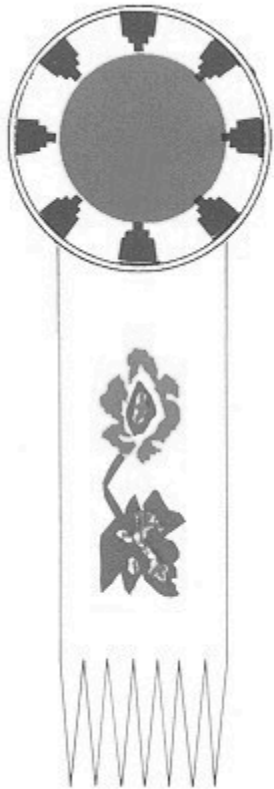


# Native Women's Association of Canada



“BUTTERFLIES  
WITHOUT  
ROOTS”

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*~ August 1993 ~*

Aboriginal Women in the Western  
Northwest Territories

*An NWAC Report*

# **Table of Contents**

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Preface.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Forward.....	4
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Part I – Issues and Concerns N.W.T. Aboriginal Women .....	10
The Questionnaire / Survey.....	10
The Social Fabric.....	11
Part II: Solutions for Results - N.W.T. Aboriginal Women.....	40
Solutions - Part A:.....	40
Solutions – Part B:.....	42
Part III: Regional Workshop Results .....	50
Yellowknife Regional Workshop.....	50
Hal River Conference.....	56
Part IV: N.W.T. Aboriginal Women’s Views On The Royal Commission On Aboriginal Peoples .....	59
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Health and Social Services .....	63
Education .....	64
Political and Leadership.....	65
Justice .....	66
Culture .....	66
General .....	67
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>68</b>
Concluding Remarks by N.W.T. Animator Bren Kolson (Ms.).....	68
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>72</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## Preface

In January 1993, the national Native Women's Association of Canada (N.W.A.C.) informed aboriginal women attending a two-day workshop at Ottawa, Ontario, that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (R.C.A.P.) had provided funding from the Intervenor Participation Program for information from aboriginal women at the regional and community level, both on and off reserve. Provided with R.C.A.P.'s mandate, terms of reference and general information to guide the project, representatives at the two-day workshop became official representatives or animators for the national Native Women's Association of Canada through their affiliate organizations in the provinces and territories.

The animators' mandate, based on generally consensus-style terms and through written agreement, was to inform, explain, assess, evaluate, analyze, accumulate, research and disseminate information about the work of the Commission and, as well, to gather concerns and solutions from aboriginal women at the regional and community level. Throughout the four-month period, animators were asked to write Interim Reports and a Final Report which would form part of the final submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples by the National Native Women's Association of Canada in the fall of 1993. Based on the Commission's mandate, animators were not only to include information on concerns, problems and issues, but also to provide results and solutions raised by aboriginal women from communities across Canada.

The animators, representing the core of the project group, were in contact with a national N.W.A.C. project coordinator at Ottawa, Ontario throughout the four-month project. The national coordinator served as a liaison between the Ottawa office and animators in the region. Working under the guidance of the national coordinator, animators used their skills, objectivity and diverse cultural and geographical knowledge to provide information from aboriginal women in their provinces and territories. As well, they provided a balanced perspective on input by aboriginal women in Canada.

Because financial resources did not allow for independent research into statistically documented data, and to avoid duplication of existing analytically formulated and tabulated data, statistics from existing territorial, federal and native governments and groups were used throughout the Final Report.

Because of a lack of adequate financial resources, indepth examination of some issues, eg. housing surveys and studies, public works and transportation, were not included in the Final Report. What the Final Report does focus on is issues, concerns, statements, problems and solutions as provided by aboriginal women who chose to partake in the questionnaire and survey. The contents of the Final Report reflect the voices and opinions of aboriginal women, particularly of the western Northwest Territories (N.W.T.).

## **Acknowledgements**

This report is the culmination of many hours of work by aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. Insight gathered from northern aboriginal women was the cornerstone of the project and the foundation of this report. Particular appreciation is expressed to those aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. who voiced their opinions even though they feared reprisal or continued reprisal from spouses, relatives and friends. Ideas and advice received from Bertha Allen, President of the N.W.T. Native Women's Association, ROO Sato, Executive Director of the N.W.T. Native Women's Association, Martha Montour and Theresa Nahanee, national coordinators for the national Native Women's Association of Canada are noted appreciatively.

Thank you also to Mary Anne Lafferty and Ann Watson for their assistance in the project and for the patience of my seven and a half year old daughter, Kiera- Dawn Kolson. Particular and special thanks to all the aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. who took the time to complete the survey questionnaires and to all the aboriginal women who participated and whose appreciation for the project should not go unmentioned.

Gratitude also goes to Debbie Maracle for the hours of typing and revisions done to complete this Final Report.

## **Forward**

Aboriginal women in the western Northwest Territories (N.W.T.) and in all geographic areas of the N.W.T. -one-third of the Canadian land mass - are the "life-way" for the future of new generations. As aboriginal women in the North have been the helpmates and caregivers during the past thousands of years, as demonstrated by their documented abilities to exist in a harsh environment within the hunting and gathering societies in the North, so, too, will they be the "life- way" for continuing thousands of years of new generations of aboriginal northerners. They are and will continue to be the watchmates and mothers of the future for their daughter's children. Dene women, Metis women, Inuit women and Inuvialuit women have all shared in the building of the N.W.T., although seldom are their showers of gratitude or awards of acclamation to distinguish many of the feminine names etched on gravestones in the cemeteries that align community boundaries with current day names listed on a government payroll sheet. Seldom is there mention of the aboriginal women of the North from all ethnic backgrounds who chose to live and die in the N.W.T.

It must be difficult for a southerner to imagine the North at the time of the signing of the Treaties in 1899 and 1921, and to look at archival photographs in a southern museum and see an aboriginal woman couched in the back, left hand corner and wonder who she was or where her following generations are today? Difficult because southerners are not from the once imagined romantic North with myths illusively created from their world view alone and not from the reality and life experiences of northerners. Difficult because many southerners who see the North in glossy magazines intent on the

promotion of tourism have no concept of what it was like to live in the North at the turn of the century, nor do they know what it is like to live in the North today.

Aboriginal women know the North know-how to survive the northland - snare rabbits, flesh hides, tan caribou skins, sew clothing, and ensure survival of "old ways" in a "new age" of technological advances and jet fighters aiming for the midnight sun in the high noon of an Aklavik summer. Aboriginal women know how devastating alcohol and disease were during the turn of the century with the building of missionary and residential schools which took, at the insistence and will of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, their children - for the betterment of future generations. They became the victims of alcohol and other abuses, while their children became the victims of an identity almost lost.

Aboriginal women in the North never really did have a voice in political affairs during the early history of the North. It wasn't until the 1970's when the N.W.T. Native Women's Association (N.W.A.) was formed that northern aboriginal women began to realize the consequences of northern political and constitutional development. It was then that aboriginal women began to voice their opinions about high rates of various forms of abuse and ill-treatment in all forms whether socially discriminating, contagiously unhealthy, culturally ignorant, economically outcast or politically numbed by changing factors in the "last frontier". They did attempt at best, however, to sway the many factors influencing their very existence, particularly in the years following the signing of the Treaties, the years of travois on northern waterfronts while their husbands earned a dollar a day as interpreters near Fort Fitzgerald and the years of hauling whale blubber for European markets at Herschel Island in the high western N.W.T. Many factors contributed to changing influences among northern and aboriginal women with the "discovery" of oil, the building of refineries at Nonnan Wells, and the building of the dewline, or early distant warning system, to protect North America from invading aliens from "over the pole".

She endured - the aboriginal woman. She endured changes during the 1930's and 1940's when gold found near Yellowknife became a squatter's dream, and later when the building of the Mackenzie Highway to bring cheaper material and goods by transportation only brought more dust and muck to mingle upon freshly hung laundry in the centre of an economically developing townsite.

She didn't forget where she came from though. She didn't forget her language, her culture. Aboriginal women still speak their aboriginal mother tongue and "Michif" - a Metis dialect still prevalent among Metis, particularly in the southern half of the Mackenzie Valley or Denendeh. With new words and images of a prosperous future North published in bureaucratic reports she had no say in, aboriginal women became fearful that their children's children's children may not have an aboriginal language to speak or a culture to share.

She didn't forget her culture though. Aboriginal women have petitioned the male-dominated Legislative Assembly of the N.W.T. for years to increase the budget of the Department of Culture and Communications to ensure their children would have a culture to remember. No reply. No money. Shift departments. And to think it was she, coupled with her non-aboriginal sisters, who voted him into office as constituency representative.

Many, many factors influenced the way she dressed, the brogue she used when seeking employment as a chambermaid or filling out an application to gain entry into an adult up-grading class. Wonder why she's still living in the south when her heart is with her grandchildren in the heartland of the north? Many, many factors contributed to the influences that brought the voices of the aboriginal women to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry community meetings and the hundreds of assemblies, seminars, workshops and gatherings - all in the name of the children's children.

The factors were enormous: alcohol abuse; sexual assault; child and teenage gang rapes; venereal disease and other once unknown diseases such as diabetes and tuberculosis, which are still statistically accounted for at high rates in some small northern communities among aboriginal women and their children. Other factors were suicides, glue-sniffing, injuries, violence and death against herself or her children, spousal assault, abortion, incest, a lack of adequate housing, a lack of employment, high welfare rates and a son or daughter quitting school in grade seven or eight.

The "old ways" that brought change to the aboriginal woman's way of life in the North was an unknown at one time - hidden and as mysterious as the northern lights. Today in the North, there are no secrets, with annually published statistics on how many of her children now form those statistics for gonorrhoea or the deadly HIV infection. Nowadays in the North, with more southerners coming to the North still dreaming of winter firewood piled high outside a cosy cabin, the aboriginal woman of the North is screaming for someone to listen to her cries for change. Positive change. Change to drastic statistics that are killing her "life- way" for future generations.

Her mother's mother's mother's name may be etched on a cemetery gravestone, but she is not giving up the promise of a holistic future for her children's children's children.

In this Final Report to the national Native Women's Association of Canada, which will form part of a submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, are the voices of aboriginal women of the western and eastern N.W.T. who also chose to participate in the formation of responses to this Final Report of the N.W.T. animator to the project.

The voices of northern aboriginal women should not go unheard. Nor should their concerns and issues. Their concerns and issues are real today. Their concerns and issues may be results of maladies of the past, but they are also a cancerous plague of unnamed proportions if allowed to fester and prey upon future generations of aboriginal women from the North. The voices in this Final Report are the voices of aboriginal

women who want to be heard and listened to and who are seeking change through a traditional, holistic, healthy, manageable and workable forum. They do not want unworkable piecemeal, token or band-aid reforms that will continue to fester incompetence and further the work of northern statisticians.

The mandate and terms of reference of the R.C.A.P. have asked for the voices of aboriginal women of the North to be heard loud and clear by Commissioners to the process and to provide remedies to their concerns and issues. Will they be listened to and will their voices be heard?

In a positive sense, their voices will be recorded in the annals of a Final Report of the Commission. Hopefully, the printed word on the printed page will not be prone to dustmongers. In a negative sense, their voices have never been clearly heard amid cries for a better North because of a male-dominated and paternalistic attitude still prevalent in the North today. Let us hope and let us pray that the spirit of the aboriginal women of the past and present will be heard and the recommendations included in this Final Report will be acted upon in as positive a manner as good government will allow. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples had best not fail to hear the voices of aboriginal women of the northland. If the Commission does fail, as so many of their predecessors have so failed, to hear the voices of northern and aboriginal women, they will indeed be contributors to a "death-way" and not a "life-way" for the current and future generations of aboriginal women and aboriginal northerners in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

Prior to 1975, there was no organization in the N.W.T. representing aboriginal women. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, that while other aboriginal organizations (primarily spearheaded by men) were forming in the North to endorse issues and concerns of the Dene, Metis, Inuit and Inuvialuit, there remained a void for aboriginal women of the North to voice their concerns. In 1974, the Native Women's Association of Canada was incorporated and in 1975, at Ottawa, Ontario, a Native Women's Conference was held (as well as in Pangnirtung in the eastern N.W.T.) providing the impetus for aboriginal women in the North to organize a territorial affiliate of the national organization.

In 1976, initiated by current president, Bertha Allen, the idea of an all - native women's conference was the foremost item on the agenda of a planning committee of northern aboriginal women who met to discuss the formation of a territorial organization. The committee, comprised of Bertha Allen (Inuvik), Albertine Rodh (Fort Simpson), Eliza Lawrence (Fort Resolution / Yellowknife), and Alizette Potfighter (Dettah), agreed an assembly to bring northern aboriginal women to a founding conference should be held in the summer of 1977. The theme of the conference was "Community Action". The conference was held at Akaitcho Hall in Yellowknife on July 19 - 21, 1977, with 29 community representatives from the Mackenzie Valley-Western Arctic attending. The first executive of the N.W.T. Native Women's Association (N.W.A.) was formed at the founding conference and included: President, Bertha Allen; Vice-President, Rosa Brunt; Secretary - Treasurer, Esther Lazore; and Secretary, Alizette Potfighter (Tatsiechele).

One of the foremost needs addressed at the founding conference was the preservation of unique styles of preparing and sewing various arts and crafts. Other concerns included alcohol abuse as a major concern, as well as foster care and adoption of native children, nutrition, health and education. With a constitution and bylaws in agreement by founding members of the organization and with core funding from the territorial government, the N.W.T.N.W.A. grew from one staff member to 20 by 1978.

The most important aspect of the territorial organization is the membership which represents all aboriginal women in the North despite political affiliation or allegiance with aboriginal and non-aboriginal political organizations and parties. Since its formation, Inuit women have formed their own organization in the eastern N.W.T. Nonetheless, the society's objectives remain: 1) to work towards a solution on social, economic and political problems and to promote the interests of native women in the Northwest Territories; 2) to encourage native women to assume a more positive and active role in assisting native peoples to achieve their rightful place in society; 3) to assist and encourage native women to contribute ideas and skills to the social, cultural and economic development of native society; 4) to assist local women's groups in the development and management of their local projects within the Northwest Territories;



and 5) to study, in conjunction with other native organizations, problems confronting native women and to make representation to government on behalf of native women.

While program and project development continues with the institution of an adult training and up-grading facility and with the enhancement of arts and crafts at the community level, the philosophy of the N.W.T.N.W.A. in the North remains, "...to develop programs by native women of the Northwest Territories, so that we function in areas that affect our daily lives, economically, educationally, culturally, politically and socially..." - a philosophy that continues in the organization and with aboriginal women in the North in 1993.

Over the years, numerous resolutions and recommendations have been adopted by Annual General Assemblies regarding the various concerns of aboriginal women in the North. Some have been acted upon by government departments and agencies, while some have not been because of either a lack of commitment or a lack of financial resources. However, the N.W.T.N.W.A. continues to strive to bring a holistic lifestyle to aboriginal women and their families and, as well, continues to lobby governments, private and public groups and organizations to ensure there is a brighter future for northern aboriginal women and their children.

## Part I – Issues and Concerns N.W.T. Aboriginal Women

### The Questionnaire / Survey

Twelve questions were asked in the questionnaire. The first five questions were statistically-based. Question number five begins the questionnaire proper. Under Part I: Issues and Concerns - N.W.T. Aboriginal Women, the question asked was: "In your own words, what would you say are the greatest overall concerns to you in your home community? Please provide reasons why you feel the way you do about these concerns?"

Here are the voices of aboriginal women of the western N.W.T. when answering question number five. Statistics are provided for information purposes.

*The youth - there needs to be much more emphasis on education and there needs to be workshops with Elders.*

*Because of assimilation and loss of identity, there has to be more consistency within the culture for re-identifying with the loss of culture. The youth are 'just like a butterfly' - they have no roots.*

*Albertine Rodh, Fort Simpson, N.W.T.  
March, 1993*

While conducting the survey with aboriginal women, particularly in the western N.W.T., as N.W.T. animator for the national Native Women's Association of Canada for a Final Report into the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, I was surprised at not only how many aboriginal female youth participated in the survey but also at their comments. When reading this Report, you will find that the youth of the N.W.T. do not feel that their future is either promising or encouraging. Without the exuberant spirit of youth participation in any culture, the future of a nation in an abyss of marginalization, commonly with high rates of dysfunctional families, high rates of crime, suicides, teenage pregnancies, violence and alcohol and drug abuse. Without the promise of a future, youth in culture are without dreams or goals and often are doomed to a way of life not of their immediate choosing. The list of negative factors could go on and on and on. It is best to note, however, the comments of aboriginal women and female youth and what they had to say in the survey and in this Report.

Their ideas and comments evolve into a sphere of socio-economic, cultural, social, political and spiritual upheaval. The youth of the N.W.T. are an integral unit within which combines the fabric of the North. Hear what the aboriginal women and youth of the North have to say. It's their future, but it is also our future we are addressing through their comments.

## The Social Fabric

### a) **Drinking - Alcohol - Booze...**

In the N.W.T., there are approximately 16,500 women aged 15 years and over. Dene and Metis women comprise 23% of the population; Inuit women comprise 35% of the population; Inuvialuit women (statistics unavailable); and non-aboriginal women comprise 42%. There is a majority of non-aboriginal women in the major centres of Yellowknife, Iqaluit, Hay River, Fort Smith, and Inuvik. In the 60 remaining communities in the N.W.T. live the greater population of aboriginal women.

Survey results out of twelve questions asked showed the greatest overall concerns to be alcohol and drug abuse, a shortage of adequate housing, low levels of education and a shortage of equitable job opportunities in the labour force in the N.W.T. The responses continue to reflect the same concerns after reading some fifty questionnaires - alcohol and drugs, alcohol and drugs, alcohol and drugs, no jobs, no housing, youth in abusive situations, and a lack of youth participation in small communities as well as a lack of parental guidance.

Ndilo, once unaffectionately known as 'Rainbow Valley' or 'Squaw Valley', is a small, predominantly Dene community approximately five miles from the centre of the city of Yellowknife. A young aboriginal girl who chose to remain anonymous, as did 90% of the aboriginal women surveyed, said:

*Too many people these days are drinking and taking drugs. Most of these children come from families who go to bingo and cards or are out drinking and kids are left on their own to care for themselves.*

Ndilo, during the past ten years, has become more self-reliant as services once discharged from the federal government to the city of Yellowknife for essential services has come under the scrutiny of the Chief and Band Council. Dene from Ndilo form part of the Yellowknife Band which also comprises members of the community of Dettah, approximately a half hour ride by vehicle from Yellowknife or approximately fifteen miles from the city centre. Ndilo is considered part of Yellowknife but is situated geographically at one end of the main townsite under the constituency of "Old Town" or "Latham Island" of Yellowknife.

