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# **Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell**

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## Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

•(1110)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Order, please.

*Uplaakut.* Good morning.

I'd now like to open this meeting, meeting number 22, on Tuesday, March 8.

Our order of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), is a study on the slaughtering of Inuit dogs from the mid-1950s to the late-1960s.

I'm very pleased this morning to have a delegation from northern Quebec, from Nunavik. I'm also very pleased to have the Nunavut Sivuniksavut students here to listen to the witnesses this morning. I notice we have people from Baffin Island also.

I would like to welcome everyone to this meeting. *Tungasugiitsi.* Welcome to the meeting we're having with our aboriginal affairs committee.

I understand that the presentations will be in Inuktitut, with someone translating for them.

I believe Pita Aatimi, as president of Makivik Corporation, will do the opening remarks, and then we'll get to the witnesses.

*Eelaa?*

**Mr. Pita Aatami (President, Makivik Corporation):** *Nakurmiik marialuk. Uplaakut, ihunnasi.*

Thank you also, Ms. Chairperson and members of Parliament, for this opportunity to tell a story. It's not quite a story, but it actually happened.

I'm going to start off by saying I am Pita Aatimi. I am the president of Makivik Corporation. I represent the Inuit of Nunavik, known by southerners as northern Quebec.

I want to make some opening remarks about why we're here. We do a field trip to our 15 communities every other year, and when we did a field trip in 1999 we started hearing comments about a dog slaughter that happened in the late fifties and early sixties, and we wanted to dig further after starting to hear these comments that something had happened before we were born.

We decided to do an intensive documenting of people's stories about the dog slaughter. After 1999, after we had some more fact-finding missions and after we had all the information we thought we

needed, we wrote a letter to the Quebec government requesting a public inquiry. In turn, we also wrote a letter to the Government of Canada with our counterparts from Nunavut, who had a similar story to ours in Nunavik. We wrote a letter to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who was Nault at that time, and he referred our letter to the Solicitor General of Canada. He responded by saying that they had no record of any systematic dog killing in Nunavik, since all their documents were destroyed.

So right away, when they responded in that way I said, "How could you say that there was no systematic dog killing when your documents have been destroyed?"

We did an intensive interview of 150 people, documented it, even though there were more than 150 people who came forward. We thought we had sufficient information to move forward with this file, which we did. Since they came back with a negative response we debated about what else we could do. So we had a resolution passed at the ICC conference in 2002 to get support from all the Inuit of the world that if it all came down to nobody wanted to listen, we would go to the United Nations. We wanted to have another alternative, that if Canada wasn't listening, we'd go to the United Nations to tell the world about a slaughter that happened in northern communities, not just in Nunavik but also in Nunavut.

I won't go into detail, since I wasn't around when this happened, but we've brought some of our elders, who are going to tell you what happened. You will hear it from them what they saw happening with their own eyes in the late fifties and early sixties.

I am going to turn the mike over to George and he can start telling you the story. But what we've been requesting all along is a public inquiry so the story can be told, so people can actually tell their story of what happened. It just didn't pop out of thin air; it happened.

I want to make sure that people understand in Canada that there has to be a public inquiry on the wrong that was done to the Inuit.

We are going to show this video this evening at 6:30 at 180 Wellington, and I would invite you to see for yourself what the Inuit are saying.

So thank you very much for this brief opportunity to make an introduction, and I am going to pass the mike over to George. Lisa will be translating what George is saying in Inuktitut.

*Nakurmiik.*

•(1115)

**Mr. George Koneak (Elder, Makivik Corporation)(Interpretation):** First, I would like introduce who I am.

When the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development first came to Nunavik, I was employed by them from 1949 to 1966 as a translator and welfare officer.

By the time 1966 arrived, something terrible happened. In those days, Inuit used to stay at their family camps. They were dispersed in different areas of the land, making sure they were staying near their favourite hunting grounds, whether they be inland or by the sea.

So we have something to say today about something that happened in reality from a government decision. To try to diminish our numbers as Inuit, our dogs were being killed. I will not speak of the RCMP at that time because they were no longer there, but I will speak of the QPP. They told us, in their words, that a decision from Ottawa was that our dogs had to be killed. Some hunters had more dogs than others, but for some of us, our dogs were being shot one by one. When we asked, "But why?", no one could give me an answer. I was asking this question too, as an employee of the Department of Indian Affairs. There was no explanation.

