent with the findings
5 from, for example, the, the ALL report?

6 A Yes.

7 Q At page 8 of his report, he talks about concerns
8 that you've identified, with respect to indigenous people
9 having poor access to nutrition in isolated communities and
10 accessing traditional and country foods.

11 What are, what does that mean to have access to
12 traditional foods?

13 A Before contact, we were very healthy people and
14 after suffering historical intergenerational trauma and you
15 know, all the policies related, like, you know, the Indian
16 Act and all of that, it affected -- somebody else was
17 always the decision maker, not the people. And a lot of
18 them that, a lot of the decision makers, like, were an
19 Indian agent or INAC, making the decisions, living with the
20 effects of residential school, it was always somebody else
21 making the decisions, so you didn't have time to, you know,
22 adequately think about what it is that you needed to do in
23 order to have access to the traditional foods. Like,
24 people started putting up fences that they didn't want any
25 trespassers and that, to go through their lands. So

1 oftentimes, you had to ask for permission, just to be able
2 to pick up, sage and be able to go berry picking. And of
3 course, you know, the parks, you can't go in there and take
4 what you want.

5 So in taking a look at all of these things, it
6 was, it's difficult for our people now to have access to
7 hunting, you know, there's policies and places to, the
8 numbers of, you know, catch that you have, in terms of
9 fish. And right now, there's a ban on moose hunting,
10 because you know, there is, the moose population was very
11 minute and in order to have that no hunting, they have to
12 be able to make sure that, you know, there's plenty of
13 moose. And in many First Nation communities, like, they
14 have all their, you know, little, like, their fish camps
15 and their, excuse me, their trap lines. When you go
16 further north, it's a lot easier, but when you come further
17 south, it's difficult. Like, you have to go in a, into a
18 First Nation community and you have to be able to ask
19 permission to go hunting or fishing, or anything like that.
20 And if you live in the urban area, you can't do those
21 things that, you know, you have to have a licence and of
22 course, you have to have all the equipment to go hunting
23 and, and fishing and all of that. And if you don't have an
24 adequate income level, you can't purchase the equipment you
25 need to be able to do that. So you have to factor in all

1 these things. And of course, you have to have
2 transportation, or depend on somebody, or give somebody
3 money in order to go hunting or fishing.

4 Q So then, then what you've described, people
5 living in urban areas, with limited resources, are not
6 going to have access to traditional foods?

7 A No, unless it's donated. Because a lot of the
8 fisherman, like, in both Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg, a
9 lot of times, you know, when they have their quota, they
10 end up throwing the fish on the shore and a lot of that
11 should be coming, like, to the food banks and all of that.
12 And they want to be able to problem solve, rather than you
13 know, letting the fish go to waste. And so, when you take
14 a look at these things, you have to have, you know,
15 partnership and linkages and to be able to problem solve
16 what the issues are.

17 Q The last document that I wanted to pull up on the
18 screen, Exhibit 94, is the Hunger Count 2012.

19 That's number 35.

20 Now this document talks about food bank use in
21 Canada generally, based on statistics from March 2012 and
22 if we go to page 23, it shows a detailed look at the
23 numbers in Manitoba.

24 Now, can we --

25 THE COMMISSIONER: What page did you say?

1 MS. WALSH: Page 23, Mr. Commissioner.

2 Can we make that bigger? Oh, well done.

3

4 BY MS. WALSH:

5 Q So looking, for instance, at the, this is the
6 Manitoba focus, key hunger count findings, it shows food
7 banks reporting an increase of 59 percent, 59.1 percent in
8 2012, that 47.6 percent of the people using food banks are
9 under 18. It shows that, of the households receiving food,
10 13 percent of them were receiving assistance for the first
11 time. And that overall, the food bank is assisting five
12 percent of the provincial population.

13 It also shows things like household type and
14 primary source of income. So if we can look, for instance,
15 just at the primary source of income table, if we can
16 scroll down a bit please?

17 So that shows that -- and these are for clients
18 of, of the food bank; is that right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q So 13 percent of them have income from a job?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And yet they still need to rely on the food bank.