A youth from Dettah said:

*...(my greatest overall concern) are drinking, not enough housing for young people and too many young people drinking.*

An aboriginal youth from Fort Resolution attending high school at Yellowknife's Akaitcho Hall, a hostel or residence for youth whose communities do not house high schools, said:

*Alcohol and drug abuse is a very major concern. It leads to violence, depression, death and suicide. I feel this way because it seems the only one thing people do care about is their alcohol. That is their only concern and the cost of it doesn't matter.*

Elizabeth Kimiksana of Tuktoyaktuk provided an example of her family life as an adult, and the results, therefore, of an abusive relationship because of alcohol abuse by her husband. She said she wants to live in her home town of Tuktoyaktuk, but she cannot because of the abuses she lived through with her husband for twenty-four of her fifty-five years.

*...people (are) killing themselves by booze...people shooting themselves because of alcohol, abuse. Young kids in trouble - lot of them - families breaking up - lots and lots of them just turn to booze.*

*When I turned sixteen or seventeen, there was only one teacher in my home town and I was training to be a Sunday school teacher. That's what I wanted to be - a Sunday school teacher. When I got married and had children, everything broke apart. I didn't get out of it because I wanted to grow old with my husband and I wanted my children to grow up with us - their parents - to keep the family together. I now left my beautiful home - my home town of Tuk.*

*I was in a very abusive situation. I'm not allowed to go to store alone; I'm not allowed to look at a thirteen year old boy; I'm not allowed to be alone; I'm not supposed to go to the nursing station or anywhere alone. When he goes out on the trap line with his dad, he makes his sister stay with me to watch what I do but she's on my side. If I look at a fifteen year old boy out of the corner of my eye, he beats me up.*

*In 1980, he beat everyone from oldest to youngest - even the (my) deaf girl. He whipped her with a willow at the summer camp and hit her like that. His dad kick my nineteen year old and he covers his face so his father doesn't kick the face. I try to help him but he kick me in the ribs.*

*My son - my ten year old son used to whisper in my ear: 'My mom, please shoot my dad', and I tell him, 'no', and one time he strap my daughter with a belt. She saw her dad taking off his belt but she's only fifteen or sixteen. She makes some kind of excuse. She say she can't help herself because she's deaf but he didn't listen to her. She wrote a note to me: 'Mom, shoot my dad'. I wouldn't because we're human beings and best just to leave. R.C.M.P. help me leave... so hard for my eldest daughter... start crying on my shoulder.*

*I don't like people to get hurt like me - lots of kids scared.*

*I see lots of women shoot their husbands and they get away from it - in Holman (Island), McPherson (Fort), Tuk (Tuktoyaktuk), Edmonton - some women move to these communities to get away from their husbands. I see lots of women shoot their husbands and they get away from it, and I think about doing it - shoot him when he's asleep - but I can't. It's better to be strong and get away. So I leave my town, even though I didn't want to leave my home town.*

Muriel Betsina of Ndilo, near yellowknife, said:

*All my life I've been an addiction and alcohol worker. No budget in government departments and have to get through so much red tape. They say they support you, but they don't.*

*In the 36th Annual Report (April 1, 1989 to March 31, 1990), the Northwest Territories Liquor Commission states for the year ending March 31, 1989 there were 26,324,530 liquor sales in the North. In 1990, sales of liquor were 28,603,030. Gross income for sales of liquor for March 31, 1989 were \$13,780,587 and for March 31, 1990, the figure was \$15,083,010, for an increase in sales of liquor and financial credit in 1989 at 3.7 to 8.7 at the fiscal year end in 1990.*

#### **b) The Children's Children's Children...**

In the North, as in any society or community plagued with terminal problems of alcohol and drug abuse, social problems are not immune to dysfunctional family problems, depression or suicide as noted by the youth from Fort Resolution. In the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Child Welfare and Health in the North, statistics show "an average of 484 children a month were in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare". In 1990, this figure was approximately 340 and in 1989, this figure was 276.

As of March 1991, approximately 25 percent of the children in care were committed to the permanent care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare. Of these, approximately one-third are in permanent care because they have "special needs" which their parents cannot provide. Most children in care are aboriginal children.

"The family is the cornerstone of society and must be protected. However, children as individuals have rights and should have access to adequate care in line with the standards of the community," states excerpts from the N.W.T. Family and Children's Service Program Manual which guides practices for social workers and health professionals assisting children in the N.W.T.

A thirty year old aboriginal woman who recently moved from Aklavik to Yellowknife and who close to remain anonymous said in the survey:

*...women ( aboriginal) are dependent upon government or social services as a way of support. Men do not take responsibility for children. Right now, I'm a foster mother and social services said (to the child's mother) to get treatment or her children will get taken away.*

*It's been five times now that she's been in treatment and social services should be saying to her: 'what's wrong? We've been paying for you to get better all this time'. But they keep paying for everything but it's not the mother's decision (to take alcohol treatment) - it's social services. There are no (aboriginal) professionals to deal with these issues. No treatment! If people need to work on these (their problems), they (government) hire people from down south who in turn go back there afterwards. Social problems ... sexual assaults on children... it happens all over...*

A thirty-three year old aboriginal woman from Fort Liard said:

*Drugs and alcohol are the greatest concern as of right now, because most medical problems are caused by alcohol and drugs. I don't think the government deals with the people on a feeling level either. And then again to be able to do that you need sober leadership. They could go to treatment or training before taking on any leadership role and make it mandatory.*

*As a Deh Cho Dene woman, I think that women are not treated fairly where the justice system is concerned. For example, if a woman gets assaulted by a partner, in court she would be made to feel like a criminal and the same goes for sexual abuse victims. I think this way because I see people change for the worse after going through the court system.*

Sarah Hardisty, a sixty-seven year old aboriginal woman from Jean Marie River, a small community in the Liard Valley west of Fort Simpson, said:

*There is too much alcohol in our community for the last year. The drinking goes on for weeks at the most. Children are not taken care of... This is my first response (in writing) of my concern I'm writing down. Have the community "NO ALCOHOL" ban. Community needs... healing...*

During the survey, a young twenty-two year old girl from Yellowknife stated:

*I feel that alcohol is my greatest concern because several of my friends and family have died in alcohol-related issues. I'm concerned about these two (alcohol with younger generation as well as education) because I have abused alcohol myself as well as not finishing high school. Some organizations (native) do deal with it, but not enough to make people really understand the problems with alcohol abuse. There has to be something that would really make people listen and realize that this is a very powerful substance and it will take more than just one person to beat it.*

A young girl who also chose to remain anonymous but who identified herself as a 'youth', said:

*There is too much drinking in my community. There is not enough things to do, places to go, and the adults do not communicate with the youth. The youth don't seem to care... they do what they want. Probably the parents are too heavy drinking to care about what the youth are doing. The young people today seem to be following in their parent's footsteps. Also, more youth these days are not educated so they can't get jobs. They don't get encouragement from their parents - from their peers. Booze... no education... no jobs... no self-esteem...*

The Child Welfare Act in the N.W.T. has its own legislation, but it is an Act that is supposed to establish legislation "to protect N.W.T. children from abandonment, neglect, abuse or situations where the child is disabled and has special needs which cannot be met by the parents". The two most frequent reasons reported for a child taken into care are parental neglect and emotional / behavioral problems.

A variety of extenuating circumstances may also account for children under the care of the department, ranging from emotional / behavioral problems as a result of alcohol abuse to neglect as a result of abuse. Child abuse, sexual abuse, surrender for adoption, death of parent(s), inadequate housing, disability, financial need, mental or physical handicap to mental illness are other reasons cited in the 1991 - 1992 Annual Report of the Superintendent of Child Welfare and Health in the N.W.T.

A thirty-four year old aboriginal woman from Fort Rae said:

*The greatest concern affecting (my) home community is drugs and alcohol and too much bingo and card games all night. Some kids don't go to school and not enough food to eat and no clean clothes to wear. I hope there is a chance for our younger ones and ones growing up. I would like my community to be sober up. We need more counsellors and more meetings for sobriety. I don't know how I can help provide solutions because there's too much alcohol going on. If they see the money, like big money, they might go to the liquor store or to the bar before they use it for others.*

### c) **Healthy, Holistic Communities? ...**

In a June 28 - 29, 1989 health research workshop and report sponsored by the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories entitled, "Health Research North of 60", former Minister of Health and now Government Leader, Nellie Cournoyea stated when addressing general principles about health and health care in the North, "Since a positive state of physical, mental and social well-being is as much our goal as the reduction of disease and disability, we must be prepared to see the whole person within the context of their daily life".

A holistic approach involving aboriginal women at the community level is the guiding principle. It seems fruitless, though, amid growing and never-ending statistics which account for inadequate housing and housing conditions, as well as prolonged periods of inaction by government departments to implement research, policies, projects and programs aimed at a better and holistic lifestyle. For many aboriginal women and peoples of the North who currently face high rates of various abuses on an individual or on a collective basis, a holistic approach seems realistic, but is sometimes beyond their grasp. Health systems more relevant to aboriginal communities for a better and holistic lifestyle are statements aboriginal women in the North have requested at numerous times during the past ten to twenty years.

How can the symptom be treated when aboriginal women at the community level do not feel the symptom has yet been adequately addressed? Aboriginal women who did partake in the questionnaire requested over and over again that more workshops, seminars, conferences and assemblies be held to address the problems facing their communities. How can solutions be found when aboriginal women in the North do not feel the issues have yet been addressed? In the meantime, though, statistics continue to grow in all areas that present symptoms, yet they are not addressed to the satisfaction of members of aboriginal communities.

A seventeen year old aboriginal youth from Fort Simpson said in the survey that her greatest concerns for her home community are:

*Drinking...as young as twelve years old, and teenage violence. When young people see parents drinking and so when young people are offered a drink to try it - they get a big hang-over and say they aren't going to do it again - but they do. It's the same with drugs. Social Services pushes too hard.*

*I know a young girl who was sexually assaulted and they took her out other home and they pushed her to talk (about the assault). They (Social Services) want them to get counselling right away and maybe they're (the victim) are not prepared to tell the whole world about it right away.*



Shelly Anderson, a twenty-two year old Metis from Yellowknife, said:

*I am concerned with many issues facing native peoples in the North. Not all of my concerns affect me directly now and most of my concerns affect me in different ways than they affect other aboriginal women.*

*The greatest concern affecting my community is the Giant Mine Strike. People are dead, lives are destroyed and there seems to be no end to this mass confusion. Yellowknife used to be a nice city to live in. It is not too big or too small, but now it is too violent. The problem again is that a person who resides in the south, and has no idea of what life is really like in the North, is making all the decisions. We don't own this fight. We just live it.*

*Again - my experiences as an aboriginal woman is very different than that of most others. While I realize housing needs are not met at all by many in the North, it seems that I am at the opposite end of the spectrum. Because I have chosen to climb the proverbial corporate ladder, I am now disadvantaged because of it. I do not qualify for housing programs. This is not to say that I am not in need of assistance, just that I am seen as such. I suppose if I had chosen to marry a rich man, I would be living in a mansion on the hill. But I didn't and I don't. The way the programs are set up now, my best chances for assistance in aboriginal programs would be the following scenario: -if I was single and had more than one child, I was unemployed and collecting social service assistance. This scenario should be discouraged. Help them until they are on their own two feet, yet discourage future generations from making the same decisions. Stop spending aboriginal dollars on the same people, year after year? I have tried to make the right decisions in my life and now feel that I am being penalized for it.*

*I still live in a one bedroom apartment and pay through the nose for it. I can't save for a mortgage down payment and in these soft, economic times, I hesitate to get a loan for fear that my job will be gone tomorrow.*

*One solution may be that we develop better sweat equity processes. You help me build my house and I will help another build their house and so on. Or, in a similar way, take one person familiar with carpentry, one with plumbing, one with electrical, one with painting, and a few labourers, etc., and these people build for each other. It is a community project where everyone can participate at their own level until they pay back a portion of what they've received. I believe that too many people can abuse a system where they are always at the receiving end. There is no incentive to do things for yourself and people can become independent on hand-outs, and this also makes it so that there is not enough to go around, and people like me, who aren't at the end of our ropes yet, can't access programs designed to assist aboriginal people.*

In the N.W.T. Report on Sexual Assault and Sentencing, it states that of the sexual assault cases studied for the Report, those persons between the ages of 7 to 12 years are in the second highest risk group. Children between the 0 to 6 age group showed statistically 30 assaults at 12%; 7 to 12 years of age at 69 assaults for 25% and 13 to 18 years of age, 77 assaults for 28%.

The above figures represent those complaints that actually went to court. They do not include the assaults that are never reported.

Canadian researchers say the victim of child sexual abuse is between the ages of 4 to 11, and that the assault occurs in the child's home and is reported 88% of the time. The 1984 Badgely Report says 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys will be sexually assaulted before the age of 18.

The following represents the 1991 Child Sexual Abuse Intake Reports by region in the N.W.T.

	<b>Total Victims</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Baffin	84	74	10
Fort Simpson	8	8	0
Fort Smith	11	10	1
Inuvik	19	17	2
Keewatin	45	37	8
Kitikmeot	7	6	1
Yellowknife	<u>26</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>8</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>30</b>

As statistics show, more aboriginal female children than male children are being sexually assaulted in the N.W.T.

What futures do these young aboriginal female children have ten years from now? What repercussions will occur as a result of negative childhood experiences? How will they in turn treat their children?

In "Network", Spousal Assault, Spring 1992, a N.W.T. newsletter on spousal assault, published by the Department of Social Services and the Office of the Press Secretary of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and in an article entitled "NWT Survey of Sexual Assaults and Sentencing", it states, "A recent study of sexual assault cases in the Northwest Territories found that victims usually know the offender, alcohol is often a factor, and teenagers are at highest risk of being assaulted. Data collected from sexual assault cases and dealt with in N.W.T. courts between January 1, 1988 and December 31, 1989 showed a total of 261 cases were studied".

Ninety percent of the assaults were committed by someone known to the victim; 20% of these were members of the victim's family; 29% of sexual assaults included acts of intercourse. No actual use or threatened use of firearms was involved in any of the

cases surveyed; physical injury to victims occurred in at least 25% of the assaults. At least 50% of the sexual assaults surveyed occurred in the home of the victim or accused and at least 25% occurred in the victim's own bedroom.

In the N.W.T., teenage females between the ages of 15 to 19 years acquire gonorrhoea four times the national rate. These gonorrhoea rates raise genuine concerns about human immunodeficiency (HIV) infections and young people and AIDS.

Teenage pregnancies in the North are another dilemma. A high rate of teenagers, especially in Grade Eleven, will become pregnant, the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Child Welfare states. Also, in 1990 there were 28 births for every 1000 people in the N.W.T. or twice the Canadian average birth rate. In 1990, there were 225 live births among Dene; 725 among Inuit and no statistical breakdown for Metis or Inuvialuit although the figures show 515 for others. Infant death rates in 1990 show 11.45 compared to 1988 Canadian figures at 7.2%

A thirty-two year old aboriginal woman from Dettah said:

*Family abuse is one concern a lot of people are not talking about because it's so personal. It relates to alcohol and the children are always the ones to suffer.*

Sarah Jerome of Fort McPherson, a Mackenzie Delta Gwich'in community geographically in proximity to Inuvik, said in the survey:

*Our major concern has to do with drugs and alcohol which results in unemployment and a lot of social problems. These problems began when many of our parents today were taken from their homes and put into residential schools. In order to help these many individuals to find their identity and to help themselves, we need to have community counselling by professional psychiatrists and a lot of basic life skills workshops. These workshops and life skills have to be mandatory for all ages and walks of life in each community.*

#### **d) Injuries, Death, Violence, Suicide...**

Statistically, in the N.W.T., deaths of younger and older children due to injuries, violence and suicide "rated higher in the N.W.T. than for the rest of Canada. Males and females 0 to 5 years are almost four times more likely than in the rest of Canada to die due to injuries or violence. This is also true for males in the 15 to 24 years age group".

Health statistics for 1991 - 1992 show that during the 1980's, suicide among the 15 to 24 year age group in the N.W.T. was five times the Canadian rate. The recently published Northwest Territories Health Report 1990 says there is a "real concern" about the amount of injuries and accidents. Further, that for young people under the age of 24, violent deaths, injuries and accidents are "a worrisome issue". The Report states a full 39% of deaths in the N.W.T. are caused by injuries, accidents, homicides and family violence and involve young people under the age of 24.

Ellen Smith, a Gwich'in aboriginal woman from Inuvik, said:

*Family violence: eg. spousal assault, elders abuse, sexual abuse, families abusing each other, physically, spiritually, psychologically and mentally.*

*Everyday I hear stories from victims. I see elderly being abused on Pension days. Reports... incidents of on-going sexual abuse cases - be it rape or assault. Families abusing each other - child neglect - parents out gambling. No proper daycare services for single parents. Single parent incomes are low; therefore quality babysitting is unavailable. Uneducated... unemployment... health care needs improvement... dysfunctional youth... elders are knowledgeable but people need to help them be proud of themselves again.*

*Dysfunctional family units are due to residential school syndrome. The traumas of residential schools and the experiences provided parents with no parenting skills who are now unable to show affection, love and caring. It produced brain washed robots who are living in a confused state of mind. Living in two worlds - the European world (Scottish, English, etc.) and the Indian world. They kill the painful experience with abuse of alcohol, drugs, inhaling solvent abuses - people unable to ventilate feelings of sharing and of self are living in anger, shame, guilt, resentment, blaming and denial, etc.*

A young Inuit from Iqaluit, formerly Frobisher Bay, in the Eastern Arctic, who wished to remain anonymous, said:

*The high risk of suicides for youth (is my greatest overall concern). There are many attempted suicides in Iqaluit. There was a suicide same week before I went here. I have lost (a) couple of friends through suicide. We need something for the young people to keep going for them to feel free to talk when they feel - without them to feel scared to talk about their problems. There is a Mental Health worker there (in Iqaluit) and Alcohol and Drug counsellors. But for the young people, they think Mental Health is for mentally ill. They probably feel uncomfortable to see one. Just like my friend when she was feeling suicidal, I referred her to Mental Health for counselling since I was too close to her. She said: 'I'm not crazy'. I tried explaining to her it's for counselling, but she refus(ed), so I tried my best to help her.*

A twenty-two year old Inuit woman said:

*Young adults committing suicide is usually so shocking to the community for they don't talk about their problems. Most of them don't seek for help and don't know where to turn. Having to live two cultures and listening, - two different information. Not enough explanation for why they should and shouldn't do that or this. Too many information with no explanation. Too much peer pressure, especially for guys.*

A twenty-eight year old Inuit woman from Pangnirtung said:

*The concern I have as a community member is the violence in young people. Boys and girls around fourteen years and over are quite violent. Either they're on drugs or not. I'm scared for myself and the community when these violent people who seem to have a lot of anger will pass on these actions towards their own children.*

*The issues and concerns affecting our community are the young people. They seem to not care about life and their future. I feel this way because I see a lot of it since I have four younger siblings and they don't seem to care what they do. I feel that we should educate the people about the life issues that come up in later teenage years. We should be doing these skills in schools before junior high.*

Emma J. Roberts, a fifty-eight year old Gwich'in from Fort McPherson, summed up what many of the aboriginal women who did partake in the questionnaire and Final Report feel about their home communities and the issues and concerns facing their home communities.