And I wish to say a few more words. We we did try to resist at that time, for we didn't want all of our dogs killed; we didn't want to lose our dogs. One person, I remember, was even hugging his dog so it wouldn't be killed. There's also someone present here in this room who had one last dog left, and was holding this dog so it wouldn't be shot, but the police there told him very firmly to let go of that dog, and he had no choice. It is very regretful for us.

Up to today, even, the memory still seems fresh of that time. Hunters had no choice but to abandon their fishnets, their traplines that they had already set up, because from one day to the next, the dog teams that allowed them to bring them to the fishnets and the traplines no longer existed. They could no longer fetch firewood. At that time they didn't have wood houses and they needed firewood to keep warm. The houses didn't exist at that time, although some were already building some small wood houses from scrap wood.

They stayed in tents over the winter, however. So in springtime the dog teams were a very important means of transport for helping to bring the hunters to fetch firewood, because the sea doesn't have wood.

I have not much more to say. I will pass the word now to Mr. Watt, who has a few words to say.

• (1125)

**Mr. Johnny Watt (Elder, Makivik Corporation)(Interpretation):** My name is Johnny Watt. I am from Kuujjuaq. When the Qallunaat, that is to say the non-Inuit, first began to arrive on our land, it was first just the Hudson Bay Company. I am 79 years old today, and I began to work when I was 18 years old. I have experienced the arrival of the government and the HBC—the Hudson Bay Company—and even the RCMP. We had one lone officer who first arrived.

In the 1950s there were welfare officers or administrators working in our communities. They would take care of family allowance and the education of our children. Then in the 1960s it happened that the RCMP were replaced by the QPP, the Quebec Provincial Police. The federal government, however, remained as the administrator in our communities. I suspect that the federal government administrators ordered the QPP to shoot the dogs, as I have seen with my own eyes

a federal government engineer actually running around in the community looking for dogs to shoot.

The dogs were being killed for what seemed like no reason, for some reason that we could not understand.

I remember when the Inuit would arrive at the trading post, they would arrive by dog team, their sole means of transport. They would shop, and while they were shopping in the trading post they would have to place their dogs somewhere, to have them wait while they were shopping.

I remember one hunter coming in to trade. He finished all his shopping and began to pack up his sled while his dogs were harnessed, preparing to leave back to his family camp. One of his dogs was shot, even while it was harnessed. This is the way we have been treated—badly.

Inuit were also being threatened that they would lose family allowances if they didn't bring their children to the schools. So at that time they also began to gather and settle around the trading post to be near their children, who were going to the schools then on a permanent basis. With no dogs around, the social life just began to deteriorate at that time, with the increase of alcohol usage and just malaise in the society.

It has been said that the dogs were killing too many people, that the dogs were killing a lot of people and that they were dangerous. It's no reason to kill all the dogs, because not all the dogs are dangerous. Not all dogs attack people.

• (1135)

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** I would just add to what he said earlier about the man's dog being shot while he was still tied to the harness. Once the man found out that his dog had been shot, he took his gun and wanted to go and shoot the policeman's truck tires. When the policeman found out that he was going to shoot the tires, he was jailed for the night. He was just trying to give a message to the policeman: "You shoot my dogs. Let me see what you can do without your truck. Where are you going to go?" So for pointing his gun at the tires he had to spend the night in jail, but he had no more dog, and he had no more means of going back to his camp, to his family.

These are horror stories that we're hearing from people like Johnny: that people would go into the trading post, and while they were in the trading post their dogs would be shot without them even being consulted. I'm just adding more to what Johnny was saying about the dog that was shot, and one of the men, trying to do something about his dogs being shot, who ended up spending the night in jail for aiming his gun at the policeman's tires.

• (1140)

**Mr. Johnny Watt:** In my own experience, I owned a dog team for hunting and for trapping and for fetching firewood. Some of my own dogs were killed, although they were all tied. That day, at the end of the day, there was a knock on my door to show me the harnesses and to tell me to get the dogs and to get rid of them. That's my own experience.

