

**COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS
PROGRESS OF THE INQUIRY
March 6, 2006**

- GOOD MORNING.

- AS HAS BEEN MY PRACTICE THROUGHOUT THESE HEARINGS, I WISH TO MAKE A FEW COMMENTS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE INQUIRY.

- HOWEVER, BEFORE DOING SO, I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE UNEXPECTED NEWS LAST WEEK OF KENNETH DEANE'S TRAFFIC ACCIDENT AND TRAGIC DEATH.

- ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION AND ALL INVOLVED WITH THE INQUIRY, I WISH TO EXTEND OUR SYMPATHIES TO MR. DEANE'S FAMILY. I KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT MUST BE FOR THEM TO DEAL WITH THEIR LOSS.

- WHILE THE COMMISSION WILL NOT HAVE THE BENEFIT OF MR. DEANE'S VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVE, WE ARE NONETHELESS CONFIDENT THAT OUR INVESTIGATION WILL BE COMPLETE.

- THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MEANS BY WHICH WE INTEND TO DEAL WITH THE ABSENCE OF HIS FIRST HAND TESTIMONY AT THIS INQUIRY, AND COMMISSION COUNSEL WILL ADDRESS THIS ISSUE AT A LATER TIME.

- WE HAVE NOW HEARD TESTIMONY FROM SEVERAL OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED WITNESSES AND SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE FACT-FINDING PORTION OF THE INQUIRY IS COMPLETE. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE CASE.

- LET ME EXPLAIN, IN A LITTLE MORE DETAIL, WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS.
- AT THE OUTSET, WE IDENTIFIED THREE PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF WITNESSES AROUND WHICH WE INTENDED TO ORGANIZE THESE PROCEEDINGS, NAMELY ABORIGINAL WITNESSES WHICH WE HAVE HEARD FROM, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHICH WE HAVE ALSO NOW HEARD FROM, AND FINALLY THE OPP, THE WITNESSES WHO ARE NOW TESTIFYING. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD FROM THE MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PERSONEL WHO WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1995.
- WHILE WE HAVE HEARD FROM MOST OF THE SENIOR OPP OFFICIALS, THERE ARE MANY OTHER POLICE WITNESSES, PREDOMINENTLY CONSTABLES, WHO WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED, WHO MUST BE CALLED. THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WILL BE DEVOTED TO HEARING TESTIMONY FROM THESE WITNESSES AS WELL AS FROM THE CURRENT COMMISSIONER OF THE OPP, GWEN BONIFACE.
- MUCH HAS BEEN LEARNED SO FAR. EACH WITNESS ADDS DETAILS OR PERSPECTIVES TO THE INVESTIGATION THAT HELPS ME TEST OR VERIFY THE EVIDENCE OF OTHERS AND ULTIMATELY, WILL HELP ME TO REACH CONCLUSIONS.
- FOLLOWING THE OPP WITNESSES, THERE ARE A FEW ADDITIONAL WITNESSES TO CALL WHO FALL OUTSIDE THE THREE PRIMARY CATEGORIES, BUT WHO WERE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY, OR INVOLVED WITH, THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1995. THESE INCLUDE SOME LOCAL COTTAGERS AND DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE OFFICIALS. OUR INVESTIGATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL WE HAVE HEARD FROM ALL OF THE WITNESSES.

- THROUGHOUT THESE PROCEEDINGS WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT THE PROCESS OF A PUBLIC INQUIRY IS NOT ONLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMISSIONER. THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC EDUCATION COMPONENT TO A PUBLIC INQUIRY AND IT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO HEAR - AND FOR WITNESSES TO SHARE - THEIR PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES.
- WE INTEND TO CALL ALL RELEVANT AND HELPFUL EVIDENCE, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN WE INTEND TO HEAR ALL POSSIBLE EVIDENCE. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE SINCE WE BEGAN, THOROUGHNESS AND FAIRNESS NEED TO CONTINUE TO BE BALANCED WITH ECONOMY.
- I WANT TO REMIND EVERYONE THAT THE COMMISSION'S POLICY AND RESEARCH WORK IS BEING CARRIED OUT AT THE SAME TIME AS THESE PART 1 HEARINGS. SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF RESEARCH HAS BEEN GATHERED AND IS BEING REVIEWED.
- EXPERTS AND PARTIES WHO HAVE PART 2 STANDING HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS RESEARCH. A NUMBER OF FORUMS AND SYMPOSIA HAVE BEEN HELD AND, AS YOU KNOW, ANOTHER IS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS WEEK. MANY OF THESE SESSIONS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND HAVE BEEN WEBCAST TO GIVE THE MATERIAL PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION, WIDE ACCESSIBILITY.
- AFTER THE HEARINGS AND POLICY WORK HAVE CONCLUDED, I INTEND TO COMPLETE MY REPORT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. MY GOAL IS TO HAVE IT FINISHED BEFORE THE END OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR.

- IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT A PUBLIC INQUIRY IS A LENGTHY AND COSTLY UNDERTAKING. IT ALSO GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT PUBLIC FUNDING IS NOT UNLIMITED. THESE FACTS ARE, NO DOUBT, TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN A GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO HAVE AN INQUIRY.
- I HAVE SAID ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, MY EXPECTATION IS THAT THE COST OF THIS INQUIRY WILL BE COMPARABLE TO OTHER RECENTLY COMPLETED COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY.
- I WANT TO ASSURE EVERYONE THAT THE COST TO THE PUBLIC OF THIS INQUIRY HAS ALWAYS BEEN FOREFRONT IN MY MIND AND THAT EVERY DECISION I HAVE MADE HAS BEEN WITH A VIEW TO BALANCING THE NEED FOR THOROUGHNESS, FAIRNESS AND ECONOMY.
- FROM THE OUTSET, MY PRINCIPAL GOAL HAS BEEN TO CONDUCT A THOROUGH, FAIR AND OPEN INQUIRY. MY SECONDARY GOAL HAS BEEN TO CONTRIBUTE, IN SOME WAY, TO THE HEALING OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHOSE LIVES WERE AFFECTED BY THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1995.
- NOTWITHSTANDING THE MANY TWISTS AND TURNS AN INQUIRY MAY TAKE, I BELIEVE THAT, SO FAR, WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING THESE GOALS.
- THANK YOU.