*Not or none at all recreation for our young people. Because of nothing for them to do, they seem to find other means of activities which of course puts them in trouble through alcohol and drugs and mischiefs. I see this go on just about every night. Parents should start doing more with their children or even know where they are.*

*With our Land Claims, I know they are starting to implement many things and feel strongly that the young should be involve(d).*

*I think we have to have an assembly for each community and especially invite our young people to talk about what they would like to see for themselves and how they feel about all the problems. I feel we can listen and am sure we'll learn a lot from them - then work from what we hear.*

*Since land settlement, there's so few people to deal with communities' problems, as others are on Boards. But I hope the communities will start dealing with our young people soon".*

*A young adult who lived in Fort Resolution, a mixed Dene/Metis community southeast of Yellowknife near Fort Smith, commented on her childhood. She said:*

*I'm from Fort Resolution. When I was younger, I felt embarrassed to go to school because I was ten years old and in the lower grades.*

My parents were drinking all the time. Ten years old and twelve years old are drinking nowadays in Fort Resolution. There are no role models because probably all the people they (the youth) go to visit are probably drinking or offering them drugs.

*I have a sister in Fort Good Hope. She's drinking. I was babysitting for her for a while when I was younger but I was always getting a licking (being treated abusively) from her so I left there and came back to Fort Res.*

*My other sister is in St. Pat's (St. Patrick High School in Yellowknife). I was in Grade Four and I was thirteen years old. When I was younger and going to school I didn't get much sleep at night because of the partying. Even when I was not old enough to drink... but my sister asked me to drink.*

A family should be trying to tell you that you shouldn't be drinking and doing drugs but when you're always around it, you fall into it and it's the same with a relationship. It seems when you get into an abusive relationship you get pulled toward it because that's all you know.

*My parents would beat us kids with a stick. I have no respect for my father yet he now expects me to cook for him and give him my welfare money - (when he comes to Yellowknife from Fort Resolution). I told my mom she could stay with me but not him. I don't want him around my home. There were times when they were drinking when we kids - when I remember hiding under the kitchen table and it was dark outside and I woke up and there's a banging at the door and I opened it and my brother was there with some guys and they partied all night. I was around five years old then.*

*I was in the bush a lot when I was younger. I don't mind living on the land but I wouldn't want to live there (anymore). When I used to live in the bush with my parents that's all I knew and I was scared of people when I came to town. My sister and brother teased me about being bushed. The only thing I saw in the bush was drunk... and I saw how my father treated my mother... beat her up. She's sick now and now when my mom goes out alone with my dad (to the bush), I'm scared for her. But she's left my dad now and he's violent when he's drinking and probably drunk right now.*

Many of the aboriginal women who completed questionnaires for the project and survey remained anonymous. Many of the aboriginal women, though, wanted their views known. All the aboriginal women did not want to appear before the R.C.A.P...

Approximately 80% of aboriginal women who did partake in the survey for this Report stated they either moved from a smaller community to a larger centre because of one form of abuse or another and the same percent said alcohol and drugs were the contributing factors leading to the abuses. Of the aboriginal women who commented on alcohol and drug abuses, all of them considered alcohol and drug abuse as disease(s)

and a health problem of their victimizers. Although statistics play an important part in determining negative affects to aboriginal women and their children in the N.W.T., hearing the words and voices of the aboriginal women themselves should lead the R.C.A.P. and the G.N.W.T. to not only seriously and adequately address these outstanding social problems, but also begin to partake in the healing of northern aboriginal women and their children in northern and remote communities.

The symptoms may be a social hell to come to terms with by government agencies and agencies like the R.C.A.P., but a hellsome, leading to a wholesome, future for the North is worth the challenge. While health and social professionals provide essential services to attempt to address outstanding social issues and concerns, aboriginal women are continually demanding a more holistic and traditional return to practices for curing the ill and providing care to the socially needy.

Mental and physical problems will not subside with increased levels of criminal activity and offenses in N.W.T. courts or with high rates of family abuses in smaller northern and remote communities. In more than half the cases of persons accused of sexual assault against an aboriginal woman in the North, "the accused pleaded guilty. The average sentence for adult offenders prosecuted by indictment was a jail term of 15.7 months. (The Canadian Criminal Code divides offenses and summary conviction offenses. An indictable offence is the more serious criminal offence. For 'indictable' sexual assault cases, the maximum sentence is 10 years imprisonment. For summary conviction sexual assault cases, the maximum sentence that can be imposed by the court is six months in jail or a \$2000 fine or both".

The N.W.T. Department of Corrections stated recently that 50% of the population in jails are female Inuit offenders; 34% are Indian; 9.1 % are Metis; 6.8% are "other" and 90% of female offenders have Grade 10 or less. (There was no statistical breakdown for Inuvialuit women based on ethnicity). What are the solutions? What are the long term solutions? The survey questioned aboriginal women in the North not only about issues and concerns, but also about workable solutions to their unhealthy community problems. Education in either formal college or university programs or through community adult education programs, workshops, meetings and open discussion forums were some suggestions for a brighter future for the North and for the social concerns outlined in the survey.

#### **e) Education - A Great Concern...**

In March 1982, the Special Committee on Education, as commissioned by the Legislative Assembly of the N.W.T., completed a review of education in the North. In the Final Report entitled "Learning: Tradition and Change", approximately 49 recommendations were the result of 43 public hearings in 34 communities throughout the North. Approximately 1500 persons provided testimony to the Special Committee on Education between January 1981 and March 1982. While many of the recommendations have improved education systems for northerners, and while many of

the recommendations continue to be implemented, statistics continue to show aboriginal women at a disadvantage in the labour force because of low education levels.

Education - spiritually, culturally, socially, and even to extents, economically and politically - in an evolving northern environment will determine how the N.W.T. compares in partnership with national and international communities into the 21st and 22nd centuries. If the North is to capitalize on the exuberant spirit of its youth, exhilarating changes must be developed, maintained, revised and implemented and revised again, for the benefit of all northerners. Particularly, there must be a greater overall emphasis in providing aboriginal women of the North with the incentive and confidence to continue education through new initiatives in education. Unfortunately, and perhaps only, the disillusionment of the youth of the North is a statement correct for all intents and purposes about a future marked as bleak.

In the N.W.T., 44% of the population has an education of Grade 9 or less. In small communities, this figure can be as high as 72%. During 1990 - 1991, there were 14,079 children enrolled in the (N.W.T.) school systems. School enrolment increased by approximately 500 children from the previous year. School enrolment figures are expected to increase in the future. Children entering the school systems were completely in proportion to their ethnicity with Inuit at 6,600; Dene at 2,347; Metis at 979; and non-native students at 4,093 (1989 figures).

While enrolment is in proportion to ethnicity, graduation is not. The percent of children graduating in the N.W.T. differs by ethnicity. The rate of graduation of non-native children is far higher than native children in proportion to their numbers.

During 1991 - 1992, there were 203 children who graduated from Grade 12 in the N.W.T. Of these 203 students, 91 had entrance to university. The following is a breakdown statistically, according to ethnicity:

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Dene	13	6.5
Métis	17	8.2
Inuit	27	13.3
Non-native	<u>146</u>	<u>72</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### RATE OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE N.W.T.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Dene	2	2
Métis	7	8
Inuit	3	3
Non-native	<u>79</u>	<u>87</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>

(Inuvialuit by ethnicity was not acknowledged in the statistical breakdown)



In 1982, the N.W.T. Student Financial Program (assistance) assisted 322 students enrolled in post-secondary studies and programs. This year (1991 - 1992), the program funded 1,140 students. Of these, 579 were native students attending both northern and southern learning institutions.

With high reports of youth attending post-secondary education at universities and colleges, why are youth at high school levels intent on quitting school? Why do they feel their future is in jeopardy? Are social concerns and problems so overwhelming at the community level that youth in the communities are transferring their feelings of inadequacy to cope with social pressures within the home, school and society into attitudes of hopelessness and simply giving up their spirit of youth?

A document printed for public distribution, 'Our Students, Our Future, An Education Framework', states " ...exposure to a number of different cultures provides all students with a unique opportunity to discover, understand and appreciate others culture; in particular, the history and culture of aboriginal peoples of the N.W.T".

As they move toward the next century, residents of the N.W.T. must confront other formidable challenges:

- ❑ high drop-out rates and low literacy rates
- ❑ high unemployment, coupled with poor or inadequate housing, and
- ❑ high incidences of health and other social problems with relatively few professional support.

A seventeen year old aboriginal girl, whose residence while attending high school in Yellowknife was Akaitcho Hall, said:

*The people are very uneducated (with) many drop-outs (and) a lot of people without jobs, young pregnancies, alcohol and drug abuse. The people around Fort Resolution are just not involved with community activities and don't seem to care about their community. People don't volunteer to do work around the community also.*

*When I go back home, I notice a lot of people have a negative attitude towards the events, dances, feasts. I feel they are not as open-minded, education, so they are very negative - always expecting to get something for nothing. They also have no idea on what is going on around the world; for example, global warming will and does affect everyone on this planet and pollution, deforestation. The people need to be educated so they realize and want help.*

A sixteen year old Akaitcho Hall student said:

*My overall concern in my home town is the children's future - especially their education. Half the time, the children aren't in school because of the loud parties their parents had last night and they couldn't get any sleep. Do their parents even*

*care about their future - how bright it's going to be? I don't know. They get attention by breaking the law - that's how they get attention by (from) their parents, if they (the parents) are not drinking.*

A third Akaitcho Hall student who also wanted to remain anonymous said:

*The greatest overall concerns in my home community would be the future of the children who are now going to elementary school. Most of them do not get enough support from their family, or they don't want to go to school because of their lifestyle. I'm concerned because one of these students is my friend's sister and nobody except for my friend supports her (the sister). All of the other children in the family quit school.*

*Aboriginal women comprise 63% of persons with less than Grade 9, a contributing factor to the low education levels among aboriginal women in the north. Only 5% of native persons who begin school graduate from Grade 12. Based on 1989 figures, 82% of non-native women were part of the labour force while 64% of Metis women and 84% of Dene, Inuit and Inuvialuit women formed part of the northern labour force.*

Ellen Tees, a twenty-four year old Metis woman from Yellowknife, said:

*My greatest concerns are self-esteem, education, positive parenting, native women in the workforce, greater knowledge and pride in our culture, substance abuse and prevention, spousal assault and sexual assault. I feel that the greatest concern is self-esteem of (aboriginal) and all women.*

*If a woman's self-esteem is positive, the other issues, such as substance abuse, pride in our culture, etc., would be affected for the better. Positive things will happen if the woman has pride and respect for herself and her culture. This would be a starting point.*

*Regarding self-esteem, I believe if young girls are taught at home and in school to be proud and have respect for themselves, this would be a benefit to everyone, especially the young girls. Some parenting classes put on by a native organization could do this.*

Teenage drinking in my home community (of Fort Rae) is affecting my community and I feel that the community does not react with this issue enough. When People voted 'yes' for no prohibition, they did not think of their children or others. They just thought about what it would do for them. They put up (native organizations and government) banners (posters) about what it (the future) will do to your future but there are no programs for these people, except the Friendship Centre which doesn't do much.

An Akaitcho Hall student originally from Gjoa Haven, a small Inuit community in the high eastern Arctic, said:

*My greatest concern in my home community would be education because a lot of young teenagers aren't very serious about going to high school. The students going to school in Gjoa Haven should be told that education is important because I'm sure that in the future it'll be harder for uneducated people.*

Shelly Anderson, a Metis from Yellowknife, said:

*My elementary schooling took place in southern Alberta. My junior high school was in a small community in the N.W.T., and my high school took place at Sir John Franklin High School, as well, my place of residence was Akaitcho Hall. In addition, I spent a small amount of time at Arctic College, Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith.*

The schooling system in the communities is far behind what is taught in southern systems. As well, programs such as language programs are highly lacking. I spent two years studying Chipewyan at the same level as a kindergarten student. There was no real curriculum and I learned nothing, but the slang I already knew. (I lost my language because my grandmother was threatened by the nuns not to teach her children anything but English).

*Stepping out of a small community and into Yellowknife for high school was a hard lesson in itself. There was no such thing as options when you arrived. Your schedule for the first and second semester was already done up without consultation. At that time, the high school had what was called Grade Ten Preparation (GTP), of which you earned zero credits towards your diploma. The courses offered in GTP were meant to slowly merge the students into the high school setting. Because I came from a small community, I was automatically sent to those courses as well as English as a Second Language. After the first two weeks of school, they realized that I was far beyond any of my classmates; infact, I was already at a grade twelve level. Now that I was already two weeks behind everyone, it was too late to send me where I belonged. They wasted my entire year because they prejudged me based on the fact that I was coming from a small community.*

*My experiences with this same system after grade twelve graduation are no better. I have taken into my home many home boarding students attending high school. I act as a parent to these students while they reside in my home. I have gone into parent-teacher interviews for these students, while my experience with teachers is not always pleasant because I disagree with their methods of teaching, I have but one big complaint. That is -the so-called 'Northern Studies Program'. This program has no realistic curriculum, and has a great deal of Inuit content while there is no Dene or Metis content.*

*Furthermore, the Inuit content is seriously lacking meaningful data. Most of the students I spoke with, who were aboriginal descendants and indigenous to the North, did not like the course and were borderline failures on a subject that essentially should be about themselves. My final comments on education in the North are as follows:*

*- funding provided to the Government of the N. W.T. originates from funds of the Department of Indian Affairs. It is a crime that aboriginal dollars are then spent on all of the population. A person could come from anywhere in the world and spend two months here in the North, and they are considered a resident, while those of us who originate here and have a vested interest in the future of the North are the reason they are provided for. If even a small portion of that money was given directly to aboriginal organizations, we wouldn't have bureaucrats making decisions for our children. We could do it for ourselves. And, we could define the proper curriculum.*

Low subsistence grants for single parents and all aboriginal women attempting to achieve a higher level of post-secondary and college level degree programs are make-shift projects keyed to failure. Ineffective counselling practices for university entry as well as inadequate housing and day care subsidies are accumulative problems faced by most aboriginal women attending educational and learning institutions in the north and in the south. Limiting factors of support systems such as the Department of Education's student assistance programs, for example, contribute to high drop-out rates of student youth as well as aboriginal women in adult education up-grading programs. Disallowance of entry to an educational institution based on unproven previous employment or previous incarceration records in correctional institutions only contribute to disinterest in attempting to achieve higher levels of education. Barriers such as "ceilings" on tuition fees for students entering law, engineering or medicine, by the G.N.W.T. Department of Education for aboriginal northern students are contributing factors which limit university entrance. Is the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education contributing to systemic barriers for aboriginal women intent on furthering their education, as well?

**f) Aboriginal Women and the Labour Force...**

How educated members of a society are is a reflection on how well decisions among legislators of that society are made. How well a society functions in terms of equity employment is also a factor. How many job positions in the N.W.T. labour force held by aboriginal women of the north is also a reflection on whether or not aboriginal women are provided with job equity.

"Visions of Women - Partners in Change", an N.W.T. Women's Workshop held on March 25, 1988 in Rankin Inlet, and co-sponsored by the Kataujaq Society and the Status of Women (N.W.T.), quoted in their Final Report 1986 Bureau of Statistics figures. The Final Report noted that in education and the labour force, aboriginal women do not fare that well.

### **Education:**

- ❑ there are 16,435 women over age 15 in the N.W.T.
- ❑ 34% of all N.W.T. women have less than Grade 9
- ❑ 62.5% of all N.W.T. native women have less than Grade 9
- ❑ 7.6% of all N.W.T. women have a secondary school diploma only
- ❑ 20% of all N.W.T. native women achieved a grade level over Grade 9.

### **Labour Force:**

- ❑ 20.3% unemployment rate for N.W.T. women 15- 24 years old
- ❑ 17.1 % unemployment rate for N.W.T. women of single status
- ❑ 28.3% unemployment rate for N.W.T. women with less than Grade 9
- ❑ 25% unemployment rate for all N.W.T. native women (8% for non-native N.W.T. women)
- ❑ 33% of N.W.T. women employed in clerical occupations.

How can youth and young aboriginal women become enthusiastic at the prospect of a higher education knowing a clerical position with the G.N.W.T. awaits their entry into the employment sector of the public service? This question was asked of the N.W.T. animator conducting the survey. Much greater numbers of aboriginal women in upper management positions in government and the private sector is a mandate still unnoticed by legislators of the north.

If government and institutions are intent on providing the support and assistance needed to encourage aboriginal women to participate in the northern work force into the 21st and 22nd centuries, higher numbers of aboriginal women need the required and adequate amounts of money to live during a university or college year, and, as well, higher numbers of aboriginal women must be hired in employment positions that will enable them to live healthy and holistic lifestyles. In the north it seems that male chauvinistic and paternalistic attitudes still prevail in the northern society. These attitudes must change and it is the aboriginal and non-aboriginal male dominant presence that must make corrective initiations in their lifestyles for change to a healthy and holistic lifestyle in and for the northern society. Court systems and government departments must make concertive and corrective changes as a first step for a healthier northern society. More aboriginal women in government using traditional practices and methods should be allowed to begin. Without a twining of the past and the present, there will be no optimistic future, either for the children or the adults of the north.

In the 1988-89 booklet entitled "Investing in our Future: Working Together, A Review of Equal Employment Activities of the Government of the Northwest Territories" (the N.W.T.'s largest employer), the Department of Personnel, authors of the booklet, states: "It is unlikely that the Government of the Northwest Territories will achieve its objective of 52 percent native employment in the public service by 1990. A review of all departments showed that slow and steady progress is being made. The most significant barrier is the shortage of educated native people to fill positions in the public service".

From 21% in 1975, native employment increased to 25% in 1985 - 1,136 native people were employed in the public service in December, 1988. Native employment in the public service has grown significantly, partly due to the transfer of two departments from the federal government. The report goes on to list departmental initiatives to enhance native employment within the public service for the future; estimated targets. Doubtless, these statistics have improved since first published for general public viewing. Hopefully so, at any rate. The statistics, though, do not provide a breakdown of aboriginal women in the public service. Nor are there provisions stating which positions aboriginal women occupy within the G.N.W.T. labour force.