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** One thing we forgot to mention that Johny said also is when he gave an example of Ski-Doo snow machines. One of the reasons the dogs were being shot was danger to the children and so forth. But dogs at that time were not a danger if they were not tied. They were always running freely before, until the non-native society came into the communities and starting asking that dogs be tied up. Their reasoning at that time was that they were killing a lot of people, but he gave the example of the snow machine: that the snow machine has killed more people than the dogs have. With snow machines, when they break down you can't go back into your community. When you're lost in a storm, it can't tell you where you are; you freeze to death. If you're starving, at least you had the backup of a dog as a possible something to eat. I just wanted to add a little bit further to what Johny was saying.

Since he's finished his testimony, let me just add some of the quotations from some of the people who are in this brief. One of the gentlemen mentions that a man is not a man without his dogs. We can say honestly, a family wasn't a family without its dogs. People became dependent on government, so they were waiting for welfare cheques to come in. Before that time, at least they could go out on the land—go trapping and fishing, go to the tree line to pick up their wood, and so forth. That was taken away from them. They had no more means of going after what they were used to. The few people who were lucky enough to have shacks would watch out their windows and just yearn to go out again, but they had no more means. They had to start relying on the people from the outside to make them survive.

That's why, when I mentioned that when the RCMP claims nothing like this happened, and they tell us that their documents have been destroyed.... How can they claim that, when hundreds of Inuit are telling us it was RCMP and QPP who shot the dogs, when there's only one person given a post to take care of four communities? Even engineers who were working for the federal government would be shooting dogs because they were given orders from Ottawa.

This is what we're being told by our elders, not just in Nunavik, but in Nunavut also. This was not an isolated case in Nunavik; it happened in the Arctic. I'm not sure whether it happened in Labrador. It might have, but we're not hearing anything. But it could have happened there also.

What I'd like to do, Madam Chairman, is put this part of our testimony in the brief we're submitting, and also the video that was produced to show the world the Inuit telling their story of what happened.

When I first heard about it, I was really, really angry at what was going on. Why did they do this? We were given all kinds of different reasons why they did it, but nothing concrete about why they did it. We've thought of different reasons—yes, maybe because of this—but nobody can honestly say why it was done. But it did happen.

I give myself as an example. When I was young, I used to walk to a lake with my parents to go fishing. There were only three people at that time who had snow machines. When we used to walk to this lake, I used to wonder, is it because we're poor that we don't have a snow machine? We had to walk hours and hours to go fishing to a lake. I finally asked my uncle, since my father had passed away by

that time, "Was my father's dog shot also? Is that why we used to walk to a lake?"

We have stories like this all over the Arctic, that people had no more means of transportation to get to their fishing and trapping grounds, as George said. People left their traplines. They couldn't go to their traplines any more. These are stories we're hearing from our elders.

● (1145)

Families were uprooted. Whole families would be affected by this, not just the man but the whole family. People started relying on the outside world, and as Johny said, they turned to alcoholism. It's like they lost a part of their being, because a dog was their life. Without a dog, as I said, a family wasn't a family. We started giving examples: if a Bedouin has no more camels, he's not going to survive in the desert. It was the same for us.

The government at that time—I'm not saying you people, but the government at that time—did something to the people. A wrong was done to the people of the Arctic, and this has to be rectified. Hopefully, through this committee we'll get a public inquiry.

Again, I invite you to come and watch the video that was produced with our elders talking about the hardship they had to go through because of what happened.

I also gave the example of the Japanese. During World War II, as you all know, they were interned in camps, and after fifty-odd years the Government of Canada acknowledged that there was a wrong done to the Japanese people. We're looking for the same thing. As the first peoples of this country and as Canadians, we want the same kind of treatment our fellow Canadians got, the Japanese, an apology and compensation, but the first thing we're looking for is an inquiry.

Thank you very much again for this opportunity, Madam Chair.

If you have any questions, we'll be prepared to answer them.

● (1150)

**The Chair:** Thank you. *Qujannamiik*.

What I'd like to do is what we normally do in a committee, go through a first round of questions. We'll start with the Conservative Party.

I think I'm just going to have time for one round of questions, because we have another witness who should be appearing before us also.

Mr. Lunn.

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be brief.

First of all, I would like thank all of you for coming to our committee and telling us your story.

We listened to your story, yet one wonders why there are no federal records in the documents of the RCMP. Apparently there are no records about your story.

