

**COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS**  
**Final Day of Evidentiary Hearings**  
**June 28, 2006**

- THIS BRINGS US TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS OF THIS INQUIRY EXCEPT FOR COUNSELS' WRITTEN AND ORAL SUBMISSIONS, WHICH WILL OCCUR DURING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 21.
- I WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE TODAY WITH A FEW BRIEF REMARKS ON THE PUBLIC INQUIRY PROCESS IN GENERAL, AND THIS INQUIRY, IN PARTICULAR.
- AT THE OUTSET OF THESE PROCEEDINGS, I SET OUT FOUR PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE US: OPENNESS, THOROUGHNESS, FAIRNESS AND EXPEDIENCY. COMMISSION COUNSEL AND I DID OUR BEST TO ENSURE THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO THESE PRINCIPLES WERE ADHERED TO IN EVERY PROCEDURAL AND LEGAL DECISION WE MADE.
- THROUGH OPENNESS, THE PUBLIC IS PROVIDED WITH A 'WINDOW' INTO AN INCIDENT, AND TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING IT, THAT OTHERWISE MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE. AMONG THE WINDOWS IN THIS INQUIRY WERE THESE PUBLIC HEARINGS, WHICH WERE CONDUCTED IN THE COMMUNITY WHERE THE EVENTS IN QUESTION OCCURRED.
- BROAD PUBLIC ACCESS WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE DAILY LIVE WEBCAST OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND THE ELECTRONIC POSTING OF THE TRANSCRIPTS BY THE END OF THE SAME DAY.
- NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL MEDIA COVERED MUCH OF THE PROCEEDINGS. SOME LOCAL MEDIA WERE PRESENT ALMOST DAILY, INCLUDING THE SARNIA OBSERVER, THE A-CHANNEL IN LONDON AND CTV SARNIA.
- ONE-WAY IN WHICH THOROUGHNESS WAS ACHIEVED WAS BY CALLING APPROXIMATELY 140 WITNESSES, WHO HAD RELEVANT OR HELPFUL EVIDENCE, TO TESTIFY. FAIRNESS WAS ASSURED THROUGH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE CROSS-EXAMINATION OF THESE WITNESSES BY ANY AND SOMETIMES ALL - OF THE 17 PARTIES WITH STANDING, THEREBY PROVIDING US WITH MANY PERSPECTIVES THROUGH WHICH TO ASSESS THE EVIDENCE.
- YOU HEARD ME REMARK, ON MANY OCCASIONS, THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO BALANCE THE PRINCIPLES OF THOROUGHNESS AND FAIRNESS WITH THAT OF ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY.

- EVER MINDFUL THAT THIS IS A PUBLICLY FUNDED PROCESS, I BELIEVE THAT WE KEPT TO A RIGOROUS SCHEDULE, STARTING OUR DAY EARLY AND FINISHING LATE WHEN NECESSARY. THROUGHOUT, COUNSEL WAS PROVIDED WITH TIMELY DISCLOSURE AND SUMMARIES OF WITNESSES' ANTICIPATED EVIDENCE TO ASSIST WITH THEIR PREPARATION.
- IT WAS A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE TO BALANCE THE DESIRE TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MR. GEORGE'S DEATH, ON THE ONE HAND, WITH THE OBLIGATION TO EXPLORE ONLY WHAT WAS NECESSARY TO MEET THE INQUIRY'S MANDATE, ON THE OTHER.
- I BELIEVE WE SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATED THAT PATH.
- IN MY VIEW, THERE ARE OTHER MEASURES AGAINST WHICH A PUBLIC INQUIRY CAN AND SHOULD BE EVALUATED.
- YOU WILL RECALL THAT AT THE OUTSET OF THESE HEARINGS, I IDENTIFIED THE GOALS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND, THROUGH EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING, THE GOAL OF HEALING. IT WAS MY DESIRE THAT AT THE END OF THIS PROCESS, THE INQUIRY WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC'S UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH THE SPECIFIC INCIDENT OF SEPTEMBER 1995 AND OF THE FACTORS OR CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO IT.
- PUBLIC EDUCATION IS NOT ONLY ACHIEVED THROUGH THE COMMISSIONER'S FINAL REPORT. THE PUBLIC HAS ALSO BENEFITED FROM THE PERSPECTIVES SHARED BY THE MANY WITNESSES, WHO TESTIFIED PUBLICLY, AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NUMEROUS EXPERT WITNESSES, THAT HAVE ALSO BEEN CALLED TO TESTIFY.
- IN ADDITION, THE PUBLIC HAS HAD ACCESS TO THE MANY RESEARCH PAPERS, CONSULTATIONS, FORUMS AND DISCUSSION PAPERS ON THE POLICY ISSUES BEING EXPLORED BY THE COMMISSION, WHICH WILL GUIDE MY RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO AVOID VIOLENCE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES, IN THE FUTURE.
- THESE HEARINGS HAVE NOT ONLY PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO HEAR, BUT FOR WITNESSES TO SHARE SOME FOR THE FIRST TIME - THEIR VIEW OF EVENTS IN 1995.
- I WAS ALWAYS AWARE OF THE FACT THAT RE-VISITING EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE OVER 10 YEARS AGO MAY RE-OPEN WOUNDS AND RE-KINDLE FEELINGS AND TENSIONS. BUT I WAS ALWAYS ALSO HOPEFUL, THAT THROUGH THIS PROCESS, THE INQUIRY MIGHT LEAVE THE COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED A LITTLE "BETTER" THAN THEY WERE WHEN WE BEGAN.