Aboriginal women who did partake in the questionnaire still had concerns for themselves, their children and their future.

Gabriella Kolausok, a fifty year old Inuit / Inuvialuit originally from Inuvik who now works in Yellowknife, said:

*There is nothing for young people to do.*

*It's very frustrating for young and very intelligent young men and women to try to do better when the system won't help them and they are looked down upon.*

*I'm fortunate to have lived in traditional times where I learned to do things without electricity, running water and now I live with running water, but the kids are in-between.*

*There are no support systems. Education is something we can't get enough of- educate them to live a life without substance abuse. My son, he's in one little group that no one likes, or in their own little world in that game room. They know they can score drugs. 'Even if I wanted to work, there's no jobs', he tells me. They don't have an education and they've been to jail.*

*I don't see them (government) addressing anything to make functional programs going for anyone or anybody. It seems to me that the government doesn't want our native people to be smart or become educated because it seems once you get smart, it seems they just want to put you down. They'll (government) put you in the lowest position. They don't want aboriginal people to be visible. They don't want it to be known that here is an educated native woman who will make a difference for native women and for native people and don't let you get too high*

*in government. I have no confidence in our higher government. There's many things that happen like this.*

Aboriginal women in the labour force in major centres comprise mainly clerical and related occupations compared to non-aboriginal women whose professions range from Crown Attorneys to 649 Lottery license holders in private business. In 1985, 60% of women in the N.W.T. worked part-time on casual labour jobs or part-years in positions. Dene and Inuit women earn lower incomes than Metis women. A female single parent in 1986 earned an average of \$20,477 while male single parents earned an average of \$26,222, with two-parent families earning an average of \$39,972 a year N.W.T. children under the age of 24 who live in female single parent families comprise 11% of all N.W.T. children in single parent families.

N.W.T. women in the labour force, with children under the age of six years old, comprise 56% statistically. Because the N.W.T. female population is statistically considered a young population, women in the N.W.T. take their children daily to one of the 796 licensed day care spaces available in 52 licensed day care centres and day home centres in 18 communities in the N.W.T., the greater amount of day care centres and day home centres available in the larger centres - 1990 figures.

As noted, during 1989, the average income in the N.W.T. was \$27,367, which was higher than the average Canadian income of \$23,840. While employment in the mining and government sectors reflects a healthy income, aboriginal people in the N.W.T. are at the low end of the economic scale.

The average personal income in the government and mining community of the capital city of Yellowknife in 1989 was \$37,318. In the nearby community of Rae-Edzo, the average income was \$14,759. During 1991-92, there was a total of 8,643 families which collected social assistance. (It should be noted that these statistics apply to those with jobs). Family income (which includes social assistance payments) is not yet available from the 1991 federal consensus. Low incomes are often the result of lack of employment. In the N.W.T., it is the aboriginal population that does the worst in the wage economy. Of native groups in the N.W.T., the Metis have the highest participation rate at 70%. The Dene have the next highest rate at .54%, the Inuvialuit at 53% and the Inuit at 53%.

A thirty-two year old Dene woman from Dettah, near Yellowknife, stated:

*Jobs are the most concerns we have. A lot of young people graduate that come home to nothing... should try to create jobs and (on) our highway to Yellowknife is in very rough shape.*

Cheryl Fennell, a Metis woman from Yellowknife, said:

*I would like to say that Yellowknife is and has been a unique community to live in. It is culturally diverse and economically stable. Structurally, it is sound, with many*

*organizations co- existing peacefully. More than any other N.W.T. community, I would venture to say that northern native people have less of a prominence in Yellowknife. The 'melding' of the diverse elements that give Yellowknife it's identify promote this. The concern of native northerners are, therefore, more difficult to clearly see in Yellowknife than in other communities, yet they exist. Alcohol abuse, low self-esteem, low rates of accomplishment, exist among native people here. I feel Yellowknife may require focused activities to assist native people 'to shine' in the city.*

*Unfortunately, the native organizations are lacking in leadership and vision because, in their struggle to keep alive by standards set by non-native and governmental standards, they must resort to political lobbying and haggling. When native people see this occurring, they become estranged from the organization, while individually continuing to support their personal beliefs in "being native".*

Native persons, especially aboriginal women, are not considered adept at existing in positions in the labour force. Through the voices of aboriginal women, this creates the numerous problems outlined in this Final Report because the problems soon lead to unproportionate dimensions of the various abuses noted, and these same problems remain unresolved. A lack of job equity in the labour force is one of the more prominent inadequacies aboriginal women face with frustration on a daily basis in the north.

A young Metis woman from Yellowknife, who also requested her name remain anonymous, told of the following discussion between her employer and herself:

*The lack of aboriginal female role models in management (is my greatest overall concern for my current home town of Yellowknife). Reason why - I think there is still a prevailing attitude by males that a woman's career is not important, therefore, they often do not get the support needed to achieve. As well, we do not give ourselves the credit we deserve because it has been ingrained in us as children to be quiet, submissive, not bold or brass. Society still has women 'packaged' in certain types of boxes. I also think this is hard to solve because we are dealing with attitudinal change. I, personally, am ensuring my two young daughters learn that while men and women look physically different, they can achieve the same way as a male - with perseverance and hard work. I also tell them to be proud to be Metis. Don't ever be afraid to tell anyone. The key might be to instill pride and respect for ourselves and others (especially the elders) in our youth.*



*Another concern of mine is the over-emphasis placed on education. While I agree that university is essential to do some jobs, it is not needed straight across the board. There seems to be an overall position that to be successful or qualified, you have to have a degree. This perception, coupled with our generally low education level among aboriginal people into senior positions of responsibility, in particular, aboriginal women.*

*I, personally, was advised by a senior federal government manager not to expect to get any higher than an officer level position because I did not have a degree. I had tried to go to school but my family commitments and finances would not allow me to go. When I told him this, he said, 'you'd better get your priorities straight'. I was stunned.*

*I now hold a middle managerial position obtained with the support of an aboriginal employment program and two supportive managers. I think I have to work three times as hard, first because I am aboriginal, second because I am a women, and thirdly because I am young. It's not fair but these are the attitudes out there.*

*Another area which concerns me relates to education in the present skills we have to take on self-government. We need to assess now what education and skill levels are needed to run for when aboriginal self-government comes.*

*Look at Nunavut - they are so close to the date (1999) when they will run their government, yet they do not have a skilled labour market to take over. I think we are better off but don't know by how much (in the western N.W.T. compared to the eastern N.W.T.). Recognition should be given to traditional ways of 'jobs' to have like they do with the farmers in the south who harvest wheat -the hunters harvest moose, caribou.*

*On other issues, I think the high price of housing is critical in my home community. How are you supposed to be able to afford a house for a family offour at such a high cost? Rent is also incredible. With shrinking government budgets, housing subsidies are really getting pinched. There should be more priority placed on this housing issue.*

A seventeen year old Bay Chimo Inuit Akaitcho Hall student said:

*In my home community, I would say the greatest overall concern is most people are unemployed. We don't have jobs there - except for a storekeeper and a teacher. I feel that we should get more job openings, for example, like going out sports hunting, janitor work, something like DPW (Department of Public Works). I also feel that people shouldn't be collecting SA' s and UI's.*

Muriel Betsina of Ndilo, near Yellowknife, commented:

*Most grandparents are the parents. I see it. One person cannot do all the work. They get frustrated so they give up. It's very hard for parents to make a life of their own. I would like to see if anyone cares about babysitting and health issues. There is no budget for anything. I would like to see in society what the young children's future is. As long as government, they get their wages, they don't give a shit. When you go to see them for budget to get things done, they don't have time for you. They send their assistant to see you. I hope each household in the community speaks out for their needs Family circle healing - a family as a whole to start looking after one another to find respect again.*

Emma J. Roberts of Fort McPherson said:

*As a Gwich'in, I feel that all the meetings that I attended to do with aboriginal women's issues is VERY slow in getting off the ground. Sometimes I wonder if we are being heard. No matter how many recommendations are made, there's always a block of some sort. I feel the money spent on these meetings could be used in a community. Maybe -towards a play-ground or care for the elders. All communities in the N. W. T. face the same problems and I believe in getting all people in their own communities to have an assembly to deal with their own community problems .I know one from McPherson can't go to Iqaluit and fix their problems because we all have different problems of life-styles.*

#### **g) The Elders...**

In the Report, Traditional Knowledge Working Group, a gathering of individuals representing aboriginal organizations and cultural institutions, as well as government departments and agencies in the N.W.T., elders who participated in the development of recommendations to the G.N.W.T. were adamant that "aboriginal traditional knowledge" was not an abstract ideology that could easily be incorporated into non-aboriginal laws and legislation.

The Report reflects what aboriginal elders feel are the most important issues facing aboriginal people in the north. "Elders want their children to be teachers, doctors and lawyers, but success, whether on the land or in a profession, depends on students having a strong sense of who they are and where they come from". In the words of one Dene elder: "Those who are aware and who are in school usually receive a good education and use it wisely, but those who get an education without having the consciousness and the level of understanding towards life are different, and they end up destroying what they are trying to build".

A thirty-two year old aboriginal woman from Dettah said:

*Education - because our children are our future leaders and their education is very important. I think they should maintain their language and learn their cultural ways. Elders also are so important because we can (learn) so much from them. They lived a very hard life and I think we should try to help elders in a way that they are comfortable, eg. home, transportation, health, interpreters, available for them.*

In a 1985-86 assessment of the aged, disabled and chronically ill, sponsored by the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services, G.N.W.T., and under the "General Discussion" heading in the report, Nelson McCelland and Carole Miles, authors named in the report, state that concerns continue to be relevant when acknowledging aboriginal persons and aboriginal women, particularly in the age group 65 and over. "People in communities are generally doing an excellent job of caring for their elderly, disabled and chronically ill. At times, alcohol, wage work poverty and depression interfere, but, in most cases, someone in the community makes sure the people in the community who need care get it. Elders' social service committees, nurses and social service workers could always tell the project officers who should be taking care of whom, and whether they were. However, families need respite from the constant care and responsibility, they need help with the physical and financial burden of long term home care, and they need training to carry out various home procedures. Staying home to care for a sick, infirm or disabled relative does reduce the caregiver's potential income, limit the caregiver's freedom to participate in living on the land and recreation and creates extra heavy work.

Elders who have families living in the same communities are fortunate. They are also in the majority.

Better transportation services and more social activities were recognized as needs in many communities. Community representatives indicated that it is imperative that elders are not segregated to one corner and ignored. The elder's feelings of self-worth must be maintained. Several communities had facilities (community halls) that were under-utilized during the day that could have been used as gathering places.

The aged, disabled and chronically ill population will increase dramatically over the next 10 to 20 years. Demands for services will be increasing as their needs increase. Planning must commence now in order to provide adequately for the future".

The following represents demographic considerations for the aged, disabled and chronically ill citizens of the N.W.T. Age projections for the future are as follows:

**NWT POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP**  
*G.N.W.T. Bureau of Statistics*

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>1981*</b>	<b>1986**</b>	<b>1991**</b>	<b>1996**</b>	<b>2001**</b>
<b>65+</b>	1,295	1,463	1,940	2,499	3,129
<b>15 – 64</b>	28,370	32,752	35,681	38,704	42,807
<b>0 – 14</b>	<u>15,870</u>	<u>17,849</u>	<u>19,366</u>	<u>20,858</u>	<u>21,803</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	45,535	52,064	56,987	62,061	67,019

Key: \* = Census Data  
 \*\* = Projections

**Notes:**

- Estimated population as of May 1986 was 52,064, of which 2.8% (1463) are 65+.
- A further breakdown of the elderly (65+) for 1986 by ethnic background indicates that 41% are Dene, 33% Inuit and 25% represents Other Groups (Metis, Inuyialuit and non-aboriginal). By 2001, it is projected that there will be a shift as follows: 31% Dene/Metis, 33% Inuit and 36% Others.
- The projected increases in the 65+ group from 1981 census to 2001 projections is for a 24% increase. A breakdown by 5 year periods is as follows:

From 1986-1991, projected increase in 65+: 133%  
 From 1991-1996, projected increase in 65+: 129%  
 From 1996-2001, projected increase in 65+: 125%

**h) Aboriginal Women and the Justice System...**

A Yellowknife Metis woman who remained anonymous said:

*The present justice system is also an area of great concern for many people. I am not well-versed with the issues, but do know that there is a high rate of repeat offenders who continually are put in jail. I don't know if they are not being counselled in jailor if they see it as a break from their community - (with room and*

*board included) - but the present system is obviously not working. I have heard of a reserve where the people of the community deal with justice in a traditional way. The judge is a respected community leader. I wonder if a more grassroots approach would be the way to solve our own problems. The present system would have to go through a thorough overhaul though. Is this possible, given the numbers of non-aboriginal people who hold the cards?*

Regarding whether or not aboriginal women's concerns are adequately or inadequately addressed in and by the legal system in the N.W.T., a thirty-two year old Dettah Dene woman said:

*I think the system is finally listening to women and starting to realize that we have been through a lot and been taking the abuse long enough. It's not perfect, but I'm sure, in time, it will improve more.*

A thirty-four year old aboriginal woman from Fort Liard said:

*If I had a million dollars, I would have programs for the young people to educate them in alcohol and drug-related abuses. I would have workshops for elders to hire as trainees. Elders to teach elders about the illness and three counsellors for the community.*

*There is a need for helplines in small communities. I am an alcohol and drug counsellor in Fort Liard. Last week, I sat in court. A minor was asked by the judge some questions. The youth was a first time offender and the judge asked, "What do you want done?" -about the crime committed and the minor didn't know what the judge meant by the question.*

*The judge asked him what he (the minor) wanted to do to make amends and I could see that when the minor made the mischief, he was under the influence of alcohol and that's why he got in the trouble and therefore was irresponsible and the judge is asking him to make his own sentence. But why is the judge asking an irresponsible person (youth) to tell him (the judge) what his (the youth) sentence should be when he is irresponsible and doesn't know what the judge is saying or asking of him?*

*We need to form a group to have Community Justice Committees and maybe that would work. There would have to be the Justice of the Peace on that Committee and more (aboriginal) women on the Community Justice Committee. In the communities, it will take a long time for them to get used to it. There have been so many things handed to them by government. Community Justice Committees might work, but they would have to be organized really good.*

A young Metis woman from Yellowknife said:

*We are not seeing many things being solved. It's upsetting that a man can abuse his wife and get numerous times in jail. The justice system must take into account the ingrained position of a male-dominated society which has the woman 'taking what she deserves.' The high teenage suicide rate is also shocking - young people with the world ahead of them but do not want to live. There are many other areas - just listen to the news. We need this to be taken very seriously by senior levels of government and develop an approach with the federal government to address (and pay the bills) while solving these problems with us, and all the issues (solving them).*

*The Crown (federal government in Right of Her Majesty the Queen) came to the north with treaties... land, subsurface rights are one thing. The effects of merging non-aboriginal cultures are another - eg., the social distress we are in... until the social distress is removed, I don't think we can expect much (resolution of the problem).*

Many aboriginal women feel that the justice system or legal system in the N.W .T. does not fare well for aboriginal women, as noted in the previous statements. An Inuit woman from Pangnirtung, in the eastern Arctic, said:

*I've been very disappointed with our legal system, mainly because being Inuit, I've always had problems with the court because I've gone out with two whitemen and have two daughters and when we separate, all they did was run to the court for custody. I have been hurt so much. I feel so useless and little, when these whitemen take me to court.*

Shelly Anderson, a twenty-two year old Metis from Yellowknife, said:

*The federal government started it, and we are quickly following pursuit. I am not a Treaty Indian, nor did my ancestors choose script. I am a descendant of the Dene, but the government says I am Metis. Now that they've established this for us, we are doing it ourselves. I can't be a band member because you must be a Treaty person to be a member of a band. Does this mean that I am not a real Indian? Not as far as I am concerned. I understand that my ancestors never turned away their cousins but we are quick to do this today because of a little mixture of blood.*

*I am thoroughly disgusted with the staking rush in my area. Has anybody asked any questions? Well, I am! Who are these people coming to our land and claiming it for their own profits. And the worst of all is that the G.N.W.T. thinks this is a great and wonderful thing. Have we learnt nothing from our past experiences? In the years ahead, when I want to teach my children the ways my grandparents taught me, I won't be able to because I will be trespassing on my*

*own land (when I say "my own land", I don't mean a certain acre or plot of property - I mean the Mother Earth).*

*All of my concerns and the concerns of others can be addressed by the people that live those lives, not someone in a government office telling us what we can and cannot do. We need Self- Government in all aspects of life. If Self-Government is dictated by the federal government, we will continue to hit the same barriers. It is almost impossible to succeed if programs are designed for failure. We are the only ones who can know solutions to our problems.*

*I find most aboriginal organizations genuinely want to address many concerns but just don't have the resources. An exercise similar to this one and designed for that specific organization could provide a better understanding of what issues and concerns need to be addressed and how.*

*If any government was adequately addressing my concerns, they wouldn't be concerns. The reasons they don't address my concerns is because they have policies and guidelines to follow which are passed down from Ottawa. The human race hasn't figured out yet that each person is an individual with individual needs. We have to access each situation with a different outlook.*

*My personal experience has been that I don't really have difficulties in the judicial system, because I make it a practice of knowing my rights and exercising them. I do know of some real injustices on aboriginal women, though.*

*I do believe that the R.C.M.P. are lazy to check out some complaints brought to their attention. I have had to pressure them to do their jobs on more than one occasion.*

Cheryl Fennell of Yellowknife, a Metis woman, said:

*The N.W.T. Native Women's Association does have a profile in the north for addressing legal concerns of aboriginal women. The Status of Women have a higher profile than the Native Women's though. I think the N.W.T. Native Women's Association should develop a higher profile in this area and gain support on a legal basis wherever possible.*

*I believe that government is beginning to address the concerns of aboriginal people and aboriginal women in the north. But again, I believe a lack of trust exists between native organizations and other agencies. For the most part, this lack of trust is sometimes based on rhetoric formulated by native and non-native people who are insecure. I do believe there are genuine attempts being made by government to develop northern native people, but because it is government by name, these attempts are not given the recognition or support they deserve.*

## **Part II: Solutions for Results - N.W.T. Aboriginal Women**

In the Terms of Reference of the R.C.A.P., it suggests that individuals and organizations, and governments making submissions, should provide results - orientated solutions to the concerns, issues and problems presented in their briefs and reports. In this Report, many of the concerns or problems presented by aboriginal women of the western N.W.T. - approximately 50 women who chose to participate in a questionnaire - survey - provides solutions. The following excerpts accurately - except where single words have been added for sentence construction - reflects what aboriginal women who did partake in the survey provided as results-orientated solutions. Some comments have already been provided in the contents of quotations extracted from the questionnaires under the previous heading of "General Issues and Concerns" in Part I of this Report.