I guess you're asking for an inquiry, but beyond the inquiry, I think it's quite apparent you're looking for the acknowledgement of and a public apology for—or something to that effect—the harm that's been brought to the Inuit people. My question specifically is, what is the resolution you're looking for beyond that, other than the public acknowledgement, which is obvious? Is there anything else you're trying to achieve? Obviously, you cannot undo what has been done, so where do we go from here? How do we move forward?

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Well, if I can, I'll answer that question, Gary. I thought it came to the point where it was clear on our side what we were looking for. We're looking for an apology; that's the number one thing we've been looking for since we started this process. An apology would go a long way toward curing some of the hurt the people went through.

Also, we're looking for some kind of compensation package for the families. I'm not talking about the population as a whole, but the families. And we have recorded, as I said earlier, at least 150 interviews. We figure there are anywhere from 200 to 250 families who went through the hardship of losing their dogs.

If the Government of Canada can't come up with a compensation package for the families, we've thought of different scenarios. Today we buy snow machines and canoes for our livelihood and we're heavily taxed. We're some of the highest-taxed citizens of Canada. We see our fellow Canadians in the south, fishermen and farmers in the south, who get things tax-free if they're going to use them for their livelihood. We're looking for the government to come up with different scenarios.

I hope I answered your question about what we're looking for on our side.

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** That's exactly what I was looking for.

I'm going to defer to the other members just because my time is short, Madam Chair. I know Mr. Cleary brought this matter before the committee, so I would like to leave him ample time.

**The Chair:** We will now go to Mr. Cleary from the Bloc, please.  
[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary (Louis-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Aatami, I'm very pleased to see you and your delegation again because I had the pleasure of travelling to your community, and meeting with the people there who had just seen the film for the first time. I will always remember that evening, because the film sparked great emotion amongst the population, as it spoke of things that they had heard about or had experienced for themselves. From that moment on, I said to myself that governments could simply not go on turning a deaf ear to a population that had been deeply wounded from what happened. The Bloc Québécois truly understands your demands and the fact that you seek recognition of the past.

I'd like to ask Mr. Aatami a question with respect to a letter he received from member of Parliament Lawrence MacAulay stating that everything was normal, that it was not so serious and that when police officers kill dogs, they have good reason to do so. Yet, this is totally contrary to the comments made by witnesses. Therefore, from that moment on, the Government of Canada that Mr. MacAulay represents, could not really help you because in fact, the government

was not listening to the right people: they only listened to police officers who told their side of the story. You are obviously calling for an investigation so that the truth can emerge and so that we have more than just police reports to go by, which are done verbally because everything else was destroyed.

Mr. Aatami, following this correspondence, were you received by the Minister of Indian Affairs or any other minister in a position to make decisions, or was the government simply content to reply by letter, without truly listening to you?

• (1155)

[English]

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Thank you very much, Mr. Cleary.

As I said, we did write letters to both governments, and we did get a response back from both governments denying that there was any systematic slaughter of Eskimo dogs. At the same time, in their response, they mentioned that all documentation related to that time from the RCMP files had been destroyed. I said earlier, how can you tell us that there were no systematic dog killings if your documentation has been destroyed? Would we have seen a smoking gun if they had not destroyed those documents related to the dog file?

Yes, we did meet with the Minister of Indian Affairs, or we tried to. I've tried with three different ministers now. I keep bringing it up, trying to get it open, but every time it's like the Minister of Indian Affairs passes the buck and says, "He's responsible". We're forever being passed around; nobody wants to acknowledge it. Yes, I have met with the minister and I've told him the story. We've given him the brief, so the Minister of Indian Affairs is aware of this file.

I hope that answers your question. We went through the proper channels. We've tried through the proper channels. We've tried through our MPs in the past. We've brought it to the House. It's been discussed in the House. Since there's no documentation, nobody wants to acknowledge that it happened.

My question to Canada is, if your documents are destroyed, how can you prove to me, when I have 150 people who have been interviewed.... Is that not clear enough for you, what these people are telling you? You have one person who was in an RCMP detachment in the north who said it didn't happen. You take one word against hundreds of people. I'm just talking about Nunavik now, but it also happened in Nunavut.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** Firstly, I would like to point out that we'll be screening the film tonight, in Room 242 of Wellington Building, at 6:30 p.m.. I invite you all to come meet us, if you wish to see the film.

