

SPEAKING NOTES FOR

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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THANK YOU FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, LET ME START OFF WITH SAYING THAT IT IS A DISTINCT PLEASURE TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON *ABORIGINAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP – WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS PROSPERITY*.

YOUR PRESIDENT, ERNIE DANIELS, ASKED ME AS THE CHAIR OF THE SENATE'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES TO SPEAK ABOUT THE COMMITTEE'S SIXTH REPORT ENTITLED, *SHARING CANADA'S PROSPERITY: A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT*.

BEFORE I GET INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REPORT,
I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE HARD WORK,
UNWAVERING DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT THAT
MY SENATE COMMITTEE COLLEAGUES PUT INTO
STUDYING THE ISSUE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES.

I ALSO WANT YOU TO KNOW THE DEPTH OF MY
PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE
STANDARD OF LIVING FOR CANADA'S ABORIGINAL
PEOPLE.

NOTHING IS MORE URGENT AND PRESSING IN MY
MIND THAN IMPLEMENTING REAL CHANGE – THE KIND
OF CHANGE THAT WILL DELIVER RESULTS.

I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT PAST PRACTICES BUT BEST
PRACTICES – A HAND UP THAT IS SO DESPERATELY
NEEDED.

WE MUST PROVIDE THAT ADVANTAGE THAT WILL ALLOW EVERY ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ACROSS THIS COUNTRY TO MAKE HUGE GAINS ON THEIR OWN.

WHILE THE SENATE'S COMMITTEE REPORT WAS TABLED LAST MARCH, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE STUDY IS REALLY PART OF A LARGER DISCUSSION THAT THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS OR SO.

THAT DISCUSSION CONCERNS THE DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES.

ONE OF THE FIRST MAJOR STUDIES THAT WE UNDERTOOK WAS TO EXAMINE THE VARIABLES NECESSARY FOR AN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY TO BECOME AUTONOMOUS IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS - COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD AS SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THAT REPORT WAS ENTITLED, *FORGING NEW DIRECTIONS*.

IN THAT REGARD, THE SENATE HAS ALSO BEEN EXAMINING A LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL, WHERE PARLIAMENT WOULD RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE A LAND BASE, TO RE-ESTABLISH THEIR OWN LAWS REFLECTING THEIR CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS.

ANOTHER MAJOR STUDY ADDRESSED THE VOID THAT EXISTED AND STILL EXISTS IN THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO YOUNG ABORIGINALS WHO WERE NO LONGER LIVING ON RESERVE LANDS.

THAT REPORT WAS ENTITLED, *URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH: AN ACTION PLAN FOR CHANGE*.

WHILE THESE REPORTS MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE MORE SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE AREAS OF ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES, THE COMMITTEE FELT THAT THESE EFFORTS WERE NOT PRODUCING THE DESIRED RESULTS IN MOST COMMUNITIES.

THIS RAISED SOME QUESTIONS: 'WHY IS IT THAT SOME COMMUNITIES SEEM TO BE EXPERIENCING AN IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE, A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING, WHILE OTHERS DO NOT?'

WHY WERE ONLY SOME COMMUNITIES ABLE TO ENGAGE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHILE OTHERS SEEMINGLY COULD NOT?

IN THE COURSE OF STUDYING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ANOTHER RELATED ISSUE BEGAN TO COME UP DURING OUR HEARINGS.

THE COMMITTEE FELT IT NECESSARY TO EXAMINE WHY THERE WAS SUCH A PROLONGED DELAY IN SETTling SPECIFIC CLAIMS.

I WILL TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE COURSE OF MY REMARKS.

OVER A TWO-YEAR PERIOD, THE COMMITTEE HELD HEARINGS ACROSS THE WEST, ONTARIO, QUÉBEC, AND IN THE MARITIMES WHERE WE HEARD FROM 155 WITNESSES.

THE REPORT *SHARING CANADA'S PROSPERITY - A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT*, MAKES 17

RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS ON THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAYS TO SUPPORT ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOW TO ELIMINATE THE ROAD BLOCKS TO PROGRESS.

HISTORICALLY, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WERE SHUNTED ASIDE TO PAVE THE WAY FOR EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

COLONIAL POLICIES SEPARATED ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES FROM MAINSTREAM ECONOMIES - AND BEING UNABLE TO DEVELOP ON THEIR OWN - THE RESULT CREATED A SIGNIFICANT "ECONOMIC GAP" BETWEEN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND THE CANADIAN POPULATION, GENERALLY.

DESPITE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS BY SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, MOST CONTINUE TO LAG BEHIND THE REST OF THE CANADIAN POPULATION WHEN MEASURED AGAINST NEARLY EVERY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATOR.