### **Solutions - Part A:**

- 1) Gabriella Kolausok, age fifty, originally from Inuvik and now living in Yellowknife:

*Maybe a hostel, but maybe there are too many institutions. As single parents, we are so busy trying to make ends meet that we sometimes don't make a commitment emotionally to our children.*

*I would get a transition house for young offenders. Young people from 18 -25 years and educate them to learn trades and learn about how to do their financial budgeting by making them pay for their own room and board and make them feel good about themselves and counsellors to help them through life skills. And, that way when they come out of that centre, they would know how to care for themselves. That's why many of them end up right back in jail because they haven't learned self-improvement. If it was up to me, I would never lock them up if they're native. I would send them out in the bush or something like that...*

- 2) Muriel Betsina, age forty-nine, from Ndilo, near Yellowknife:

*I would like to see more leadership meetings. I would like to see a lunch program no matter what nationality they are - in our schools. Hot lunch programs. The parents are playing cards all night long and the children are left to fend for themselves and welfare is too busy to deal with it. There are also a lot of parents who are alcoholics. When they buy a pizza, the children fight for it. The parents are trying to buy their love that way.*

*It's dysfunctional families and we need counsellors and we need to heal the home first and I would like to see workshops on family therapy and healing circles. A lot I want to do with the older cultural ways, but we don't have nothing now. We have good visualization, but we don't have access to the resources.*



- 3) Ellen Tees, age twenty-four, from Yellowknife:

*...set up committees. Lobby the government and large native organizations who may have experience dealing with these issues.*

- 4) Sarah Hardisty, age sixty-seven, from Jean Marie River, a small community in the Fort Liard Valley:

*(A) ban on alcohol (and) more mental health conferences. Have one mental health conference in our community. Community healing and outspoken alcohol and drug counsellors in the community. Justice system and language and culture (are also my concerns).*

- 5) Shelly Anderson, a twenty-two year old Metis who lives in Yellowknife:

*I believe that education is the key solution to many concerns. Most non-natives can't understand what it is like to be an aboriginal person, and even more so, a northern aboriginal person, and the stereotypes that come with that. So we have to start educating them, and educating ourselves. I went through a school system that said Christopher Columbus was a great man. I find out now that he was no better than Edi Amin. The true story of North America's aboriginal people should be taught by the people who know it best.*

*And in this sense, when given the opportunity, I speak my mind to set the records straight for those who are unaware, and listen to many stereotypes. I've seen many eyes opened, and there is a good feeling that comes with seeing that happen. At the same time, I have to keep my mind open to things I am ignorant of. The learning cycle never ends, and we must use it as the tool it is meant to be.*

- 6) Elizabeth Kimiksana, age fifty-five, originally from Tuktoyaktuk and now living in Yellowknife:

*(I) would get workers. I would talk to them, get into meetings and try to find solutions. (I would) set up a little place for the little kids and big kids for the games for everything we could get (to have) people involved.*

- 7) Lucy, age twenty-six, from Yellowknife:

*...cut down on it (drinking, gambling, bingo) by the G.N.W.T. (Government of the Northwest Territories). I don't know (any solutions).*

- 8) Sarah Jerome, age forty-five, lives in Fort McPherson:

*Have regular workshops - or house to house surveys done on how parents may become more involved. Educate the Community Education Council members on their roles and responsibilities so they may become more vocal!*

*To hire more professional people in the area of psychology, mental health, drug and alcohol to work with our people and begin the healing process. The grassroots people have to help in these ventures - we must identify "our problems" and begin to heal ourselves.*

### **Solutions – Part B:**

The following comments are from aboriginal women who did not allow their names to be presented, and the N.W.T. animator and the N.W.T. and National Native Women's Associations respected their confidentiality. The following represents their ideas for solutions to the many concerns and issues raised:

- 1) Akaitcho Hall student, seventeen years old:

*Talk to the Mayor or Chiefs of the community. They know there's a problem, but it will never end.*

- 2) Akaitcho Hall student, sixteen years old:

*...bring it up at a community meeting or speak to the Mayor.*

- 3) A young girl from Ndilo, no name, no age:

*See Council meetings and make your voice heard.*

- 4) A twenty-two year old from Yellowknife:

*I would take part in workshops and conferences and speak about my own experience with alcohol.*

- 5) A thirty year old aboriginal woman, originally from Aklavik and now living in Yellowknife:

*Chief, Band members, Inuvialuit leaders. The community needs community development. Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA' s), also need community development - some can take alcoholism programs.*

*Trainers of trainers in the N.W.T. who will provide continuous training for small communities. More training for alcohol workers, benefits and wages. They are just like social workers.*

*Land Claims - more advertisement - i.e. (the) good and bad side of the decisions for elders, youth and local members in the N. W.T.*

*More support for single mothers - emotional, financial, and education and more money for day care.*

*Housing for elders. Elders are being abused and don't get houses.*

*There is no treatment for abusers and victims of Justice -talk to Yellowknife Correctional Institute (YCI) for better programs, education, health... free room and board for the abusers and the wives are left frantic at the community level trying to survive. There is not enough jobs and training and I would rather stay home than depend on social services. If there is going to be foster homes, the children should be placed in aboriginal "healthy" homes rather than in non-aboriginal homes.*

*There are no cross-cultural awareness workshops or introduction for non-natives who are foster caregivers - for foster homes.*

*There is no support for gays or lesbians. They're taking a lot of abuse (in jails) from other inmates - there's no acceptance and they are being discriminated against - need more information to explain their place in society as well.*

*There is discrimination in the workforce.*

**6)** A forty-two year old woman from Ndilo:

- more education in the dangers of abusing alcohol;
- provide funding to the Bands to run drug and alcohol programs better consultation process should be set up between Government and the communities,
- provide funding to the Bands to run Youth programs; and
- public meetings and workshops -door-to-door campaigns or surveys and Elders' Groups -seek advice: Youth Corps Groups - seek participation.

**7)** A fifty-four year old aboriginal woman from Fort Simpson:

*Take the kids out on weekends if there's no school - out in the bush and make the Elders work with them. I was working with kids last summer at the summer camp for eleven years now. Whatever I learned them in the bush -they they get back in town - there's no one to carry on. Every spring I have to start over with them in the spring.*

- 8) A sixty-two year old aboriginal woman from Fort Simpson:

*All organizations have been trying to get back to teaching the old ways. There is now mention about sexual abuse in the missions. Both my grandparents were Metis. But they kept my dada away from school because he was smart in the bush.*

*Today, the children are rebelling, but rebelling in the wrong way. They don't know how to rebel really. They were robbed, the last generation, of their youth.*

*Spirituality is a necessity for the youth. My father used to say you have to raise the ego of a person NOW, because it won't do any good after they're dead. Youth are lacking the respect and strength they need today.*

*The youth - there needs to be much more emphasis on education and there needs to be workshops with the elders.*

*Because of assimilation and loss of identity, there has to be more consistency within the culture for re-identifying with the loss of culture. The youth are 'just like a butterfly. They have no roots.*

- 9) An aboriginal woman who provided no name, no age and no home community:

*Maybe a place where youth can go, a drop-in centre to play games, watch television, etc. (No booze, no drugs). Maybe some young people would like to go to a place without any worries. Get training for young people to be involved in native organizations.*

*The Band Councils should be aware of youth problems... talk about it in the meetings and send the Minutes to young people... (post it up in notices). Band Councils are too worried about funding. The Chiefs should go to talk with some young people to get their ideas and concerns. The Chiefs are respected. Some youth will listen to a respected Elder.*

- 10) A twenty-four year old aboriginal woman from Yellowknife:

*...(get) field workers. No comment (further).*

- 11) A twenty-seven year old from Ndilo:

*Provide more grants to our Bands or Local (Metis) or non-profit organizations. Tell the government not to deny our Rights. We are growing even more impatient at their laws. Provide us with our Treaty Rights and let us get along with our lives. We need more money for our local Dene Bands.*

*(Also)... through our Local Women's group or Band.*

- 12) A seventeen year old aboriginal adolescent from Fort Simpson:

*Close the liquor stores and bars. The education system (in some cases) has to be tougher. If someone really wants to be someone, they would get their education.*

- 13) A seventeen year old girl from Fort Resolution:

*Strictly prohibit alcohol from entering the town. Educate them, show them more ways to live, open their minds, show them to think positive, have feasts and dances put on by the people of the community. If they do it themselves, it could be extra fun. Instead of regular five or six volunteers. Show them how to clean up the community. Bring back the native culture that was once...*

- 14) An aboriginal woman from Dettah who gave no name or age:

- create more training programs;
- create more jobs; and
- have more recreational things.

*We need more working together as a community rather than one or two families running a community.*

- 15) A thirty-nine year old woman from Ndilo:

*...more training and more jobs. A traditional way of life for younger people mostly.*

- 16) An aboriginal woman from Ndilo:

*There are just no solutions to these concerns. It is a northern - wide concern that affects almost every northern community. If they haven't come to any solutions or reasonable suggestions, then there are none.*

*To have good leadership, strong Band Councils that will put their foot down and say I want this, with no ands, butts, or ifs about it. I want to see this happen in a certain span of time and do it.*

- 17) A thirty-four year old from Yellowknife:

*One person's stupidity - everyone else would suffer. For a lot of more native women to speak out and not be shy.*

- 18) A thirty-four year old aboriginal woman from Fort Rae:

*I don't know how I can help provide solutions because there's too much alcohol going on. To find solutions from down south to help us with our community drugs and alcohol counsellors... to share with others from drinking too much alcohol. Send somebody to us to help us from drinking alcohol and use of drugs, too. We need to stop that...*

- 19) An eighteen year old aboriginal youth from Fon Norman:

*I would tell the members of the Council and whoever is involved in the Land Claims. I think about our future, that this Land Claims would be hard for our children's children. I don't know.*

- 20) A nineteen year old aboriginal youth from Fon Franklin:

*Put up a program or the idea on what they are and what or how we have to treat or manage it (the land). I don't know.*

- 21) An eighteen year old aboriginal youth from Fort Providence:

*A good, well-educated recreation coordinator who will do a lot, not against natives and will not think of his own interests... not only teach the kids the same words. Let them speak (their Dene language when they are being taught) a sentence or two, so it would be easier, instead of having them figure it out for themselves.*

- 22) A nineteen year old from Rae Lakes:

*Some of the solutions I may have is to get involved with organizations and maybe learn from them. Help my people to keep themselves from losing their Mother Tongue. And to get teenagers involved in some cultural activities. I feel this way because I know someday, my culture might be totally gone. Listen to each other and keep the culture strong!*

- 23) A thirty-four year old aboriginal woman from Dettah:

*Have some workshops for gambling as a sickness... community gatherings. Put a ban on bingo.*

- 24) A youth from Gjoa Haven:

*I would think the best solutions would be talking to all students about education and what comes after that... And what they could do after high school. Make them understand more about school and colleges.*

- 25) A girl from Ndilo:  
*Youth meetings.*
- 26) A thirty-one year old from Dettah:  
*AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings. Keep busy by working or going to school. I don't know.*
- 27) A thirty-three year old woman from Ndilo:  
*More workshops on awareness of what these (negative affects) are doing to their kids, like films, talks or someone just visiting people now and then.*
- 28) A seventeen year old girl from Akaitcho Hall in Yellowknife:  
*To provide solutions for the concerns I have outlined are: don't throw garbage on the land, pick up after yourself, get big garbage cans, and don't burn it too often.*
- 29) A twenty-nine year old who did not provide a name or community in the survey and who did not have any answers to the questions regarding solutions as in many questionnaires.
- 30) A thirty-two year old from Dettah:  
*Let the local people have more control over government programs and projects... that way they try to solve a lot of their concerns. They need to lobby the government more regarding these (issues) and also they need to really take a look at the grassroots of problems in the community.*  
*I think the government doesn't trust the local people to handle programs and projects -maybe because they don't want to lose their jobs.*  
*More community input, more participation from (the) community. Listen and take advice from Elders. Make sure our MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) are aware of our problems and concerns. Support and stand behind our Chief and at the same time participate in our community.*
- 31) A fifty-eight year old aboriginal woman from Fort McPherson:  
*Yes, everyone is trying to deal with all issues. But with cutbacks and all, it's hard to move (in) any direction.*  
*Fort McPherson is putting up an outpost camp this summer ( 1993 ) and hope that will (be) a good investment for our people. It's a retreat we can all use. A retreat outpost, which will be used year, round.*

**32)** A twenty-eight year old Inuit woman:

*I would like, ...I said, ...start with the education system and maybe start groups like self-help groups, support groups. I also feel that our elders should voice other concerns. And the methods should be done in their own languages and not just send' experts' from (the) South.*

**33)** A twenty-two year old woman from Iqaluit:

*There is no easy solution. We need the young people to open up and let them know that there is help. We need more counsellors who are trained.*

**34)** A Metis woman from Yellowknife:

*Money, time, commitment from the leaders in power, a healing process for people presently in distress from experiencing social/economic problems, more cohesiveness in the aboriginal nation as a whole to learn from each other, share best practice, share mistakes.*

**35)** Another Metis woman from Yellowknife, Cheryl Fennell:

*Perhaps by de-emphasizing political affiliation as a unifying force for native people and by supporting the revitalization of individual identity and support for their personal choices as positive steps to build a unified nation. There is much strength in allowing individual initiative at the community level. Especially when the end result is a strong, self-assured nation.*

*As an individual, I would persevere through my daily work to become an example of a native person who holds unity-in- diversity as the essential bond that will free people from those ideas that create hatred of one's and other's race. This individual action, if followed, will produce great results and strength at little cost to anyone.*

*I would like to add that it is through my acceptance of the Baha'i Faith, a world religion uniting all peoples, that I become strengthened in my personal cultural identity.*

**36)** Ellen Smith, a Gwich'in aboriginal woman from Inuvik, said:

*I feel this issues and concerns can be adequately addressed by the community itself A healing process to take place that is community - based (culturally and spiritually). The whole community involved - youth, elders included. For example: healing camps that are culturally and spiritually based; elders to run the programs; input from youth and families in the community; adolescent treatment programs; family treatment programs; education - childhood upbringing, the residential syndrome, sexual abuse issues; violence, sexuality; parenting, etc.*



37) A Metis woman from Yellowknife, who wished to remain anonymous, said:

*Solutions for the North will not come easy. Currently, the G.N.W.T. has begun the Community Transfer Program which it feels is the solution for more community-based responsibilities and powers over program service and delivery. However, because the communities will continue to express their concerns in an advisory capacity, with the G.N. W.T. still delegating authority and powers, this form of "Self-Government" will not work in the long run.*

*All the Community Transfer Initiatives Program will do is assist Nunavut with an infrastructure for a future provincial government. In the western N.W.T., because our structure is different than the Inuit, with a high majority of Dene, Metis, Inuvialuit and non-aboriginal persons, they will require a greater concentration on new aboriginal forms of government and not pseudo-ad hoc forms of what the G.N.W.T. calls "Self- Government" for the communities and regions. The way the CTI is currently being structured, the power will continue to lie with the central government at Yellowknife and within five to ten years, the process will be reversed back to what it is today but with a much greater mess to clean up at the then disillusioned community and regional levels in the western N. W.T.*

*The solution is to stop the current initiatives and review the process before it gets out of hand. Further, that a new Constitution Act for the western N.W.T., that guaranteed representation with an aboriginal Charter of Human Rights, be included that has evolved from the communities and regions and after a review of the mistakes not to make from countries with high populations of aboriginal peoples who have tried new forms of aboriginal Self-Government and failed.*

*I believe that the federal government is waiting for the CTI and other newly arrived at community forums for Self-Government to fail so it can not only reclaim what it feels it has lost to the whole constitutional and political development process over the past ten to twenty years, but also I believe what I have just written because I see the process of transfer of authorities to communities as coming from a federal initiative in the first place and that is the 1980 Drury Report on Constitutional Development in the N. W.T. The G.N.W.T. is grasping at new initiatives and all that it is fostering is a compliance of a federal initiative.*

## **Part III: Regional Workshop Results**

### **Yellowknife Regional Workshop**

On February 5 and 6, 1993, a workshop held at Yellowknife, with area aboriginal women, presented a list of concerns and dreams, or solutions, during the Leadership and Self-Esteem workshop. The following represents, in summary, the problems aboriginal women in the North Slave area who attended the workshop view as major issues. As well, aboriginal women expressed how they would resolve issues of concern if they had the adequate resources to resolve their concerns.

#### **a) Problems, Concerns and Issues (in order of Priority):**

- ❑ There was not enough or no teaching at all of Indian values, spiritual values, language, hunting and trapping.
- ❑ Violence, including child and elder abuse; spousal assault; sexual assault and solvent abuse. An issue that was coextensive with the above was that the justice system in the north was too lenient on most offenders.
- ❑ Drugs and alcohol, in most communities in the N.W.T.
- ❑ Lack of counselling and no respect for alcohol recovery and the healing processes.
- ❑ Aboriginal women felt there was an impact from the white community on Indian communities.
- ❑ Other issues included that there were too many bingos and card games held in major and small northern communities, causing family problems; gossiping was also considered as a bad habit.

Also in order of priority, delegates agreed on the following: i) Indian values need to be addressed immediately; ii) violence was a result of 'disjointedness' or dysfunctionality in society; northern society and southern influences on northern society; iii) alcohol needs to be addressed immediately. The following was noted by delegates: "You learn where an organization or people are at during their meetings and learn where they are coming from as a political group".

When delegates were asked how they would provide solutions to their concerns, participants listed the following as results-orientated solutions or "dreams for the future". The long and short term dreams were listed as follows:

- ❑ that education should teach both the European and aboriginal history;
- ❑ that there should be strong leadership roles;
- ❑ that aboriginal professionals, doctors and lawyers were needed in the aboriginal societies;
- ❑ that elders should be involved in leadership positions;
- ❑ that alcohol programs should be offered to dysfunctional families; .that support should be given for the children and families of dysfunctional homes;

- that treatment counsellors and after-care should be a priority for persons in the criminal system who have been in the penal system for a long time, such as sexual abusers;
- that there should be a monitoring of bootleggers on winter roads near small communities;
- that equal treatment should be provided for Bands and a consistency from government programs;
- that more aboriginal women should be in leadership roles in native organizations;
- that there should be a stop to discrimination in, against and between varying aboriginal groups, and that traditional Nations should not be fighting among themselves;
- that ownership of land and land in general should be protected; .that there should be care for the caregivers of communities; and
- that there should be no mortgages on housing for aboriginal people but there should be better housing programs.