According to the comments we received, families have been affected by this whole incident. Therefore, families were certainly deprived of a number of things: the ability to hunt, fish, and travel as they normally did.

At that point, did the government not help you somehow, somehow? For example, did it not find other means of transportation, if they didn't want the dogs to be used, when in fact, sled dogs were the only means of locomotion available? Did the government not try to find a solution to this situation? Had they not heard about it? Was it not even one of its concerns? Is there anyone who remembers what was done at the time the sled dogs were being slaughtered? Something was surely amiss.

• (1200)

[*English*]

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** I'll say it in Inuktitut, since we didn't have translation for them.

[*Witness speaks in his native language*]

Johnny is going to answer that question, Mr. Cleary.

**Mr. Johnny Peters (Vice-President, Makivik Corporation) (Interpretation):** Hello. My name is Johnny Peters, from Kuujuaq. I'm the vice-president of Makivik Corporation. I was born in Kangirsuk.

In those days I was a young boy. In Kangirsuk there were no churches, no Hudson's Bay Company, and no RCMP.

People would arrive once in a long while during the winter from Kuujuaq, and RCMP would arrive through Kangiqsujuaq, the RCMP with the long yellow stripes down their pants. There would also be Catholic or Anglican ministers travelling through our communities as they were going on their way to all the northern communities as missionaries.

In those days—and you will understand this very clearly from our submission, from this document—there was no other means of transport except for our dog teams, our dog sleds. They would bring the RCMP around to the communities. Even Canada Post was using dog teams as their means of bringing mail.

As Inuit, what shocked us was that after having used our dog teams to help bring them around, to help them travel, the RCMP decided to kill all our dogs. We did not ask for our dogs to be killed, so why?

• (1205)

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Mr. Cleary, you asked a question about whether they provided any other mode of transportation or wanted to help. As far as I know from hearing the elders, nobody wanted to provide any kind of assistance. They were ready to give you a snow machine for killing your dogs off. That's why I mentioned that Inuit started relying on the non-native society. Because they had no more means of transport to get their food and so forth, they started relying on the outside for their livelihood. Nothing was given to or offered to the Inuit in return for losing their dogs.

I hope that answers your question.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Cleary.

We'll now go on to Mr. Martin, of the NDP.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to all the witnesses, especially the elders who are here with us.

I'd like to recognize and acknowledge how powerful it is for you to make your presentation to us in your own language, because I believe what we're dealing with here is a cultural issue or a failure of the Government of Canada to acknowledge the cultural importance of the sled dog in your history and in your culture. What I'm understanding from this issue is that there seems to be a cultural disconnect. There was an appalling lack of cultural sensitivity by those who implemented this bizarre policy of trying to annihilate the dogs you relied upon.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Cleary for bringing this issue forward today on your behalf and for using his political influence to have us deal with this cause today.

I'd also like to recognize a former member of Parliament, Guy St-Julien, the former member who represented the Nunavik area and has tried on your behalf to raise this in Parliament with members of Parliament for many years. We should acknowledge that at this hearing.

This isn't the first time the Government of Canada has been responsible for some catastrophic social engineering experiment. Indian residential schools come to mind as another glaring example of insensitivity.

Other than just taking what you tell us as information—and for the record, I believe your side of the story as to what happened there—in the absence of any documentation, in the absence of the RCMP being able to produce any formal policy or written history, it then falls to relying on the veracity of the eye witnesses who were present, who saw it happen. I suppose it comes down to whether we believe your side of the story or whether we believe the undocumented version of one or two individuals on the other side of the story.

I know I should be coming to a question, and I'm framing this in that way. Can you think of any conceivable justification or policy that may have been going through their minds that would justify getting rid of your dogs? Was it some threat to public health, some risk to personal safety? What do you think could have possibly been going through their minds to implement such a disastrous and offensive policy?

I apologize for the length of my question.

• (1210)

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Thank you, Mr. Martin, for the question.

I guess the obvious answer on my side would be that this is why we're looking for a public inquiry, so that we can answer these questions. Without any documentation on hand to prove.... On our side, Inuit don't have a written history. They're a verbal people, so anything that happens is always verbal. Today, since we're in this age of computers and so forth, it's all written down now, but nobody took notes when it happened. At that time, they didn't really have any pens and paper to write it down anyway. I hope that is why we're giving you this presentation, this testimony from some of our elders. I hope you will believe the 150-odd people we've interviewed and have documented. It's not just a story. It did happen. That is why we want these questions raised and answered through a public inquiry.