THE FACT IS ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES COULD NO LONGER ACCEPT TO HAVE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, LOWER INCOME LEVELS AND ELEVATED RATES OF DEPENDENCY ON FEDERAL TRANSFERS.

SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE.

BUT WHAT CHANGES HAVE TO BE MADE AND BY WHOM?

WHEN THE COMMITTEE WENT OUT TO THE COMMUNITIES, WE SAW THAT CREATING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ARE THE WAY THAT ABORIGINAL PEOPLE CAN GET UP ON THEIR FEET AND RESTORE A SENSE OF RESPECT FOR THEMSELVES AS INDIVIDUALS.

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM CAN BE RE-ESTABLISHED IN A MEANINGFUL WAY.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE ARE MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM A TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE TO A WAGE ECONOMY, AND THEN TO OWNING BUSINESSES.

THE REPORT NOTES THAT FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY SHARE A COMMON COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING THEIR COMMUNITIES.

THERE IS A GROWING AWARENESS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL DISPARITIES THAT MANY EXPERIENCE.

DESPITE THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO ABORIGINAL WELL-BEING, WE OFTEN HEARD THAT THE MONEY AVAILABLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS HAS ACTUALLY BEEN SHRINKING, TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS NOW ONLY 8 PER CENT OF THE \$9 BILLION OR SO THAT THE GOVERNMENT ALLOCATES TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES.

TIME AND AGAIN, WE WERE TOLD THAT "THERE CAN BE NO SOCIAL JUSTICE WITHOUT ECONOMIC JUSTICE".

FOR MOST COMMUNITIES, THE ALMOST EXCLUSIVE EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND SPENDING BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS MISGUIDED.

WE FOUND THAT MORE AND MORE, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE ARE VIEWING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS FUNDAMENTAL TO RESHAPING THEIR SOCIAL OUTCOMES AND ARE ASKING THAT GREATER PRIORITY BE GIVEN TO THIS AREA.

WE OBSERVED THAT COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC SUCCESS ARE EXTREMELY DIVERSE IN SIZE, LOCATION, AND RESOURCE WEALTH.

AND WE NOTED THAT THESE COMMUNITIES DO SHARE SOME VERY KEY SUCCESS FACTORS WITH ONE ANOTHER.

- SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES HAVE DEVELOPED A STABLE LEADERSHIP AND THESE LEADERS HAVE A VISION WHICH IS SHARED AND SUPPORTED BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

- THERE IS AN APPROPRIATE INTERPLAY BETWEEN POLITICS AND BUSINESS – MEANING THAT ONE DOES NOT INTERFERE IN THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OTHER.
BUSINESS IS MANAGED BY PROFESSIONALS.
THE POLITICIANS DETERMINE THE WAY OF LIFE THAT THE COMMUNITY WANTS TO BUILD.

- THERE IS A LEGITIMACY OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES TO THE COMMUNITY;

- COMMUNITIES CONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY THE STRATEGIC USE OF AVAILABLE NATURAL RESOURCES.

➤ WHAT GIFTS FROM THE CREATOR ARE THERE TO USE IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER?

WHAT IS NOT A SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE AND HOW CAN IT BE USED RESPONSIBLY TO CREATE LONG LASTING BENEFITS FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND.

➤ THERE NEEDS TO BE QUALIFIED LABOUR POOLS TO DO THE WORK, EVEN IF THAT MEANS BRINGING IN OUTSIDE EXPERTS TO DEVELOP THE BUSINESS UNTIL ONE OF THEIR OWN MEMBERS CAN BECOME EDUCATED AND SKILLED IN PERFORMING THE WORK.

➤ REALLY SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES ALSO SHARE A WILLINGNESS TO FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

THE BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES THAT POSITION THEMSELVES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IS THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO ADDRESS THEIR SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

IT IS TRUE THAT BUSINESS DOES NOT JUST HAPPEN WHEN THE COMMUNITY IS STRUGGLING WITH SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF HOUSING, CLEAN DRINKING WATER AND SAFE WATER TREATMENT FACILITIES, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION.

HOWEVER WE FOUND THAT WHEN THE SUCCESS FACTORS START TO DEVELOP, THESE OTHER IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES START RECEIVING THE ATTENTION THEY NEED.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THERE IS LEADERSHIP PRESENT
- THE VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY GETS
TRANSLATED INTO A PLAN - AND THIS ACTION PLAN
SETS OUT HOW THESE SOCIAL PROBLEMS WILL BE
POSITIVELY RESOLVED.

ONCE THE COMMUNITY DECIDES TO TAKE ACTION,
SEVERAL DIFFERENT THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN
TOGETHER.