23 A Do you want me to give you an example of that?

24 Q Sure.

25 A Okay. I, like, I had mentioned that I'm an

1 acting tribal nursing officer. I don't make the income of
2 a graduate student, less than an LPN, and in order to be
3 full time employed, I have all of these other duties that I
4 have to do. So when you take a look at those things,
5 that's the reason why the people rely on the food bank.

6 Q And is it fair to say that that's, that's a myth
7 that, that needs to be dispelled, that everybody --

8 A Yes.

9 Q -- who uses the food bank is unemployed?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Another primary source of income, almost 50
12 percent of the people who rely on the food bank, are
13 receiving social assistance?

14 A Yes.

15 Q So what does that say?

16 A What it, what I feel that it, it states is that
17 our people are not receiving the adequate amount in order
18 to meet, meet their basic needs.

19 Q From social assistance?

20 A Yes.

21 Q So finally, can you tell us about some of the
22 ways that Winnipeg Harvest is looking to provide solutions
23 for people who rely on the food bank, or if you have any
24 specific recommendations, based on your experience?

25 A What I've talked to David about is that, in terms

1 of the gardening, you know, when you -- it's like going
2 back to look at the Bible and you know, how they divided up
3 the, the fish. But if you teach somebody how to fish,
4 then, you know, they'll be able to provide for their
5 family. So in looking at the gardening methods, like, we
6 have to have a lot of partnerships in place and that
7 requires a lot of meetings to happen. So we take a look
8 at, like, Fort Whyte. It's a good training centre. The
9 Harvest Moon in Clearwater, having access to them and what
10 they do, they do a lot of education and the people in the
11 inner city as well, working with Tara, that I mentioned,
12 there's a, a lot of gardens within the core area and in the
13 North End of Winnipeg and it's just getting people actively
14 involved with gardening and being able to provide seeds, so
15 that you know, lot of people had that way back when. And
16 I'll talk about, like, some of the gaps, in terms of
17 residential school survivors. That was taken away from
18 them. A lot of the effects, in terms of Manitoba people in
19 First Nations and, and utilizing the effects of the
20 Churchill River diversion, in order to get hydro down south
21 and how all the water was affected. And people had gardens
22 all the way down to the river and how they can't water
23 their plants, as a result of the pollution involved. So
24 when you factor in all those things, that's what Harvest
25 tries to take a look at, take a look at the bigger picture

1 and teaching people what they need to do and supporting
2 them.

3 So one of the things that we talked about is a
4 greenhouse and how to make that cost-effective and I told
5 him, I, I said, David, you know, we do ceremonies and you
6 take a look at them, a day lodge, you know, you use willows
7 and it's easy to put a plastic over it and it's very cost-
8 effective. And when you take a look at that, in different
9 homes around the, the city that I mentioned, within the
10 core and within the, the North End, it's being able to
11 change people's thinking that they don't need something
12 like steel in order to put up a greenhouse.

13 Q So --

14 A So it's --

15 Q -- enabling gardening and, and growing
16 opportunities?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And then, of course, the work that you, that the
19 organization has done with showing what an acceptable
20 living level amounts to?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Anything else that you want to tell the
23 Commissioner?

24 A We're always looking for ways to be able to help
25 the people and we've created a big network and partnership,

1 and linkages, with a lot of people, corporations,
2 organizations, to be able to help us, because you know, I
3 can't think of everything, so I need all these partnerships
4 in place to be able to say okay, this is what I need to
5 contribute and it's a learning process in itself, because I
6 don't have all the answers, as a board member. And then I
7 hear all these ideas being thrown back and forth and I
8 thought, oh, okay, you know, you have those aha moments and
9 you learn. It's always reciprocal and I like that.

10 MS. WALSH: Thank you. Those are my questions.

11 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Anybody in the audience want
13 to question?

14 It would appear not, so witness, thank you very
15 much for your attendance here. You've been of assistance
16 and put out some good ideas and some factual background
17 that will be of assistance to us, I know.

18 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Thanks kindly.

20 MS. WALSH: Thank you.

21

22 (WITNESS EXCUSED)

23

24 THE COMMISSIONER: So are we adjourned until 9:30
25 tomorrow morning?

1 MS. WALSH: Yes.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

3

4 (PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED TO MAY 28, 2013)