Why did it happen? What is the reason why they did it? It's hard to say. We're hearing rumours that it was for safety and to settle the people in the communities. The main two things that kept popping up were that it was for safety but that at the same time they wanted the Inuit to settle in communities so that the children would go to school.

I wish I could answer why they did it. Some of the gentlemen here have asked that question many times over and over. Why? You heard Mr. Peters ask, "Why did they do it?" Nobody knows that answer. Maybe at a public inquiry it would be answered, but I can't even give you that assurance that it would be answered. But we need a public inquiry to ask some of the questions that would be raised through an inquiry.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Martin.

We now have Roy Cullen.

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be splitting my time with my colleague, Lloyd St. Amand. I'm not actually a full-time member of the committee.

Thanks very much to all of you for coming here.

One of the challenges that occurs to me is that these events, the way you've described them, would have occurred 50 years ago. The RCMP would normally get rid of certain files in any case, so there might not be a lot of documentation in their files. As you say, your society has more of a verbal history.

I gather there is some information in the RCMP files, and that information does not support the notion that there was a deliberate policy to eliminate the Inuit dogs. The one part I have difficulty understanding or comprehending is the motivation—and you touched on this earlier—for the RCMP to eliminate the Inuit dogs. The way you've described it, that essentially ended up ruining some of the economic livelihood of these people. If you're looking at it in terms of a federal policy, even from the point of view of economic and social policy, it would not have made any sense for the federal government to pursue such a policy.

My impression—and it's just an impression—is that some dogs must have been shot because of some epidemic of distemper, or perhaps some dogs were causing some harm. But as you pointed out, not every dog would have been attacking humans, and some of the mechanized equipment probably has more potential than dogs to kill people. Other than dogs that were ill, had distemper, or were clearly violent, I can't imagine what would cause the RCMP to go around exterminating the dogs of the Inuit people. I have a lot of difficulty with that.

Just to wrap up, if it's a question of an inquiry—I think Mr. Cleary and Mr. Bellavance would understand this particularly—this would be under the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General of Quebec.

I guess I have one question for you. Have you been able to locate any RCMP officers, or Sûreté du Québec officers, who were around at that time who confirm or corroborate what you're saying? Otherwise, it's your verbal history that you're alleging or saying, against a lack of documentation.

I'll just leave it at that, Madam Chair. I don't know if anyone wants to respond.

● (1215)

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** I would like to respond to that, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Cullen. As you say, it was a long time ago. Since there are no records of any systematic dog killing, it's like we're trying to prove to the rest of Canada that one RCMP person posted in one of our communities.... It's almost saying that we're liars, that it's a story. It is not a story.

Even though we're a verbal people, these gentlemen who are sitting here with me went through the dog killings. They saw them with their own eyes. You heard them saying, "Don't shoot my dog". People were even hugging their dogs. Without consent, without even consulting the owners of the dogs.... How can you say—

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** I'm not suggesting you are lying, but people may have misunderstood why dogs were being killed. If a dog had distemper or was violent....

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** I just hope you listened to some of the testimony this morning. Among people going to the trading posts no dogs that were rabid would be used; they would be killed instantly. People knew about their dogs; they were part of them. If you go to shop at a trading post, while your dogs wait for you to come out from your shopping, and when you come out you find that they've already been shot, what is that? You ask yourself the question, why would they do that? Why were they shooting dogs? We want to look into this.

As for the question of the Solicitor General of Quebec, it's not just Quebec, it's Canada also. You heard that the RCMP were involved. The Department of Indian Affairs was giving orders to the people living in the north to kill dogs. Dogs were being shot while they were tied. Dogs were being shot while they were beside their shacks. In the brief there's even a mention of shotgun pellets going into the shacks. That's how close they were when shooting the dogs; while they were still tied they were shooting dogs.

I hope you can watch the video and read the whole brief and get a good sense of what the people are saying. To pass the buck that it was just Quebec, we won't accept that, because it was both. The RCMP were there first. They started it off. Then the QPP took over from the RCMP. They kept doing the same thing. But it started with the RCMP.