COMMUNITY LEADERS ALSO TOLD US THAT ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT BECOMES CRITICAL TO NATION
BUILDING, SELF-RELIANCE AND ABORIGINAL
AUTONOMY.

AND IT IS THIS AUTONOMY THAT IS IMPORTANT FOR
THE COMMUNITY AND THE PEOPLE.

THIS THEN FOSTERS A RETURN TO A TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE BUT WITH A MODERN WORLD APPROACH THAT RESPECTS THE NATURAL LAWS GIVEN TO US BY THE CREATOR.

AN AMERICAN STUDY, THE HARVARD PROJECT, LOOKED AT THIS WHOLE ISSUE IN THE UNITED STATES.

THEY ALSO FOUND THAT THOSE FIRST NATIONS THAT HAD GOOD GOVERNANCE, OBVIOUS RULES FOR THEIR CONDUCT AND THEIR DEALINGS WITH BUSINESS, WERE THE ONES THAT WERE SUCCESSFUL.

PIECEMEAL EFFORTS BY OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS, AND SPORADIC INVESTMENTS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOWEVER, ARE NOT ENOUGH TO BRING ABOUT MEANINGFUL CHANGE.

THE REPORT ATTEMPTS TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON ADOPTING NEW APPROACHES THAT WILL EFFECT NECESSARY CHANGES IN ABORIGINAL POLICY.

MEANINGFUL, LONG-TERM, STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - BOTH ON AND OFF RESERVE - ARE FUNDAMENTAL IF THE FULL PROMISE OF ECONOMIC RENEWAL IS TO BE REALIZED.

- THE REPORT RECOMMENDS A RENEWED FEDERAL APPROACH TO FIRST NATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL FIRST NATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY.

- ENSURING THAT FIRST NATION PEOPLE IN CANADA SHARE IN THE ECONOMIC WEALTH AND PROSPERITY OF THIS COUNTRY IS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVING IMPROVED SOCIAL OUTCOMES.

THE TWO ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED AND WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE ANOTHER GENERATION OF NATIVE YOUTH BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE PROUD PARTICIPANTS IN CANADA'S ECONOMY.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES, INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES ARE COMMITTED TO LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THEIR ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE.

DESPITE CONSIDERABLE OBSTACLES, MANY ARE DOING SO SUCCESSFULLY.

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES HAVE FRAMED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN A WAY THAT IS RESPECTFUL OF THE COMMUNITY'S VALUES, PRACTICES AND CULTURE.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES ARE NOT WILLING TO COMPROMISE THEIR IDENTITY AND CULTURE IN THE PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC SUCCESS.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES MUST FIT INTO THEIR CULTURAL FRAMEWORK.

THE DOGRIB TREATY 11 COUNCIL EXPRESS THIS BY SAYING "WE DO NOT WANT TO LOSE OUR TRADITIONS, CULTURE, LANGUAGE OR RELIGION."

THE TAKU RIVER TLINGIT NATION TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT A "SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY MEANS RESPECTING OUR LANDS, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR RIGHTS AND TITLE."

PRESERVING TRADITIONS AND CULTURE IS BEING RECONCILED WITH THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND THE MODERN ECONOMY.

THIS IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, "ON THEIR TERMS".

AND IT IS SHOWING GREAT PROMISE.

COMMUNITIES SUCH AS MILLBROOK FIRST NATION IN NOVA SCOTIA, OR THE SQUAMISH FIRST NATION IN VANCOUVER, ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THEIR STRATEGIC LOCATION TO DEVELOP A RANGE OF COMMERCIAL AND REAL ESTATE ENTERPRISES.

COMMUNITIES, SUCH AS THE WHITECAP DAKOTA FIRST NATION IN SASKATCHEWAN, ARE DEVELOPING KEY PARTNERSHIPS AND ESTABLISHING PROFITABLE BUSINESS VENTURES, SUCH AS GOLF COURSES AND RESORTS.

OTHERS LIKE THE T'LICHO IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF LARGE SCALE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS DIAMOND MINING, AND NEGOTIATING IMPACT AND BENEFIT AGREEMENTS FROM LARGE DEVELOPERS.

WHILE OTHERS, LIKE LAC LA RONGE IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN OR THE MOHAWKS OF KAHNAWA:KE IN QUÉBEC ARE DEVELOPING THE ECONOMIES FROM THE GROUND UP, PROJECT BY PROJECT, BUSINESS BY BUSINESS, VERY MUCH FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

ANY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ON ABORIGINAL LANDS MUST PROVIDE DIRECT BENEFIT TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE THE STEWARDS OF THAT LAND AND ITS RESOURCES.