## **b) Home Community Concerns**

During the Yellowknife workshop, some participants agreed to discuss, in groups, what issues and concerns they felt were the greatest overall concerns in their home communities. They provided the following problems to the N.W.T. animator, in closed circle.

The persons providing the concerns wished not to be identified but agreed the animator could provide the name of their home community. The following represents their concerns for their home communities:

- A young lady from Fort Resolution, who now lives in Yellowknife, said there was no counselling for various programs. She noted that many elders drink in the community and that it is difficult to go to them for advice when the youth do not respect them. She noted there are bingos and card games going on into the night and that children are being neglected as a result of no proper care and attention. "Parents don't do things with their children," she said.
- A lady from Lac La Martre said that, previously, the problem was sniffing solvents but that this abuse has now subsided. Alcohol abuse was next tried and although alcohol remains an issue, now people are using drugs. She also said leaders talk a lot about approaches for community problems but it doesn't seem to help. The elders are also approached about the problems but bingo, gambling with cards, drinking and drugs continue to be problems in Lac La Martre.
- A lady from Fort Norman wondered if Community Justice Committees will work in communities. She reiterated a story about a nine year old who was sexually assaulted when Community Justice Committees were tried at one

- time in an ad hoc fashion. The lady noted that because there were too many family members on the Committee, the abuser "got off".
- In response to questions about Norman Wells, a lady said there has been so great an influx of non-native people to the community because of oil and economic benefits that the aboriginal community "gets pushed out of the way and away from their communities". She also noted gambling as a concern.
  - Another woman from Fort Resolution noted child and sexual abuse were home community concerns.
  - A Fort Rae woman said drinking under the age was a concern. As well, she said there is no respect for the elders and the divorce rate among parents is also a problem. She said there is a need for more counsellors and counsellor support (Band and Council). She too noted gambling as a home community concern.
  - A lady from Cambridge Bay said spousal assault is a problem, as well as drinking, gambling and bingo. Elder neglect is also a problem. Elders are not being cared for because they, as children, were neglected. She noted an example that as long as five years ago, solvent abuse has been a problem. The two greatest concerns she felt were gambling and elder abuse. She said there is a need for more activities in her home community.
  - A lady from Fort Resolution said drugs, alcohol and child abuse are the greatest problems in her home community. She said there is no respect for the elders. The Chief "has lost values and don't set a good example. I was taught to respect my elders, but I saw when I moved to Res. the disrespectfulness of the elders. Maybe it's because they don't set a good example. Sexual abuse is a problem that becomes a normal thing. People just laugh at a woman who is passed out (from drinking alcohol and who then gets sexually assaulted). There is no support mechanisms in the community for recovering alcoholics".
  - A lady who lived in Fort Smith, but who now lives in Yellowknife, said there is ostracization and gossiping used against people as a trigger to induce emotional depression and instability in the community. Card games are played in the Old Folks Home and drug and alcohol are problems as well. "The parents have to be interested. There is no support for teaching young people the ways of our culture, for example, trapping. There is no support for people trying to better themselves".

- A lady from Yellowknife said there are "broken links" between political organizations among the Dene and Metis groups versus the Yellowknife political bodies and structures. She gave the example of no aboriginal institutions, such as housing for aboriginal people to administer because it is administered by government structures. She said the justice system is too lenient "on the rapists and child abuse situations".

**c) Deh Cho Regional Workshop Held at Fort Simpson**

During the March 21 - 23, 1993 regional workshop at Fort Simpson, delegates, who remained unnamed, provided concerns and issues from their home community in Round Table forums. The following represents their concerns:

- An elder: "There are lots of concerns about drinking. There needs to be help to get families back together and there needs to be more aboriginal counsellors".
- A Fort Liard woman said there is a need for more support from community leaders, more support for young people; for example, to begin youth camps during the summer and winter months. Also, there is a need to "know themselves and their culture".
- A youth: "We need support from the adults".
- A lady from Trout Lake said there is a need for more workshops and more people in the community to help "those in need and a need for a safe home".
- Bertha Allen (president of the N.W.T. Native Women ' s Association) said, "more women need to be involved at the community level. There needs to be more role models among women. Women need to know about how to heal themselves and there is a need to give each other support. There is a need to give support to the caregivers and there needs to be more workshops on all these things".
- Riki Sato (executive director of the northern women's organization) said, "self-counselling about our relationship with one another and overcoming the past to change and further break the cycles (of abuse)".
- A woman from Jean Marie River said, "young people should be taught the traditions in the schools and counselling should be for young people, not just the adults".
- A lady from Fort Simpson said, "there is a need for more volunteers and child counsellors to make it (the work needed to be done) a reality. Young children vandalize -where are the parents? We need a 'Kids Club'".

- Ethle Lamothe said, "There is a need to make a commitment to work in the community. There is a need for women to take training but the training can come to the community. -There is a lack of connection with the elders. Youth should be trained on how to approach an elder in the traditional sense. We have and need the elders to share their knowledge. There is a need for a women's circle to join into a prayer circle. We must also be open to other people to accept them".
- A lady from Wrigley said, "there is a lack of jobs in (my) home community". She said there is a need for "up-grading, more training, support for one another. Parents don't talk to their children and young people just need someone who cares to talk to them to help them".
- A lady from Fort Simpson said, "there is a need for a community native women' s organization and... more native women should be encouraged to take leadership positions in the community".
- Another woman from Fort Simpson said, "there is a need for more co-dependent workshops to deal with women's issues. We, the community members, need to know what steps to take to help the people, especially the children. We need to plan day trips for children to see the land, mountains..."
- A lady from Wrigley said, "there is a need for more organized activities for the children. There is also a need for activities in (my) home community for pre-schoolers and daycares". She said there is a need for youth workshops on self-awareness, on alcohol and drug abuse and in the inhaling process. There is also a need for a woman's Crisis Centre and a Safehome and, as well, a crisis line for "people to call anytime during the day". She also noted a need for a community centre to plan activities for the elders and youth and a workshop on "grief loss". She said there is a need for more housing for single people.
- A lady from Fort Simpson said there is a need for support groups for teenagers and a need for younger counsellors who can relate to young people, as well as more activities for youth.
- A lady from Jean Marie River said her community could use an alcohol and drug counsellor. "We need to support the young people. Mothers can talk to their young about the traditions and old days. There is a need for training of alcohol counsellors from their own communities and from social services. We need someone to come into our communities to talk to people about sexual abuse and spousal abuse".

- A lady from Fort Simpson said, " Alcohol and drug abuse is the greatest concern. People who don't drink anymore are the ones that are suffering the most. We need to deal with mission (school) syndrome and to back to the culture. Who is teaching the young parents how to be parents? In the form of story-telling, this information needs to be passed on".
- Another lady from Fort Simpson said, "we must tell each other how we feel today - be closer together with other people. The alcohol program is not working - why? - what can we do to change it? As a society, we do not protect the children. We give the offenders too many rights. There needs to be programs in place to help the child and family of the offender.

We should be taught how to do intervention and we should create more jobs for teenagers. We should really struggle to start and maintain our support groups, so we can raise money to hold these meetings when we want them, instead of relying on governments.

We have to heal ourselves. We have to teach the children about sexual abuse in schools and parents don't know how to talk to their children about this issue. We (as parents) have to follow the path that we expect of our children.

We should do things today! We must care for one another. We must compliment each other today! Praise is much more appreciated today!"

The persons providing the following concerns wished not to be identified but agreed the animator could provide the name of their home community. The following represents additional comments supplied at the Deh Cho workshop:

**Fort Simpson:** *In cases of family violence and abuse, the R.C.M.P. only see the surface of issues. There is a frustration at the police and legal system for not supporting basic needs of safety and trust in a family violence situation.*

**Fort Liard:** *The court systems do tend to see the victim as the victimizer and the court system itself can be the victimizer toward the victim.*

**Bertha Allen:** *The reality is that there is violence around us in every walk of life and what do we do about it for ourselves as native women? We can't sit back and say we are equal in the court system. It doesn't work for us. We can't sit back and criticize any system. We have to think about what we can do as individuals and as women as a whole.*

**Fort Simpson:** *Why take a mother and child out of 'their home?' It seems that in abusive situations, if there is more than one child but only one child has been abused, then the younger of the children are taken away. We are not pro-active, but reactive. A lot of people in the communities are uneducated and where can they go for help on*

*these issues? And it's especially worse if you're not an outspoken person. There are a lot of blocks in your way when you are trying to help someone and sometimes if you do speak out, there are a lot of peer pressures about what you are saying about your community when you live in a small community.*

**Fort Good Hope:** *Sometimes the only protection you have is to have them (the children or people who are being abused) go out of their home community because, in some cases, a quick decision has to be made and the R.C.M.P. are not always in every community.*

**Fort Liard:** Some people are so convincing and youth shouldn't give in so easily (to those who can convince them so easily).

### **Hal River Conference**

"The Spirit of Northern Caring: A Conference on Helping Victims", was held at Hay River on April 13 - 16, 1993. The theme of the conference, which was attended by over 120 delegates, was an N.W.T. conference for community caregivers who provide help and support for victims of violence or crime. The purpose of the conference was to bring together community caregivers (paid or volunteer) for skill development, self-care and support, and for the sharing of information and resources in order to increase the help available to victims of violence or crime in the N.W.T. The conference was organized in seven skills workshops, sharing groups and plenary sessions with resource materials and a crafts table.

While the N.W.T. animator for the national Native Women's Association of Canada, Bren Kolson, was not a direct participant, she did provide an overview of the work of the R.C.A.P., as well as distributed over 78 surveys and questionnaires to the delegates. Ms. Kolson was asked to address the delegates at the opening remarks of the conference and provided information on the work and purpose of the N.W.A.C.'s participatory role as an intervenor organization to the R.C.A.P. process.

During the plenary session beginning the conference, some conference delegates noted the following when asked to speak about their concerns and issues at a community level. The following information is provided from the delegates:

- that persons who are caregivers or counsellors for the community should attend wellness programs themselves as a client, prior to their involvement and work at the community level.
- that isolated communities in the N.W.T. do not have the proper resources to take care of themselves and that there are no facilities or resources for caregivers at the small isolated community level.
- that caregivers need resources in order to do their job.



- that (northern) aboriginal people have been led to believe through residential school systems that English is/was a first language and, as a result, aboriginal elders have not yet told their story .The aboriginal elders of the North still have their story to tell. If aboriginal elders don't understand the questions asked of them about issues and also don't understand the problems because of how they are presented in the English language, then they do not understand how to respond and, in turn, do not understand the problem because it has not been explained to them in the aboriginal language flrst.
- from Fort McPherson, a caregiver said that non-aboriginal professionals (on suicide prevention) "go in and talk to them (the potential suicide victim) for a few minutes and don't think there's a problem at the community level". She said there are problems with youth and adults and the potential of suicide in small northern and isolated communities, as well as teenage pregnancies and alcohol abuse. The youth, she said, are "getting two different messages from two different cultures (the non - aboriginal and aboriginal cultures in the North)".
- another delegate said there is a lot of physical abuse in the N.W.T. .and that the R.C.M.P ., the N.W.T. .court system, social service workers and non-native women are acting as counsellors or professional helpers and are stymied from acting (to solve the problems) "because of the bureaucracy. There is too many channels and red tape to go through," she said.

During the plenary sessions, the following questions were the theme for discussion: "In what ways do you provide help to people who have been victims of violence or crime; what are the difficulties or frustrations you experience in helping people who have been victims of violence or crime; what would make it easier to provide help to victims; why do you work as a paid or volunteer caregiver; what kind of problems are experienced by victims in your community who have to deal with the justice system; do you work with other people in your community to provide help to victims -in what way; what prevents us from working together, and how can we overcome these barriers; how can we involve other people in beginning to change things in the community; how can we overcome these problems or barriers; and will the conference help you as a caregiver, and in what way?"

In a follow-up plenary session, the following comments were made by participants at the conference:

- from Fort Smith, a lady said the following:

*...there is a need for a Victim's Assistance Program. The work of a Victim's Abuse Caregiver involves acknowledging the rights of the victims, attending court circuit and a host of additional duties. There is not always supportfor the victim's abuse worker. There is support initially, but once the process is in place, the*

*bureaucracy or, if you're working with the justice system, for example, stimulates problems such as inconsistent communication between workers and the system, etc., as well as language barriers in dealing with not only aboriginal people as previously mentioned, but also with the present (government) system itself.*

- there is a need for more public awareness of Victim' s Abuse Programs and the work they do.
- there are only two Victim Abuse Programs currently in the North and there is a need for more in smaller communities.
- in the south, Victim Abuse Programs have been established for ten years, but there is a need for more financial assistance for more positions for Victims Abuse Caregivers.
- a liaison aboriginal person working for the G.N.W.T.'s Justice Department said her role in government was varied when working with victims who come to the Crown Attorney' s office seeking assistance because they were victimized. She said her job alone entails preparation for the court appearance, meeting with the Crown Attorney, arranging babysitting for the victim while they are in court, providing short term counselling, providing advice for the victim who doesn't press charges and who is afraid to press charges, providing advice or referring victim' s to Criminal Injury Compensation offices, liaisoning with the R.C.M.P., attending Community Justice Committee meetings, preparing documentation for the courts on particular cases, providing follow-up work, as well as a host of other duties.

An R.C.M.P. Constable who attended the conference said she works in Rankin Inlet in the area of victim abuse as a result of a community group that was established to address services for victims. Because the program is volunteer based, it has been successful. One problem encountered, however, is that, due to the fact that there is a high turnover for R.C.M.P. personnel every two years, the community has to be assured of continuing support from the administration for programs they become involved in at the community level. While the R.C.M.P. in Rankin Inlet were supportive for coordinating the Victim's Abuse Program, the officers said community residents have also been very supportive in coordinating and administering the program on a volunteer basis.

Workshops at the conference included discussion of healing processes as well as counselling, basic skills involved in a crisis situation, healing processes for sexually abused children, how caregivers can provide support for abused women, basic knowledge on how to intervene in cases of attempted suicide, an understanding of the grieving process, the introduction of possible ways communities can develop assistance programs for victims of crime, awareness of the role played by cultural factors in victimization and the effectiveness of healing groups from different cultural perspectives.

## **Part IV: N.W.T. Aboriginal Women's Views On The Royal Commission On Aboriginal Peoples**

The following remarks represent quotations from aboriginal women who completed the survey and questionnaires and when asked in Question 11 if they felt the R.C.A.P. would or would not be able to find solutions to the concerns as presented by the individual women completing the survey. Here is what they said, in random order:

- "...will not be able to find solutions to our parent's discipline to their children. They (the parents are hook(ed) on drinking".
- "N/A".
- "I don't know".
- "I hope they can state a solution to our concerns and issues because I think our concerns are needed to be noticed or heard... not sure..."
- "They will find solutions, because it isn't a big, big concern".
- "I'm sure they will try to solve these problems of the small communities, but it has to begin by the people inventing it (the problems)".
- "No, because there (they) are not that important and there isn't much concerns I feel would not (be heard of) what's happening in my community".
- "N/A".
- "Yes".
- "I hope you will find solutions".
- "Maybe, now that they have done the survey - something will be done".
- "I think they can. Never mind helping way over in South Africa – help your own people in your own back yard".
- "They will never solve our concerns for us. It's a waste of money to have Commissions. I have yet to see reports come back to us on how to improve life for the aboriginal people in areas of education, alcohol/drugs and social services. We had concerns about the loss of our languages. What band-aid solutions have been attempted since? Not the Emmersion camps which we requested?"
- "I don't know ".

- "If the - yes - I think so because what we talk about it's really true what I say. If the people look (the people at the Commission) look at these papers for fixing up for us - if those people really look at what we say - then I think it could happen and issues addressed. I'm willing to support anything that will be helpful".
- I feel I'm one in a million who is bringing issues to the Royal Commission. How is one voice going to make a difference? The way the community is in need, the only service is self-government - is what is needed in the community".
- "I believe the Royal Commission will be able to find solutions. I hope that something is done about it though. A plan of action should be set up".
- "Aboriginal women of the North - the Royal Commission will have to find the solutions of our concerns and issues. The women have Rights too!"
- "It is nice to think that all of our communities are being heard and that the Commission can come up with some great solutions. However, we are in the middle of a process where there will be a different government party in position once their (the Commission's) recommendations are developed and we can't be assured that anything will actually become of the whole process except that it is well-documented".
- "When this study is done I hope this Report will be circulated to all native organizations and Government, so they know what is happening in the communities".
- "I don't know what kind of issues the Royal Commission deals with, so I can't say anything about the question".
- "No. Because the government said so much good things to aboriginal people but it's not getting any better. It's getting worse. We have loss of land, culture, loss of self- respect. It's the aboriginal's goal (to have their land, culture and self-respect) but we need more support".
- "I believe the Royal Commission will be able to find solutions to my stated concerns. They have different forums which allows everyone to participate at all levels".
- "I think so. If they work hard. I have faith in this presentation. I have hope and faith. At least it is an effort".
- "This organization for aboriginal peoples, should speak louder on it's concerns that aboriginal peoples in the community raise. Once the people in the community speak, they send it up to an organization that says they will take care of it and years later the people are still raising these concerns".

- "Yes. They are blessed by the Prime Minister of Canada Brian Mulroney. They will have the consent of all aboriginal people. They will have a lot of impact on the Government of Canada to win or lose. It depends how well they can take what we want".
- "Yes. I guess if they really want to help the aboriginal people. I guess they'll succeed".
- "I'm sure they will try to solve these problems of the small communities. But it has to begin by the people wanting it".
- "...working with government... I feel this Report is useless".
- "...wait to see..."
- "No. They will not find any solutions. Why? Because all time and money spent on committees are a waste of time. After they have done their duties, paperwork will be done, suggestions made, and then it will go to the department, and this department and to Ottawa and back... in the end... it will probably be lost or forgotten".
- "I think they will (succeed). But when is the question".
- "Yes - because more and more native organizations are speaking up for themselves".
- "I don't know ".
- "No, because they are not that important and there isn't much concerns I feel would not (be addressed) of what's happening in my community".
- "Yes".
- "We aboriginal women need more Royal Commissions to help our community to change like get more meetings to help us more and about young people are drinking. We want to stop that before they get hurt. Young people get no place to stay sometimes - too much alcohol and use of drugs too. We need to stop that..."
- "I hope they can start a solution to our concerns and issues because I think our concerns are needed to be motivated and heard. (I'm) not sure (on the reasons why I feel that way)".
- "The meetings on sexual abuse are really good -(a film that was shown at the Fort Simpson workshop) -about the victims etc. Yeah. I think it might be a good idea (the Commission)".