**The Chair:** Mr. St. Amand, you have a bit of time.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.):** I take it, Mr. Aatami, without in any way sounding disrespectful toward you personally, whatever happened or did not happen in the 1950s and 1960s happened or didn't happen well before you were born. Is that fair to say?

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** I was in the tail end. As I said earlier—

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** What is your date of birth, sir?

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** It was 1960.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** All right.

As I understand, the first official complaint was initiated in the year 2000. Is that the case?



•(1220)

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** We started hearing about this in 1999, so we started to do an intensive process of transcribing the people's comments and so forth.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** You started hearing about this in 1999—

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Yes.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** —some 40, 45 years after the events. Correct?

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Yes.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** You've indicated that the Inuit are a verbal people. To your credit, you are. Why the wait of 40 or 45 years? If it's a community that basically communicates verbally, surely it's most peculiar that it would be 40 or 45 years after the fact that you first heard about this. What's the explanation there?

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** The only explanation I can give to that is—unfortunately, I'm going to have to say this—it's your laws, your policies that we've had to adapt to. They weren't aware of what rights they had under your laws. If they would have known their rights at that time, they would have spoken out right there and then. But since they weren't aware of your laws, your regulations, and so forth, nobody knew what to do. They were very intimidated by the non-native society. They were sometimes very scared to speak out when there was a non-native person present in the community. It's like they were gods to the Inuit, they had all these goods that they would bring from the south, and if they could produce all these goods they must be higher than us.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** With respect to Mr. Koneak and Mr. Watt, both of whom seemed clear, in terms of the federal government being involved, what we have to go on is Mr. Koneak saying the QPP person or persons not named told somebody in the community that it was a decision from Ottawa that the dogs had to be killed. That's one very slender thread of evidence. And we have Mr. Watt, to his credit, saying that he suspects that the QPP were ordered by the federal government to shoot the dogs.

What is there of substance to indicate that the federal government was in any way involved in these incidents? Is there anything?

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** I don't know if it got lost in the translation. George was explaining he was a translator for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, which was the federal government. He was a translator for the Government of Canada and he heard the Indian Affairs people giving the mandate to the QPP to shoot the dogs. If he's working for the Government of Canada and he's been told and he's hearing right from the horse's mouth, if you want to call it that, that they're being given the mandate by Canada to shoot....

You'll also be hearing in a couple of days from our counterparts from Nunavut, who had RCMP in their jurisdiction, who went through a similar thing. They didn't have any Quebec police. You'll also be hearing from those people in a couple of days that it was the RCMP who started it. In my area, since I'm in the province of Quebec, it was the QPP who finished it after having been given the mandate from Canada to go ahead and shoot the dogs.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, we've run out of time.

I want to thank the witnesses for coming this morning.

[*Chair speaks in her native language.*]

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to listen to your point of view and an opportunity for the members of the committee to ask questions to further understand the issue.

We are now completing our first hour of presentations, so I want to thank all of you for being here with us today. We'll certainly take what you've said to us to heart.

[*Chair speaks in her native language.*]

**Mr. Pita Aatami:** Thank you also, on behalf of the Inuit delegation that I'm here with for this opportunity. Thank you to the MPs for listening to the testimony from our elders. I hope something can be done. We're very hopeful.

Again, we invite you to come and watch the video this evening.

Thank you very much. *Nakurmiik.*

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to suspend for a minute just to get the table ready for the next witness.

•(1224)

(Pause)

•(1230)

**The Chair:** Good morning, everyone. I'd like to get back to our committee meeting for the next hour.

We have before us Mr. Kevin Vickers, from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I just want to take this opportunity to let you know that all of us are certainly feeling what the RCMP is feeling these days with the tragedy that happened last week. Our thoughts are with you all.

Welcome to this committee meeting. I'd like to give you an opportunity to make your opening remarks, and maybe have a round of questioning from the committee members.

Mr. Cleary.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** I have a point of order, Madam Chair. I simply want to remind you that we tabled a motion within the established timeline and this motion will be studied next Thursday. If you will allow me, I would like to read the motion for the benefit of those present.

We tabled a motion that reads as follows:

Notice given at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, March 7, 2005.