THE REPORT ALSO IDENTIFIES SOME CRITICAL BARRIERS TO FIRST NATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING:

- LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ASPECTS OF THE INDIAN ACT;

- LIMITED ACCESS TO LANDS AND RESOURCES AND CAPACITY TO DEVELOP THOSE RESOURCES;

- INSUFFICIENT EDUCATION AND TRAINING; AND,

- LIMITED ACCESS TO CAPITAL.

REGARDING THE BARRIER OF ACCESS TO CAPITAL, EARLIER I MENTIONED THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD EXAMINED THE DELAY IN RESOLVING SPECIFIC CLAIMS.

WHEN GOVERNMENTS HAVE CHOSEN TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC CLAIMS, THEY HAVE DONE SO IN ISOLATION AND FAILED TO INTEGRATE THE RESOLUTION OF CLAIMS INTO OVERALL ABORIGINAL POLICY.

THERE IS A COMPLETE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S STATED INTERESTS OF USING CLAIMS AS A PLATFORM TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THE COMMITTEE OBSERVED THAT WHERE CLAIMS HAVE BEEN SETTLED, THE COMPENSATION OFTEN HAS LED TO SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST SEE CLAIMS RESOLUTION AS ESSENTIAL TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND TO IMPROVEMENTS IN QUALITY OF LIFE AND GOVERNANCE.

SPECIFIC CLAIMS ARE NOT ARCANE LEGAL PROBLEMS BUT INJUSTICES THAT OCCURRED IN THE REAL WORLD AND THEY CARRY REAL CONSEQUENCES.

THESE INJUSTICES ROBBED FIRST NATIONS OF THEIR ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ECONOMY.

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED SEVERAL WAYS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE ACTION ON SPECIFIC CLAIMS RATHER THAN FACE THE DIRE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF ALLOWING THESE CLAIMS TO CONTINUE TO FESTER.

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED:

- THAT NO LESS THAN \$250 MILLION YEAR SHOULD BE SET ASIDE TO PAY OUT SETTLEMENTS;

- THAT IT IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE TO HAVE THE INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT DECIDE ON A CLAIM'S VALIDITY AND TO MAKE REPARATIONS TO THE CLAIMANT'S.

SUCH CONFLICT OF INTEREST MUST BE

ELIMINATED.

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED THAT AN INDEPENDENT BODY BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN TWO YEARS AND THAT THIS BODY HAS THE CAPACITY TO RESOLVE THE CLAIMS IT RECEIVES IN FIVE YEARS OR LESS.

- THAT ALL REFORMS BE CONSISTENT WITH NEW GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF FAIRNESS, INCLUSION, OPEN DIALOGUE AND RECOGNITION OF REGIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THE UNIQUENESS OF INDIVIDUAL CLAIMS.

SPECIFIC CLAIMS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SHARE A COMMON PARALLEL - - IN THAT THE GOVERNMENT TREATS CLAIMS LIABILITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS PROGRAMS.

THEY ARE FUNDED AS PROGRAMS - - UNDERFUNDED
GENERALLY - - AND ARE AT THE MERCY OF BEING CUT
EVERY TIME THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES ITS
FUNDING PRIORITIES.

IT IS ONE OF THE REAL GLITCHES IN THE MINDSET OF
GOVERNMENT.

IF SOCIAL CONDITIONS ARE TO IMPROVE, IT IS TIME
FOR GOVERNMENT TO STOP TREATING ABORIGINAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS A DISCRETIONARY
FUNDING PROGRAM.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE
MEANINGFUL INVESTMENTS IN ABORIGINAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

CHANGES TO PROGRAM FUNDING CREATE BARRIERS
TO THE SUCCESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.

SECURE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO RESOLVE SPECIFIC CLAIMS AND TO ASSIST COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPING THEIR ECONOMIES.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES ARE TAKING THEIR RESPECTFUL PLACE IN THE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL ECONOMY.

THROUGH INNOVATION, IMAGINATION AND AN UNWAVERING ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE ARE CONTRIBUTING NOT ONLY TO THE WELL-BEING AND ECONOMIC FUTURES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES, BUT TO NATIONAL PROSPERITY AS WELL.

CANADA IS A GREAT NATION IN THE WORLD BUT CANADA WILL ONLY ACHIEVE TRUE GREATNESS WHEN IT HAS SHOWN THAT IT IS PREPARED TO FULFILL ITS LEGAL AND MORAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA, AND IN THE PROCESS DEMONSTRATE THAT ALL CANADIANS, ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL ALIKE, CAN EXPECT FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT.

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT, ALONG WITH THE OTHER REPORTS THE COMMITTEE HAS PRODUCED, IS DEDICATED TO LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE RATHER THAN TO THE PAST.