- "I have every confidence in the Commission to find solutions for problems. I'm sure there are a lot of problems people talk about (them). We will find solutions to it (them). The world was not created in one day. If we are patient we will one day find solutions to help our native people - who I think -need help and also we should not always stand aside and let government do things for us. Let's try to help ourselves too.
- "I do not feel the Royal Commission or any Commission will hear 'the whole story' nor will they be able to find solutions. If anything, I would hope the Royal Commission would be able to present a realistic view of where the NWT is at with respect to the development of people, native and non-native and suggest a framework for northern community development that allows the individuals to learn about who they are and how they fit in the framework so that they can assist and support the growth of their community".
- "It is possible if we work hard on it and let people know that we people are all special no matter who you are, what you do - that people do care for each individual person".
- I feel that the Commission will look into all these problems, but this is the first time I've ever dealt with your Commission. I always thought these things were always in places like Yellowknife to elsewhere, but I'm glad I was given a questionnaire. I want to start to voice my concerns. I feel I have a start now."
- "Like I said, millions might have been spent on the Commission report which could have been put to communities' use. BUT will the recommendations be met? Possibly NOT!"
- "I certainly hope they find a solution after all their panel discussions and recommendations from aboriginal people at large. I hate to see our solutions collect dust again. I have faith you will accomplish something. PLEASE DON'T DISAPOINT US!"
- "I think there will be some workable recommendations that will be able to be reviewed and 'revised' that will provide workable solutions to many of the concerns as brought forth by aboriginal peoples. There will be, however, a greater number of concerns brought forth that will never be acted upon because they will take another ten to twenty years to be properly investigated, before the good, right and correct solutions will be provided for a particular community or region of Canada with that specific problem or concern. Although many may not, I think the work of the Commission should be expanded for another two years so more 'grassroots' work can be more thoroughly completed. This should be just a Phase I. Phase II should provide the work toward specific solutions and legislative changes, etc.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of issues and concerns presented by aboriginal women in the western and eastern N.W.T., the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends the following for immediate action and implementation, and recommends that the R.C.A.P. conduct follow-up reviews and provides support to and for the N.W.T. Native Women's Association on the following requests and recommendations:

### Health and Social Services

That because of escalating rates of social abuses among aboriginal women and aboriginal female youth and children throughout the N.W.T., the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends:

- 1) That the G.N.W.T. and federal departments and aboriginal organizations' departments of health and social services provide essential and adequate financial resources in the following areas:
  - a) to hold community workshops, seminars and conferences during the next three years that will inform and enable small and northern western N.W.T. communities to begin a healing process for victims of all forms of sexual, spousal, child, alcohol, drug and infectious disease-related and other forms of abuse.
  - b) to conduct, at the request of small and northern western N.W.T. communities, door-to-door and community and regional surveys on all forms of abuse.
  - c) to allow small and northern western N.W.T. communities access to government -territorial and federal -information and financial resources that will encourage traditional and aboriginal methods of healing processes and practices.
  - d) that the G.N.W.T. and the federal government provide essential financial resources to the N.W.T. Native Women's Association in the amount of \$350,000 to do a needs assessment and review of elders and youth as victims of various forms of abuse in the western N.W.T. as a follow-up to these recommendations and as a follow-up to this Final Report and recommendations considered herein.
- 2) that the G.N.W.T. and the federal government begin a process to immediately revise existing legislation in health and social services areas that will enable aboriginal women at small and northern community levels in the fields of alcohol, drug and other forms of abuse to be formally recognized as aboriginal community

healers and caregivers and that legislation reflect adequate financial resources for the aboriginal healers and caregivers to receive full salaries and benefits at rates mutually agreed upon by all parties involved:

- 3) that aboriginal healers and caregivers be hired as counsellors for small and northern western N.W.T. communities and be formally recognized in respective government's legislation as the community healthgivers;
- 4) that government(s) provide aboriginal healers and caregivers with adequate financial resources to build facilities for administration of projects and programs that will enable aboriginal healers and caregivers to provide essential services for victims of all forms of abuse;
- 5) that only aboriginal women be hired as social workers and counsellors when requested by small and northern western N.W.T. communities and that government(s) comply with these requests;
- 6) that aboriginal professionals in the fields of psychiatry and psychology be hired to assist aboriginal female healers and caregivers at small and northern western N.W.T. community level;
- 7) that the G.N.W.T. and the federal government provide financial resources to build safe-homes, suicide prevention facilities and crisis centres in small and northern western N.W.T. communities at the request of the community;
- 8) that counselling and other services be provided by aboriginal professionals to aboriginal children from small and northern western N.W.T. communities who are victims of various forms of abuses;
- 9) that counselling and other services be provided by aboriginal professionals to aboriginal children from small and northern western N.W.T. communities who are experiencing "grief loss" as the result of death;
- 10) that an N.W.T. youth and Elders Council be formed and an office established to act as a liaison between N.W.T. aboriginal organizations in the N.W.T., the G.N.W.T., the federal government and other public and private groups, organizations and agencies.

## **Education**

That because of high student and adult drop-out rates at adult upgrading schools, colleges and post-secondary educational levels among aboriginal women and female aboriginal youth, the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends:



- 1) that the G.N.W.T., the federal government departments responsible for education as well as aboriginal organizations provide essential and adequate financial and human resources in the following areas:
  - a) that the G.N.W.T. Department of Education revise educational curriculum and study courses to allow aboriginal women and female aboriginal youth to train as aboriginal traditional healers and caregivers at northern and southern colleges and universities.
  - b) that aboriginal women and aboriginal female youth, as traditional healers and caregivers, be hired by northern educational and learning institutions as instructors and trainers to teach and train aboriginal traditional healers and caregivers.
  - c) that aboriginal women and aboriginal female youth with incarceration records be provided equal and special consideration and opportunities for entry into educational learning institutions in the N.W.T.
  - d) that the G.N.W.T. and the federal government provide the N.W.T. Native Women's Association with essential financial resources in the amount of \$300,000 to do a needs and assessment and review for, from and in aboriginal western N.W.T. communities for a project on revisions to the existing N.W.T. Education Act.
  - e) that statistics of all aboriginal women and people attending and completing adult upgrading colleges and post-secondary institutions be tabulated according to ethnicity.
  - f) that additional and more use of cultural components from traditional knowledge of elders be used in the development of and within the curriculums of educational and informational material.
  - g) that systemic barriers such as "ceilings" on tuition fees for aboriginal persons, especially aboriginal women, be removed immediately by the G.N.W.T. Department of Education for aboriginal northerners entering university facilities which will allow aboriginal persons of the north a higher learning education as professionals in law, medicine, and engineering.

## **Political and Leadership**

That the G.N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that workshops and conferences be funded by the G.N.W.T. and the federal government to encourage and enhance aboriginal women throughout the G.N.W.T. to be involved in various political and leadership roles at the community, regional, territorial and national political assemblies and political structural levels.

## **Justice**

That the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that aboriginal women be hired as aboriginal traditional judicial professionals in all areas and facets of the legal system in the N.W.T. and as native organizational representatives and liaison personnel as well as at various N.W.T. and federal government court and judicial levels;

That the N.W.T. court and judicial system review and revise sentencing laws as per the Criminal Code of Canada for persons with existing or new offenders of child and sexual abuse offenders and that sentences for child and sexual abusers sentences be ordered more severe and astringent in the N.W.T.

That 'traditional' methods of imposing sentences for child and sexual abusers be considered in the context of existing and revised sentencing laws and codes within the legal and judicial system in the N.W.T.;

That traditional aboriginal women be consulted and hired in non-professional judicial roles to advise and observe court systems as a preliminary stage for future involvement as official and traditional aboriginal representatives for female aboriginal victims of abuses; caregiver and comfort role, not simply a role as advisor of rights within the court system and that these persons be aboriginal women and that the positions be positions other than the role of victim abuse advisor.

## **Culture**

That the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that the G.N.W.T. and the federal government review and revise current legislation which disables aboriginal women from practising or participating in all roles, methods or values and principles of aboriginal culture in the N.W.T.;

1. that culture is the fabric that unites the north and that culture is an evolving component of ethnicity for aboriginal women and aboriginal people of the N.W.T. and, therefore, that new policies be developed to so reflect new program areas within the G.N.W.T. for aboriginal culture - Dene, Metis, Inuit, Inuvialuit - in consultation.
2. that the N.W.T. Native Women' s Association be provided financial resources to review and advise government on the current status of aboriginal culture in all facets in the western N.W.T. in total of \$35,000 and that solutions and recommendations be brought to the N.W.T. Legislative Assembly within two years.
3. that all components of aboriginal cultural knowledge and cultural/ heritage activities become an integral unit in all G.N.W.T. departments and agencies and in all facets of G.N.W.T. policies, manuals and other internally governing documents used by G.N.W.T. employees and that inclusion of Dene, Metis, Inuit

and Inuvialuit traditional knowledge and activities be included in revisions to all N.W.T. Acts and other legislation by the N.W.T. Legislative Assembly of the N.W.T. that will serve to reinforce aboriginal cultures and not disable aboriginal cultural growth in the N.W.T.

## **General**

That the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that more work be done by the G.N.W.T. to implement within existing policies the hiring of aboriginal women in the upper management levels of the a N.W.T. in order to reduce the high rate of employment of aboriginal women in the clerical and secretarial positions and which will further enable aboriginal women of the north to enhance their credibility, self - esteem and wage equity in the G.N.W.T.;

That the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that not only through the current exercise of evolving government services and programs to local community levels through the Community Transfer Initiatives Program, but also through a revision of existing legislation and policies and methodologies within the G.N.W.T. that aboriginal women of the north become directly informed and involved in the government and other processes for devolving programs that will directly affect aboriginal women and so become direct participants, and not just observers.

That the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that all governments administering lottery and bingo facilities and casinos in the N.W.T. and, particularly, at local community levels, endorse more astringent criteria for the issuance of licences and develop criteria which will assist in the reduction of excessive gambling and bingo in small northern communities if it is proven to be an undisciplined activity for the worse and not the betterment of the community; and

That the N.W.T. Native Women's Association recommends that legislation be endorsed in laws and legislation that will safeguard and protect elders from all forms of abuse and that requirements for housing and other amenities be improved for the elders of the north.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Concluding Remarks by N.W.T. Animator Bren Kolson (Ms.)**

When the project began last January, with a two-day workshop in Ottawa, Ontario and later in February with a workshop held in Yellowknife, N.W.T., the national coordinator was monitoring from her head office the amount of expenses incurred for each phase of the project. A number of options on how to proceed were discussed at Yellowknife and a workplan to guide the project was submitted to the national coordinator. At that time, a total figure to conduct the project was not provided. Interim reports with attached expense claims were submitted to the national coordinator upon completion of each phase of the project. The Final Report and Final Financial Statement were submitted to the national coordinator upon release of the Final Report at the completion of the project, near the end of May, beginning of June, 1993.

The national coordinator's positions were changed, respectively, halfway through the project. Under a new national coordinator, monies for the project - what was remaining in each region of Canada - were given to the animators to complete the project. Animators then became responsible for accountability to the national coordinator for the remaining funds in their particular project area.

My understanding of the total amount provided to the national Native Women ' s Association of Canada to hire animators to provide issues, concerns, problems and results-oriented solutions was approximately \$250,000. The national office was to disperse these funds to each region of Canada and then to receive from each animator Interim Reports and a Final Report on their findings. The original mandate from the national coordinator (the flfst national coordinator) was that a set amount of money was to be provided to the regional animators. The amount of money in total provided to the N.W.T. regional animator, minus approximately \$700 (the amount originally provided to the second N.W.T. animator who later quit the project), was approximately \$8,333.13. The original mandate to complete the project for the amount of \$8,333.13 was eight (8) days.

In other words, the N.W.T. animator was to travel throughout the western N.W.T. and speak to aboriginal women about their concerns in an eight-day period using a combined total of \$8,333.13. Obviously, this was impossible. To utilize the funds for the best and most adequate results, a strategy of "piggy- backing" workshops and seminars held by the N.W.T. Native Women's Association was used.

By traveling to the workshops and seminars, the N.W.T. animator was able to speak to aboriginal women in various regions from the western N.W.T., as well as to distribute information packages and a twelve-point questionnaire to the workshop and seminar participants. In addition, the N.W.T. animator mailed approximately sixty questionnaires to aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. As well, the N.W.T. animator hired, on a part-time basis, two persons to assist in the distribution of the questionnaires to N.W.T.

territorial native organizations and individuals. Approximately 355 questionnaires were distributed throughout the western N.W.T. Approximately 50 completed questionnaires were returned as of the writing of the Final Report. Some women had mentioned prior to the completion of the Final Report that their questionnaires would be sent to the national N.W.A.C office for inclusion in their Final Report to the R.C.A.P. in the fall of 1993.

Statistics (see attached under respective heading) were compiled from the questionnaires for the Final Report by the N.W.T. animator. A sample copy of the questionnaire is also attached to the Final Report.

As N.W.T. animator, I feel the Final Report is a good one. However, I do not feel it adequately represents a consensus of views from aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. or from the N.W.T. as a whole. Eight thousand dollars to complete an eight-day project is unrealistic. I am pleased I projected the dollar figure and timeline over a four month period. However, and because of inadequate financial resources needed to complete an adequate job, only three of the five western N.W.T. regions were addressed and are so reflected in the contents of the Final Report, now so submitted. Assistance for typing, xeroxing, paper, telephone, etc. from the N.W.T. Native Women's Association in an amount over \$7,000 has yet to be reimbursed for their time and materials.

The Deh Cho, North Slave and South Slave regions were the three regions addressed. The Sahtu and Inuvik-Delta regions have not yet been adequately addressed, although some women from these regions contributed their voices in the questionnaires mailed to them on an individual basis.

Some aboriginal women I spoke to did not want to complete the questionnaire because they felt the dollar figure and time-line were unrealistic. Some aboriginal women voiced their opinions that the Final Report would not provide an adequate and overall representation of aboriginal women's views in the western N.W.T. and, therefore, did not want to partake in the questionnaire.

On the other hand, I was personally overwhelmed at the response I did receive from those individual women I spoke to and who would not have otherwise voiced their opinions.

From the time I spoke to the first women in February about the project, there was complete acceptance and confidence in my abilities and they so opened up to me, providing some disturbing facts about their personal lives and hoping their voices would be heard through the questionnaire and Final Report. I feel that the women who did not choose to participate would have participated if they, too, felt the project had been adequately funded and a greater and more serious commitment and consideration had been provided to the national N.W.A.C. office and, therefore, to the N.W.T. aboriginal women for their concerns and solutions.

As N.W.T. animator, I feel the Final Report does reflect the concerns and problems of aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. But, I also feel that the number of responses acquired through the survey was not justifiably enough to form an adequate picture of all or a majority of western N.W.T. aboriginal women's views. Because of extremely high transportation, accommodation and other costs, the job went incomplete.

To travel to the Deh Cho workshop by rental vehicle for a three-day period alone cost approximately \$2,500. Airfare return to the Inuvik-Delta region costs \$890, not including accommodation, which alone would have cost over \$90 a night in Inuvik. I do not feel the Commissioners from the south know the high costs northerners endure simply to travel from one location to another in the north. The high cost of living with limited supplementary or subsidies for northerners from the federal or territorial governments is also a primary factor which results in casualties of poor housing conditions for single mothers on low income to other tragedies which occur daily in the smaller N.W.T. communities.

As I, the N.W.T. animator, was born and raised, for the most part, in the north, I am aware of the high incidents of abuses, etc. which are outlined by aboriginal women in this Final Report. I do not feel a majority of southerners and the southern Commissioners on R.C.A.P. are aware of these factors and conditions, and that it is difficult to continually tell governments that money to alleviate these atrocities in our northern society are contributing factors to the ills of our northern society. I cannot stress enough that this project is the prime example of such "helter-skelter" and "give-them-a-dollar-to-do-a-billion-dollar-job" attitude that results from southerners pretending to know "The True North Strong and Free".

I wanted those persons who read this Final Report and, particularly, these concluding remarks, to know that I do not feel there was adequate financial support to complete an adequate project (by the R.C.A.P. Commissioners) and, therefore, to access and present the views of aboriginal women in the western N.W.T. I also want the readers of this Final Report to know that, as one affiliate group of the national N.W.A.C., the N.W.T. Native Women's Association did not have to be held victim of political wranglings between N.W.A.C. and R.C.A.P. that so resulted in limited finances to do what was prescribed in the allotment of \$250,000 and which resulted, therefore, in \$8,333.13 to the north for this project. I would recommend that each Commissioner on R.C.A.P. from the south be provided with \$8,333.13 to do their own survey in the five western N.W.T. regions to access and analyze and prepare interim and a Final Report on the views of aboriginal women in the western N.W.T.

I would also recommend that the R.C.A.P. acknowledge that inadequate financial resources were originally provided this northern aboriginal women's organization and that an additional \$17,664 be provided to complete the project properly. Follow-up work on this project could still be done and completed by the fall of 1993 if the adequate financial resources were made available to do a complete job for final presentation; Final Report II: N.W.T. Aboriginal Women's Views.

Having already said the Final Report 'as is' is a good one, I concur it is a good one. However, it is as the poet Coleridge said of the moth reaching not for the flame, but for the star. This Final Report would and could have been done better if the goal of completion had been reached and had the adequate financial resources been provided to do an adequate and complete job in the first place. For the amount of finances and the timelines, the Final Report 'as is' is as good as can be expected under the circumstances.

I only hope the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' Commissioners understand and are flexible enough to agree that more work is needed in order to complete the job properly.

Bren Kolson (Ms.)  
N.W.T. Animator

c/o General Delivery  
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**APPENDIX 1**

**LOGISTICS OF THE N.W.T.  
ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S  
SURVEY**

## LOGISTICS OF THE N.W.T. ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SURVEY

Logistics of the questionnaire (as of June 7, 1993):

AGE GROUP			
1	-	14	= 0
15	-	24	= 14
25	-	30	= 5
31	-	34	= 7
35	-	40	= 1
41	-	44	= 3
45	-	50	= 4
51	-	54	= 1
55	-	60	= 2
61	-	64	= 1
65	-	70	= 1
71	-	74	= 0
75	-	80	= 0
		No stated age	= 2
Total:			48

Number born in the N.W.T.: All

Number who allowed their name to be recorded: 12

Number who did not allow their name to be recorded: 36

The following logistics represents, by ethnicity, the aboriginal women who did partake in the questionnaire:

Dene	=	28
Métis	=	9
Inuit	=	5
Inuvialuit	=	2
Other (eg. Gwich'in)	=	3
Status not stated	=	1

Of the twelve questions asked in the survey, approximately 80% of the questions were fully answered. The first five questions represented statistical information, while the following six represented direct questions, with the last question representing information for statistical purposes. Enclosed, at the end of the Final Report, is a copy of the questionnaire for information purposes.