- I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE RESPONSE TO THIS INQUIRY: BY THE THANKS FROM SOME WITNESSES FOR HAVING HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY, BY THE EXPRESSIONS OF HOPEFULNESS BY THOSE AFFECTED FOR A BETTER FUTURE AND BY THE STEPS TAKEN BY SOME PARTIES TOWARD THAT END.
- THE HEARINGS IN FOREST DEALT WITH THE FIRST PART OF MY MANDATE AND, UNDERSTANDABLY, PUBLIC ATTENTION WAS FOCUSED ON THEM.
- HOWEVER, IN ADDITION TO EXAMINING WHAT HAPPENED AT IPPERWASH IN 1995, MY MANDATE INCLUDES MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO AVOID VIOLENCE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.
- AS YOU KNOW, THE COMMISSION HAS DONE MUCH POLICY WORK WHILE THE EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY. IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE MATERIALS PRODUCED AND COLLECTED UNDER OUR POLICY AND RESEARCH UMBRELLA WILL PROVE TO BE A LASTING LEGACY OF THE IPPERWASH INQUIRY.
- RELATIONS BETWEEN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS, POLICE AND OTHER SEGMENTS OF THE CANADIAN POPULATION CONTINUE TO DOMINATE THE PUBLIC AGENDA AND ARE LIKELY TO DO SO FOR SOME TIME. I HOPE THAT OUR WORK IN THESE AREAS WILL PROVE TO BE OF GREAT VALUE IN ADDRESSING ONGOING AND FUTURE DISPUTES.
- MUCH OF THE MATERIAL IS POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE AND WILL, OF COURSE, BE CONTAINED IN MY FINAL REPORT ALONG WITH MY RECOMMENDATIONS. I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE MR. NYE THOMAS, THE COMMISSION'S DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESEARCH AND HIS TEAM, NOELLE SPOTTON AND JEFFREY STUTZ, FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK IN THIS AREA.
- MANY OF THE PARTIES HAVE ATTENDED SOME OF THE SYMPOSIA AND OTHER MEETINGS WE ORGANIZED. IN THE PAST FEW DAYS NEW DISCUSSION PAPERS HAVE BEEN POSTED THAT I HOPE WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE PARTIES WHEN MAKING THEIR FINAL SUBMISSIONS.
- THE AREAS COVERED INCLUDE ISSUES AFFECTING THE POLICING OF ABORIGINAL OCCUPATIONS AND PROTESTS, ABORIGINAL PEOPLES AND POLICING AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND RELATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND POLICE. THESE, ALONG WITH TREATY RIGHTS AND

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS ISSUES, ARE CENTRAL TO MANY ABORIGINAL DISPUTES.

- A REFLECTION ON THESE HEARINGS WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT MENTION OF THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY LEGAL COUNSEL.
- I WANT TO RE-ITERATE MY APPRECIATION TO THE PARTIES' COUNSEL FOR THEIR CO-OPERATION THROUGHOUT THESE TWO YEARS AND FOR THE FACT THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE MANY DIVERSE INTERESTS, A STRONG SENSE OF CIVILITY AND RESPECT, FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR THE PROCESS, HAS BEEN MAINTAINED.
- I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE COMMISSION'S LEGAL TEAM, UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF LEAD COUNSEL, DERRY MILLAR.
- ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVES OF A PUBLIC INQUIRY IS TO RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, BY BRINGING TO LIGHT ALL THE IMPORTANT FACTS AND DOING SO IN AN OPEN AND IMPARTIAL MANNER. COMMISSION COUNSEL ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF DOING WHAT IS NECESSARY TO MEET THIS OBJECTIVE.
- IN MY VIEW, THE SKILL AND INTEGRITY THAT MR. MILLAR BROUGHT TO THIS INQUIRY ESTABLISHED THE STANDARD FOR HIS OWN TEAM AND SERVED AS GUIDEPOSTS FOR ALL OF US. FURTHERMORE, I BELIEVE WE HAVE GONE A LONG WAY TO EARNING THE PUBLIC'S CONFIDENCE IN BOTH THE INQUIRY INTO THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1995 AND THE INQUIRY PROCESS ITSELF.
- MR. MILLAR WAS SUPPORTED BY A STELLAR TEAM OF LAWYERS AND INVESTIGATORS.  
AT THIS TIME, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY THANKS TO MS. SUSAN VELLA, MR. DON WORME, MS. KATHERINE HENSEL, MS. MEGAN FERRIER, MS. REBECCA CULTLER AND JODIE-LYNN WADDILOVE, WHO IS NOW PRACTICING LAW IN OTTAWA, WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
- I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK OUR INVESTIGATORS LED BY INSPECTOR RICK MOSS OF THE RCMP, JERRY WOODWORTH, WHO RETIRED AFTER ALMOST 40 YEARS WITH THE RCMP, AND ANIL ANAND WHO WAS SECONDED FROM THE TORONTO POLICE SERVICE.
- IN MY VIEW NO COMMISSIONER HAS EVER BEEN BETTER SERVED THAN I HAVE BEEN BY THIS OUTSTANDING TEAM.

- WE WILL RESUME ON AUGUST 21 FOR THE PARTIES' ORAL SUBMISSIONS. WHICH WILL MARK THE OFFICIAL CONCLUSION OF THIS PART OF THE INQUIRY.

- IN THE MEANTIME, I HOPE THE SUMMER PROVIDES ALL OF US WITH SOME OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY, WHO HAVE PROVIDED US WITH MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT DURING THESE HEARINGS.

- THANK YOU.