THEIR PURPOSE IS NEITHER TO ASSESS BLAME NOR TO DEMAND VAGUE "IMPROVEMENT."

INSTEAD, IT IS THE COMMITTEE'S HOPE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS A CLEAR BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE.

THE *HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT* REPORT PROVIDES PRACTICAL AND WORKABLE IDEAS FOR CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND THE REST OF CANADA.

THROUGH THE MEDIA THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN URGED TO GET ON BOARD WITH THESE RECOMMENDATIONS.

SO WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

WELL, I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS IS TRYING TO INCORPORATE THE REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS INTO A REVISED STRATEGY OF PROVIDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.

THE SENATE HAS REQUESTED THE GOVERNMENT RESPOND TO THE REPORT.

WE EXPECT TO SEE THAT RESPONSE LATER THIS MONTH OR IN MARCH.

IN THE COURSE OF PREPARING MY REMARKS, I WAS ASKED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION TO COMMENT ON WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, SHOULD BE TAKEN BY YOU IN YOUR DEALINGS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT YOUR ROLE IS VERY CENTRAL TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN THE COMMUNITIES THAT YOU SERVE.

I BELIEVE THE FIRST STEP IS TO SIMPLY BEGIN TALKING ABOUT THE ISSUES AND TO GIVE ORDINARY MEMBERS A SAY IN WHAT GOES ON IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

LET MEMBERS DECIDE THE DIRECTION THE COMMUNITY SHOULD TAKE.

DON'T LEAVE COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING TO A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE.

SHORT-TERM IDEAS FOR BREAKING OUT OF THE DEPENDENCY MINDFRAME HAVE TO DO WITH IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LEVERAGING OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT TO CREATE WEALTH FOR THE PEOPLE.

IN THE LARGER DISCUSSION, STRUCTURAL CHANGES NEED TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND TAKE SHAPE.

HOW DO WE CHANGE THE ECONOMICS OF THE SYSTEM SO THAT WE CAN BE SELF-RELIANT?

AT THE END OF THE DAY, IF WE DON'T CONTROL OUR OWN PURSE-STRINGS, THOSE INDIVIDUALS THAT PRESENTLY CONTROL THEM WILL CONTINUE TO CONTROL US, AND THAT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING.

BUT, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT WE LIVE IN A MODERN WORLD WITH A GLOBAL ECONOMY.

WE DON'T LIVE IN A BUBBLE, AND WE HAVE TO BECOME ECONOMICALLY INTEGRATED INTO THE SYSTEM IN ORDER TO LOOK AFTER OURSELVES AND OUR COMMUNITIES.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING THAT NEEDS TO CHANGE.

YOU MUST CALL ATTENTION TO THE GOVERNING BODIES OF ABORIGINAL SOCIETY TO EXERCISE THEIR ABORIGINAL RIGHTS TO MAKE LAWS FOR THEIR PEOPLE AND LANDS AND TO CREATE THE LEGAL MECHANISMS TO INTERFACE WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS.

CALL FOR A MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE.

BUILD LEADERSHIP AND TRADITIONAL FORMS OF DECISION-MAKING INTO YOUR GOVERNANCE SYSTEM.

ESTABLISH CONTROL OVER YOUR LANDS THROUGH CLAIMS AND IF NECESSARY, ACQUIRE MORE LAND.

BUILD UP YOUR RESOURCE BASE.

BUSINESS WILL ALWAYS SEARCH FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

BUT BUSINESS WILL ONLY HAPPEN WHEN THERE IS A PLAN TO MAKE IT SO AND THOSE PLANS MUST BE ADAPTABLE AND CHANGE OVER TIME.

RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING ARRANGEMENTS MUST BE ESTABLISHED.

FOR TOO LONG THE PROFIT FROM NATURAL RESOURCES HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

THIS MUST STOP.

THE REVENUE SHARING FORMULA MUST BE MADE FAIR.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES MUST RECEIVE A FAIR PERCENTAGE OF THE PROFITS THAT COME FROM THEIR CORE LANDS AND TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES.

THE PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS NEED TO JUSTIFY THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE PROFIT SHARING ARRANGEMENT.

IF THEY CANNOT, THEN PERHAPS THE WHOLE SHARE SHOULD ONLY GO TO THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT PARCEL OF LAND.

NEVER FORGET THAT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES ALSO HAVE SOMETHING GOOD TO SHARE.

WE EACH HAVE DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES AND WE LEARN FROM THESE.

WE LEARN FROM OUR SUCCESSES AND OUR MISTAKES.