**APPENDIX 2**

**COPY OF  
QUESTIONNAIRE / SURVEY  
&  
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Ms. Bren Kolson  
N.W.T. Animator  
N.W.T. Native Women's Association  
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X1A 2P7

Telephone: 403-873-5509  
403-873-3505  
4034-920-7753

April 1, 1993

To N.W.T. Aboriginal Women: Re: Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

Dear Participant:

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was formed to address the issues, concerns, results and solutions of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. The Commission has visited on and off-reserve Aboriginal communities inviting Aboriginal members to express their views on a variety of topics including Aboriginal self-government, education, social and economic as well as cultural and spiritual grievances and future hopes and aspirations.

Since February I have acted as N.W.T. Animator for the National Native Women's Association and in cooperation with the Native Women's Association of the N.W.T. I have and will attend community and regional workshops where questionnaires have been handed out and filled out and returned to me. The information you provide will be written into a Territorial report with Bertha Allen, our president, presenting it to the National office for inclusion into the National Native Women's presentation to the Royal Commission at the end of May and perhaps August, time permitting an extension on the work Canadian Animators are presenting to the national coordinator of this project for the final report to the Commission.

I would very much appreciate your input into this very important undertaking. It is an opportunity for northern Aboriginal women to make their concerns and related solutions to their concerns known to the Royal Commission. The information will remain confidential and as well if you wish to present your views to the Commission directly let me know and I will pass your name onto them. They will make arrangements for individuals to appear before them also. I have enclosed an additional envelope for return of the questionnaire. If you would like further information, please contact me at the above telephone numbers or at the above address.

Sincerely,  
Bren Kolson (Ms.) *Bren Kolson*  
Enclosures.

INFORMATION ON  
ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Contact:

Bertha Allen, President, or  
Bren Kolson N.W.T. Animator

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# What's So Royal About a Royal Commission?

Sheila-Marie Cook

Royal Commissions in Canada date back to a time when the affairs of government were very much influenced by the Crown of England. Back in 1868, the new Government of Canada enacted the Inquiries Act, a law used to establish Commissions of Inquiry. The first Royal Commission to be set up after Confederation was in 1870. Its mandate was to inquire into the Improvement of Water Communications and the Development of Trade with the Northeastern United States. Its Chairman, a well-known businessman, was Sir Hugh Allan. One might say that some things never change. Commissions are still seeking solutions and we still encourage high profile individuals to lend their expertise to resolving problems even if they don't carry their royal titles these days.

In the past, as in the present, Governments appointed a Commission of Inquiry when they were faced with a problem which could not be resolved through the usual means of recourse. A Royal Commission is set up under Part I of the Inquiries Act. The Commission document is engraved with the Great Seal of Canada and is issued in the name of Her Majesty Elizabeth II. The main difference between Public Inquiries (Royal Commissions) and Departmental Inquiries (sometimes referred to as Task Forces) is in the scope of their work. A Royal Commission has a broad mandate to examine 'any matter connected to the good government of Canada or the conduct of the public business thereof'. A Departmental Inquiry

has a narrower focus and is charged to investigate and report only on the management and business of the Department.

A Royal Commission has some notable powers to assist in conducting its inquiry. These powers include the authority to summon witnesses to give evidence and to produce documents relating to the subject matter under investigation in much the same way as a court of record does in civil cases. In addition, the commission has the authority to conduct its affairs in complete freedom from Government influence and interference. While it can decide independently on the various programmes which will be implemented during the term of its mandate, the Commission nonetheless must show evidence of its responsible management practices. The Financial Administration Act requires it to keep the financial and administration operations in line with the procedures and regulations of other government departments.

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**Royal Commissions develop in three phases following the human life-cycle: the creation, the gestational and the delivery phase.**

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Typical of other Royal Commissions, the RCAP will develop in three phases which follow the human life-cycle: a

'creation phase' of setting up the Commission once announced; a 'gestational phase' of information gathering through consultation and research; and, 'the delivery' or production of the final report. Once the report has been presented to the Governor in Council it takes on a life of its own. The measure of its success is then gauged according to the extent to which its recommendations are implemented.

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## "No Royal Road to Success"

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Last November, Co-Chair René Dussault, speaking to a meeting of the Indigenous Bar Association in Montreal, said:

'Even for a Royal Commission, there's no royal road to success ... full success will be attained only if our proposals are implemented. In order to achieve this we will have not only to state principles, sound principles, but show how they are going to work. So...we have to get down to the level of specific proposals which reflect not only what appear to be sound principles but which can be translated into workable solutions that would be seen to be acceptable by the Canadian society as a whole.'

Royal Commissions have, in the past, had a major impact on the political, economic and social life of Canadians. Royal or not, the success of this commission—the RCAP—depends on the full support and participation of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. ■

WORKING THE ISSUES AND CONCERNS-  
ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES - OVERVIEW.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established by Order-in-Council on August 26, 1991 for a three year period to identify the challenges facing the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canada and make recommendations to rebuild that relationship. The Commission is conducting research and is holding a number of public hearings/round table discussions across Canada to hear from Aboriginal people.

After completing Round 1 of their discussions the Commission issued a report identifying key themes and questions to focus the second round of discussions. These themes include aboriginal government; justice; urban issues; health; treaties; land and resources, economy; education; language as well as culture.

The Terms of Reference of the Commission specifically identifies the "special difficulties of Aboriginal people who live in the north" as an issue for their review. The Commission visited Inuvik and Iqaluit in Round 1 and in Round 11 have visited Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay and Yellowknife. The Royal Commission has requested that this round's submissions be "solution orientated" with a particular focus on building the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians; Aboriginal government; justice; health; and urban issues; treaties; land and resources; economy; education; language and culture.

## 2/ Commission

Some basic 'solution-orientated' concerns and issues that affect northerners might focus on the following:

- e.g. the internal 'healing' process to revitalize Aboriginal individuals and communities in preparation for future change and challenges;
- e.g. recognition, preservation and enhancement of Aboriginal languages and cultures with a particular emphasis on the wisdom of Elders;
- e.g. education which prepares Aboriginal residents for a future in the modern world and knowledge of their unique history and culture;
- e.g. housing and community infrastructure which will provide a lifestyle and environment to promote individual and community welfare;
- e.g. improved access to health and social services comparable to those available to non-Aboriginal Canadians in both urban and rural settings;
- e.g. recognition of Aboriginal approaches to dealing with anti-social or criminal behaviour and,
- e.g. participation in the mainstream of the Canadian economy and labour force or the traditional land and renewable resource based economy.

It must be remembered that while some of the above initiatives are beginning to evolve at the community level they are based upon the successful outcome of the following areas as well;

- negotiation and implementation of comprehensive and specific claims; and
- the inherent right to Aboriginal self-government and/or the opportunity for greater participation in and control over institutions of government which regulate and determine the course of decision-making on these fundamental issues.
- the role and changing evolution of major northern institutions such as the Legislative Assembly in the face of Community Transfer Initiatives and operational decentralization.
- identifying how current federal legislation, programs and policies either contribute to or detract from finding and implementing solutions to fundamental changes that affect the forging of new relationships among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals in Canada with a view on the northern environment; political etc.



3/Commission

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS FROM FRAMING THE ISSUES:

"We heard that Aboriginal people want to become more autonomous and more self-sufficient. We also heard that Aboriginal people want more and better programs and services from federal and provincial governments, as do most Canadians."

(a) How will Aboriginal self-government lead to political and economic self-sufficiency?

(b) Will this require more land and resources under the control of Aboriginal people? If so, are Canadians willing to ensure that Aboriginal people achieve this?

(c) To whom would Aboriginal governments be accountable, and for what?

(d) How can a strong sense of identity be maintained in a changing environment?

(e) How will greater Aboriginal participation in the Canadian labour force be achieved? How should Aboriginal culture practices be accommodated in the workplace?

(f) Are Canadians willing to support traditional Aboriginal economic pursuits, such as trapping and hunting, as they have supported the grain, dairy and mining industries?

(g) How can education system(s) be designed and controlled by Aboriginal people that will prepare youth for participation in either the traditional or the wage economy?

(h) To what extent must social problems be resolved before economic development can proceed?

(i) What is the relationship between treaties and self-government? In what way can we ensure that self-government enhances the fulfilment of treaty obligations?

8. The Indian Act and the role, responsibilities and policies of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND).

The Commission may investigate in particular the legislative scheme of the Indian Act, the relationship between that scheme and the evolving policies of DIAND, the theory of aboriginal-government relations implicit in the Indian Act, and the future of the Act and of DIAND. All of these could be examined to determine whether existing federal legislation and administrative practices are consistent with evolving theories of Canadian law, including aboriginal and treaty rights.

9. Social issues of concern to aboriginal peoples.

In particular, the Commission may study and make concrete recommendations to improve the quality of life for aboriginal peoples living on reserve, in native settlements and communities, and in rural areas and cities. Issues of concern include, but are not limited to: poverty, unemployment and underemployment, access to health care and health concerns generally, alcohol and substance abuse, sub-standard housing, high suicide rates, child care, child welfare, and family violence.

10. Economic issues of concern to aboriginal peoples.

The Commission may investigate the problems of developing a viable economic base for aboriginal peoples, unemployment, access to labour markets, discrimination in employment, taxation and custom duties.

11. Cultural issues of concern to aboriginal peoples.

In particular, the Commission may investigate the protection and promotion of aboriginal languages, recognition by Canadian society and institutions of the intrinsic value of aboriginal spirituality, recognition by Canadian society and institutions of the intrinsic value of aboriginal family structures and child care patterns, and the protection of traditional hunting, fishing and trapping ways of life.

12. The position and role of aboriginal elders.

The Commission may examine the social and economic conditions of elders as a group, their traditional role in aboriginal societies and whether existing laws and governmental practices respect and accommodate that role, and the continuing role for elders in aboriginal societies.

## SCHEDULE II

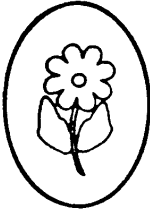
### (1) Matters for the Royal Commission

There was widespread agreement among the people with whom I consulted on the following points:

- (a) Although, in deference to the constitutional reform processes, I have tried to avoid framing 'constitutional' Terms of Reference, it is inevitable that constitutional issues will arise under some of the Terms of Reference. There is a real potential for confusion, duplication, inefficiency and waste which needs to be avoided. In terms of timing, it is essential that the Commission which has much important work to do, some of which may touch on constitutional issues, provide any recommendations it may have on constitutional reform issues in a timely fashion.
- (b) The Royal Commission should consider travelling extensively to native communities throughout Canada. Native people do not want to be studied; rather they want to meet the Commissioners and tell their stories in person, preferably in the communities in which they live.
- (c) The Royal Commission may want to consider sitting in smaller panels (e.g. panels of two or three members for some of its hearings. This might permit wider public access to the Commission, encourage a deeper consideration of some issues, and save money.
- (d) The Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission contain a provision authorizing the release of interim reports. The Commission might find this mechanism particularly appropriate if its recommendations on certain topics would be useful in other public policy fora such as the constitutional reform processes.
- (e) The Royal Commission might want to consider the possibility of an advisory role for native elders. The position and role of elders are highly valued and honoured in most native communities. Elders might be able to assist the Commission in its communication with native communities and in its understanding of native traditions and values.

## **Summary of the Terms of Reference of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**

- 1** The history of relations between Aboriginal peoples, the Canadian Government and Canadian society as a whole.
- 2** The recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal self-government, its origin, content and a strategy for progressive implementation.
- 3** The land base for Aboriginal peoples, including the process for resolving comprehensive and specific claims, whether rooted in Canadian constitutional instruments, treaties or in Aboriginal title.
- 4** The historical interpretation and application, and potential future scope, of s.91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the responsibilities of the Canadian Crown.
- 5** The legal status, implementation and future evolution of Aboriginal treaties, including modern-day agreements.
- 6** The constitutional legal position of the Métis and off-reserve Aboriginal people.
- 7** The special difficulties of Aboriginal people who live in the North.
- 8** The *Indian Act* and the role, responsibilities and policies of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.
- 9** Social issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
- 10** Economic issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
- 11** Cultural issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
- 12** The position and role of Aboriginal elders.
- 13** The position and role of Aboriginal women under existing social conditions and legal arrangements, and in the future.
- 14** The situation of Aboriginal youth.
- 15** Educational issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
- 16** Justice issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.



## Native Women's Association of the N.W.T.

P.O. Box 2321, Yellowknife, N.W.T. X1A 2P7  
Tel: (403) 873-5509 Fax: (403) 873-3152

January 27, 1993

### TO ALL NWT NATIVE ORGANIZATION:

Dene Nation  
Metis Nation  
Native Outreach  
NWT Native Courtworkers  
NWT Friendship Centers  
NWT Northern Addictions Centers  
NWT Native Communication Society  
NWT Native Women's Locals.

The National Native Women's office has requested the Territorial organization to participate in information gathering and sharing for a presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. As President of the Native Women's Association of the N.W.T. and along with Diane Betsina and Bren Kolson as Animators for the national office we will be attending Regional Workshops to gather issues and concerns as posed by northern women. We would like to hear what northern women feel are the issues and concerns affecting them as individuals, as participants in community organizations and as women associated with other northern Native organizations. What would you tell the Royal Commission if you were to give a presentation before them? What do you feel is the most important issues facing your youth, children and women in your community? We would like to hear what you have to say. The information gathered will be compiled in categories such as health, daycare, culture, or family abuses. Any issue that is a concern to you can be voiced through a written submission or a verbal submission to the Royal Commission. To help us in our work we have prepared a questionnaire which will form part of the Territorial presentation which will be included in a national presentation to the Royal Commission in May 1993 by a national representative. Can you pass out this questionnaire to as many women as you know and return them back to our office in Yellowknife by the end of February. Your input will not go disregarded.

If you should require further information you can contact either myself, Diane or Bren at the Yellowknife office at 873-5509. We greatly appreciate your help in this important undertaking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bertha Allen".

Bertha Allen,  
President

cc. Board of Directors

ENCl: Questionnaires- 50 copies

N.W.T. NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
INPUT INTO THE ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.

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In August 1991 the Honourable Brian Dickson on behalf of the Prime Minister Brian Mulroney appointed seven persons to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Commissioners mandate and terms of reference are to investigate, explain and recommend in a Final Report, the history, hopes, aspirations and futuristic goals and solutions as provided by Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

In order for Aboriginal women in Canada to be heard the Commission has provided the National Native Women's Association with funding to gather, compile and organize a presentation to the Royal Commission in September 1993. As a member of the National organization, the Native Women's Association of the NWT views also have to be heard if they are to form part of the overall presentation.

In order to assist us with our work we have formulated the following questionnaire. You do not have to state your name if you do not wish to and this questionnaire is also open to those men who wish to participate.

Please fill out the following questions feeling free to include additional comments on the back of the pages.

Please mail or hand in the completed form to the Yellowknife Territorial office before the end of June 1993.

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Q # 1). HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_  
A LITTLE \_\_\_\_\_ NOT AT ALL \_\_\_\_\_

Q # 2). i) WHAT ABORIGINAL STATUS DO YOU HAVE IN THE NORTH?

DENE \_\_\_\_\_ METIS \_\_\_\_\_ NON-STATUS \_\_\_\_\_  
INUIT \_\_\_\_\_ INUVIALUIT \_\_\_\_\_

ii) WHAT IS YOUR ABORIGINAL DESCENDANCY?

GWICHIN \_\_\_\_\_ CREE \_\_\_\_\_  
SOUTH SLAVEY \_\_\_\_\_ NORTH SLAVEY \_\_\_\_\_  
DOGRIB \_\_\_\_\_ CHIPEWYAN \_\_\_\_\_

Q # 3). ARE YOU AN ABORIGINAL PERSON OF THE N.W.T.?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Q # 4). TO WHICH ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS DO YOU AFFILIATE?

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Q # 5). IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE GREATEST OVERALL CONCERNS TO YOU IN YOUR HOME COMMUNITY? PLEASE PROVIDE REASONS WHY YOU FEEL THE WAY YOU DO ABOUT THESE CONCERNS?

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Q # 6). WHICH CONCERNS OR ISSUES ARE CURRENTLY THE  
GREATEST CONCERNS AFFECTING YOUR HOME COMMUNITY  
AND WHY DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY?

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Q # 7). HOW WOULD YOU PROVIDE SOLUTIONS FOR THE  
CONCERNS AND ISSUES YOU HAVE OUTLINED?  
(IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FEEL THESE CONCERNS  
AND ISSUES CAN BE ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED?)

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Q # 8). DO YOU FEEL YOUR NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS AND ISSUES AND GIVE YOUR REASONS WHY YOU FEEL THEY DO OR DO NOT, ADEQUATELY ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS OR ISSUES?

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Q # 9). DO YOU FEEL ANY GOVERNMENT, IT'S DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, COMMITTEES ADEQUATELY OR INADEQUATELY ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS OR ISSUES AND GIVE YOUR REASONS WHY YOU FEEL THEY DO OR DO NOT, ADDRESS YOUR STATED CONCERNS OR ISSUES?

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Q # 10). DO YOU, AS AN ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN THE NORTH, FEEL YOUR CONCERNS ARE ADEQUATELY OR INADEQUATELY ADDRESSED IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM IN THE NORTH AND PROVIDE YOUR REASONS WHY YOU FEEL THE WAY YOU DO?

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Q # 11). AS AN ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN THE NORTH DO YOU FEEL A COMMISSION LIKE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WILL OR WILL NOT BE ABLE TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO YOUR STATED CONCERNS AND ISSUES AND GIVE AT LEAST ONE REASON WHY YOU FEEL THE WAY YOU DO?

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Q # 12). WHAT METHOD(S) WOULD YOU USE TO ENSURE YOUR HOME COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND ISSUES WOULD FIND SOLUTIONS TO THESE CONCERNS AND ISSUES FOR YOU AND YOUR HOME COMMUNITY?

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Thank you for participating in this Questionnaire. We will compile them by issue eg. health, family violence, etc. for the Territorial and National information to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People.

If you require further information on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People you can write or telephone the following Addresses:

- a) Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples  
P.O. BOX 1993  
Station "B"  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1B2  
Telephone: (613) 943-2075  
Fax: (613) 943-0304  
Information (toll free): 1--800-363-8235
  
- b) Bertha Allen, President  
N.W.T. Native Women's Association  
P.O. BOX 2321  
Yellowknife, N.W.T. X1A 2P7  
Animators: Mary Anne Lafferty  
Bren Kolson  
Telephone: (403) 873-5509

Please indicate if you wish your name to be included in briefs to the Royal Commission?

YES: \_\_\_\_\_ NO: \_\_\_\_\_

MAHSI-CHO!!!

**APPENDIX 3**

**MAP**

**OF THE**

**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

# Northwest Territories