SHARE WITH OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLES YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EVEN YOUR RESOURCE WEALTH SO THAT THEY TOO CAN LIVE MEANINGFUL LIVES. YOU CAN DO THIS BY PARTICIPATING IN SHARED ECONOMIES.

SHARING CAN BE VIEWED AS JUST ANOTHER WAY OF CREATING A HEALTHY BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP.

I SEE IT AS INCORPORATING TRADITIONAL PRACTICES INTO OUR SHARED WAY OF LIVING.

IT IS RELATIONSHIP BUILDING THAT RESPECTS THE TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS THAT HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN TO US FROM OUR ANCESTORS.

I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS REQUIRES COMMUNITIES TO BUILD THEIR HUMAN CAPITAL.

THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE BY ENSURING THAT OUR PEOPLE RECEIVE GOOD EDUCATION.

WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE, NEW SCHOOLS OR PLACES OF INSTRUCTION MUST BE ESTABLISHED IN THE COMMUNITIES THEMSELVES.

TRY TO AVOID BUSING OUR CHILDREN TO DISTANT SCHOOLS.

IF THIS IS UNAVOIDABLE, THEN TRY TO AUGMENT THE CHILDRENS' EDUCATION WITH TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

THERE IS STILL SOME DEBATE ABOUT WHETHER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE THE FUNDING FOR EDUCATION.

WHILE THE TREATIES ARE GENERALLY VAGUE ABOUT THIS, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS MORALLY RESPONSIBLE TO DO SO.

THEY HAVE A FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY TO UPHOLD THE HONOR OF THE CROWN TO PROTECT AND ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST FUND EDUCATION, AT LEAST BASIC EDUCATION, AND ABORIGINAL CHILDREN MUST RECEIVE EQUAL PER CAPITA FUNDING AS THEIR NON-ABORIGINAL COUNTERPARTS RECEIVE FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

EDUCATION IS AN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE.

YOU, AS THE FINANCIAL CONTROL OFFICERS FOR THE COMMUNITIES YOU SERVE, MUST ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY AND ITS GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP MAKE A PLAN TO EDUCATE YOUR MEMBERS.

YOU MUST ENSURE THAT THE SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED; THAT THE HUMAN RESOURCE CAPITAL IS AVAILABLE TO OPERATE THE ABORIGINAL BUSINESSES AND NON-ABORIGINAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESSES THAT WILL BECOME YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY.

EVERY COMMUNITY THAT HAS DONE THESE THINGS IS SUCCEEDING AND THE LIVES OF ITS PEOPLE ARE IMPROVING.

THIS IS A JOURNEY OUT OF THE COLONIAL PRISON THAT OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RELEGATED TO, BUT EVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP.

IF I MAY BE SO BOLD – YOUR TASK, AS THE FINANCIAL OFFICERS FOR YOUR COMMUNITIES, IS TO ENSURE THAT THE FIRST STEP IS TAKEN, TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY.

I BELIEVE THAT DOING THESE THINGS EXIST IN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY.

JUST DO IT.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

I WANT CONCLUDE BY LEAVING YOU WITH A FEW POSITIVE THOUGHTS.

FIRST, THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AT OUR SITUATION WITH A DIFFERENT MINDSET AND THEN TO TACKLE AN IMPORTANT CHALLENGE.

LET ME SAY I HAVE NO FEAR CHALLENGING YOU,
BECAUSE I NOT ONLY HAVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, I
ALSO HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN OUR PEOPLE.

I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT A SOCIETY, AS OLD AND AS
RICH AS OURS, HAS THE CAPABILITY TO MOVE
FORWARD IN A NEW AGE, SEIZING NEW
OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR PEOPLE WITHOUT LEAVING
BEHIND THE RICHNESS OF OUR COLLECTIVE PAST.

THE CHALLENGE OF WHICH I WILL SPEAK IN A
MOMENT CAN BE MORE EASILY TACKLED WHEN
PEOPLE ARE INSPIRED, PROUD AND ENTHUSIASTIC.
THAT KIND OF SPIRIT HAS OFTEN BEEN LACKING AND,
QUITE FRANKLY, THERE IS NO REASON IT SHOULD BE
LACKING.

THERE IS MUCH TO INSPIRE CANADA'S ABORIGINAL
PEOPLE.

WE HAVE OUTSTANDING FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS LEADERS TODAY.

I THINK OF PEOPLE LIKE CLARENCE LOUIS, HELEN BEND, ROBERTA JAMIESON AND HERB GEORGE.

AS I LOOK BACK OVER PREVIOUS GENERATIONS AND HISTORIC TIMES, THERE ARE SO MANY TRUE HEROES WHO SHINE AS SYMBOLS OF REAL LEADERSHIP, DETERMINATION, INNOVATION AND PRINCIPLE.

TODAY I STAND HERE BEFORE YOU DRESSED IN MY MÉTIS TRADITIONAL DRESS, PROUD OF MY ANCESTRY, PROUD OF MY HERITAGE, AND HOPEFULLY AS AN INSPIRATION TO SOME WHO REQUIRE AN INSPIRATIONAL LIFT.

I THINK OF MY DIRECT ANCESTOR, CUTHBERT GRANT, WHO IN THE 1800'S CHALLENGED THE STATUS QUO — PROTESTING THE UNFAIR TREATMENT OF THE MÉTIS AND FIRST NATIONS IN MANITOBA.

GRANT TOWN IN MANITOBA WAS NAMED AFTER HIM, AND IT IS WHERE I GREW UP AS A CHILD.

UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE THERE WAS LITTLE PRIDE FOR OUR HERIATGE, AS A CHILD, I LEARNED LITTLE OF HIS INSPIRING WORK.

OF COURSE THERE WAS LOUIS RIEL, ANOTHER LEADER WHO FOUGHT FOR JUSTICE AND STOOD FOR FAIRNESS.

NOT ONLY DID HE CHAMPION THE CAUSE FOR THE MÉTIS, BUT ALSO FOR THE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN THE RED RIVER AND ASSINIBOINE RIVER VALLEYS.

THESE PEOPLE ARE OUR HEROES AND THE LIST OF THEIR FELLOW LEADERS IS LONG.

EACH ONE OF THEM SHOULD STAND AS INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES — PEOPLE WHO SHOWED US WHAT IS TO HOLD OUR HEADS HIGH, TO STAY TRUE TO OUR PEOPLE, TO FIGHT HARD FOR OUR CAUSE AND TO PROMOTE JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS.

WITH INSPIRATION ALSO COMES PRIDE.

THE FOUNDING PEOPLES OF THIS LAND HAVE MUCH TO BE PROUD ABOUT.

IT ALMOST GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT OUR PRIDE RUNS AS DEEP AS THE ROOTS OF THE TALLEST TREE THAT STOOD ON OUR LAND WHEN THE NEWCOMERS ARRIVED ON THE SHORES OF THIS BEAUTIFUL CONTINENT.

WE SHOULD FOREVER BE PROUD OF OUR STEWARDSHIP OF THIS GREAT LAND OVER THE THOUSANDS OF YEARS THAT OUR ANCESTORS LIVED ON IT AND WITH IT.

IT IS HARD FOR NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THE DEPTH OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE LAND AND HOW IT IS INTERTWINED WITH OUR VERY BEING.

WITHOUT SEEKING THEIR FULL UNDERSTANDING OR HAVING TO SEEK THEIR APPROVAL, LET US SIMPLY CHERISH THIS REALITY AND STAND PROUD.

OUR PRIDE SHOULD BE HUGE IN OUR HEARTS
KNOWING THAT WE TURNED OVER TO THEM A FEW
HUNDRED YEARS AGO A PRISTINE ENVIRONMENT
TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE, LUSH WITH DIVERSE FLORA,
RICH WITH RESOURCES, AND BLESSED WITH THE
FRESH NATURAL WATER AND AIR THAT SUSTAINS
LIFE.

THERE IS SOME IRONY BUT PROBABLY LITTLE TO
BOAST ABOUT TODAY WHEN WE ARE ASKED IN A
MIXED SOCIETY TO RENEW A COMMITMENT TO THIS
PLANET — A COMMITMENT OUR PEOPLE HAVE HELD
FIRM FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

HOWEVER IRONIC, OUR PRIDE SHOULD REMAIN
UNDIMINISHED FOR WE HAVE BEEN THE STEWARDS OF
THIS SACRED PLANET FOR SO LONG.

INSPIRATION AND PRIDE --- THESE ARE THE TWO FORCES THAT WILL ALLOW US TO FACE ANY CHALLENGE, TO TACKLE ANY OBSTACLE AND TO SEIZE THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES.

LET ME SPEAK OF A CHALLENGE THAT I BELIEVE MUST BE AT THE TOP OF OUR LIST OF ISSUES FOR WHICH WE MUST COLLECTIVELY FIND INNOVATIVE ANSWERS.

THAT CHALLENGE IS EDUCATING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE GENERATIONS TO COME.

THIS IS A PRESSING CHALLENGE, AND IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE OVERCOME IT.

LET ME TELL YOU THAT THE SENATE REPORT I SUMMARIZED A FEW MOMENTS AGO MAY BE A GOOD DOCUMENT.

WE HAVE PROBABLY DONE SOME COMMENDABLE
WORK TO DEFINE HOW CANADA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
CAN IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

BUT THIS REPORT IS MERELY A BLUEPRINT.

WE NOW HAVE TO GET PEOPLE TO ACT AND
IMPLEMENT
PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY.

ONE CAN WRITE THE GREATEST MANIFESTO IN THE
WORLD, BUT IT MUST BE PRACTICAL AND PEOPLE
MUST BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT ITS
RECOMMENDATIONS.

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

I KNOW THIS REPORT WILL DO LITTLE GOOD IF WE DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO REALIZE WHAT IT SETS OUT AS OPPORTUNITIES.

I KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN MANY MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PAST, AND I AM CONVINCED WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO DATE HAS NOT WORKED.

WE MUST CHANGE OUR WAY OF THINKING AND, OUR WAY OF ACTING.

WE MUST THINK BEYOND THE NORM AND OUTSIDE THE BOX.

UPPERMOST IN OUR MINDS MUST BE AN ESSENTIAL QUESTION -- WHY ARE SO MANY OF OUR PEOPLE LANGUISHING ON THE SIDELINES?

WE DISCOVERED PART OF THE PROBLEM IN THIS STUDY.

WHEN WE WERE IN THUNDER BAY, OFFICIALS OF WAUSA AIRLINES APPEARED BEFORE US AND WE HEARD OF THEIR SUCCESS STORY, WHICH WAS REALLY ENCOURAGING.

ONE OF THE NATIVE LEADERS – THE HEAD OF WAUSA AIRLINES -- WAS ASKED HOW MANY PILOTS HE HAD IN HIS AIRLINE THAT WERE FIRST NATION, AND HE SAID ONE OUT OF OVER 100.

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, I AM A FORMER AIR FORCE PILOT AND STILL HOLD A COMMERCIAL PILOT'S LICENSE.

I PURSUED THIS QUESTION AND ASKED WHY THE LOW REPRESENTATION.

HIS RESPONSE WAS THAT FIRST NATIONS YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE EDUCATIONAL GROUNDING IN SCIENCE AND MATH.

SO THEY CANNOT MAKE THE CUT.

MY FRIENDS, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE MUST MAKE THE CUT.

EDUCATION IS NOT AN OPTION – IT IS AN IMPERATIVE.

WE MUST EDUCATE OUR YOUNG AND GIVE THEM THE KNOWLEDGE, THE SKILLS — LIFE SKILLS AND PRACTICAL SKILLS -- TO SUCCEED, EXCELL AND ACHIEVE IN LIFE.

I DO NOT HAVE ALL OF THE ANSWERS AS TO HOW WE MOVE FROM A RECORD OF HIGH DROP-OUT RATES TO FULL ACHIEVEMENT IN A BASIC EDUCATION.

I DO KNOW THAT THE SYSTEM OF THE PAST HAS NOT WORKED.

I BELIEVE WE MUST APPROACH EDUCATION DIFFERENTLY FROM THE TRADITIONAL FORM OF EDUCATION IF WE ARE GOING TO KEEP FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS CHILDREN IN OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ALLOW THEM TO SUCCEED.

A NON-ABORIGINAL PERSON IS DRIVEN MAINLY BY MATERIALISM AND ACHIEVEMENT AS IT RELATES TO THEIR SOCIETY.

MOST OF OUR PEOPLE STILL HAVE A COMMUNAL THOUGHT PROCESS AND AN ATTACHMENT TO THE LAND.

PERHAPS IT IS TIME WE LOOKED AT THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN THROUGH THEIR EYES INSTEAD OF THROUGH OUR EYES OR THROUGH THE EYES OF A SYSTEM DETACHED FROM THE CURRENT REALITY.

SOMWHERE BETWEEN THOSE TWO FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES — MATERIALISM AND A COLLECTIVE APPROACH -- LIES A THEME, A MEANS AND A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION THAT WILL PREPARE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE FUTURE.

FINDING THAT MIDELE GROUND WILL, QUITE FRANKLY, MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUSTAINING OUR CULTURE OR SEEING IT ONE DAY DISAPPEAR.

THE CHALLENGE IS HUGE BUT NOT DAUNTING.

IT IS WANTING BUT NOT DISCOURAGING.

REMEMBER WHO WE ARE.

REMEMBER WHAT WE VALUE.

REMEMBER THE LAND FROM WHICH WE HAVE ALWAYS
FOUND OUR SUSTENANCE AS HUMANS AND AS
SPIRITUAL BEINGS.

REMEMBER OUR ANCESTORS — OUR HEROES.

BE PROUD, STAND PROUD AND MOVE FORWARD TO
FACE THE CHALLENGES BEHIND WHICH ARE OUR
LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES.

THANK YOU.