—That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development undertook a study on the slaughtering of Inuit sled dogs in the North between 1950 and 1970; that, to get to the bottom of the matter, the Committee request that the government appoint, before April 15, 2005, a Superior Court judge to inquire into the matter; and that this individual submit a report to the government, the Committee and the Speaker of the House of Commons three (3) months following his/her appointment.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cleary.

You were just reading out the motion this morning to let us know?

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** Exactly.

[English]

**The Chair:** All right, thank you.

Mr. Vickers, please.

**Mr. Kevin Vickers (Director General, National Contract Policing Branch, Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Good day, everyone.

•(1235)

Thank you very much for your very kind words, Madam President. I'll get right at it. I know the time is passing quickly.

My name is Chief Superintendent Kevin Vickers, and I'm the officer in charge of the national contract policing branch for the RCMP's community, contract, and aboriginal policing services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issue before us, the alleged systematic destruction of Inuit sled dogs by law enforcement personnel in northern Quebec and Baffin Island between 1950 and 1975.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police maintained 11 detachments in that geographic area in those days. In all of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, there were just over 100 RCMP members stationed at any given time. Their role was to provide for the safety and security of the communities they were assigned to serve. As a police force of jurisdiction, the RCMP was responsible for imposing both territorial and provincial statutes in addition to federal laws.

However, as is often the case in these isolated locations, the members performed a wide variety of non-police services, such as administering first aid, distributing welfare, keeping vital statistics, resolving disputes, sharing their government-issued provisions in hard times, and relevant to our discussions today, helping to inoculate sled dogs against disease, or in even one instance, providing breeding stock for local dog teams.

The question of systematic government-sanctioned destruction of sled dogs has been raised in the past. While most police files from that period have been destroyed, some remain. In a search of historical records by the RCMP and the Solicitor General in 2000, no information was found to indicate the existence of any policy regarding the destruction of sled dogs.

Furthermore, there are no records to indicate any arbitrary killing of dogs in Nunavik. The Solicitor General corresponded with representatives of the northern Inuit communities at that time to inform them of the results of the examination. During the course of the review, anecdotal accounts were found from police officers who were serving in northern regions at that time about instances when stray or abandoned dogs were occasionally destroyed due to disease or because of neglect on the part of the owners. The territorial government announced a dog ordinance in those years addressing the issue of sled dogs running loose in the communities.

To prepare for this presentation, we located half a dozen retired members of the RCMP who served in those areas in those years. The members had sled dogs of their own, and when it became evident that the dog teams in the community were faring much worse due to

food shortages, they often would order extra provisions to share with them.

RCMP members frequently provided inoculations against disease to sled dogs throughout the territory. It appears that such actions were taken at the request of local government and community residents. One retired member we spoke to said that each summer, a supply boat would bring a shipment of inoculations that were administered every year to every dog. Another said that when disease and starvation had decimated the local population of sled dogs, they brought in puppies and gave them to the community to assure that they had sufficient stock to maintain the necessary population for their survival.

The RCMP annual report of 1950 and 1951 indicates that a large number of RCMP sled dogs, 101 in fact in 1950, and 72 in 1951, were no longer required for service. In fact, they were condemned. The report goes on to say that there was a scarcity of game meat in some areas that led to starvation conditions, and that 50% of the dogs were lost due to starvation. The 1960 annual report indicates that distemper was rampant in some areas and up to 50% of the RCMP sled dogs had to be destroyed.

There is other historical data indicating that an epidemic in 1959-1960 wiped out 90% of the dogs in the southern portion of Baffin Island. Approximately 200 dogs died within a month and a half at Frobisher Bay. Dogs belonging to the RCMP were so emaciated and rundown that six that did not die were humanely destroyed.

These are statistical facts. What doesn't come through is the very real threat of aggression on the part of diseased animals and the danger the community was therefore exposed to.

RCMP members took this threat very seriously. The members were quite aware of the impact the loss of dogs had on their owners, but the larger threat could not be ignored. Of course, it was often the community members themselves who would approach RCMP officers and ask them to perform this duty.

The destruction of stray or suffering animals by police is a necessary function accepted in law as a human practice. It is unfortunate that the necessity and reason for these actions being undertaken in the specific circumstances may not have been thoroughly explained to the residents. This may have led to confusion and resentment, borne from a lack of understanding as to the long-term and wider implications of an epidemic among dog populations, as well as to the threat this posed to residents of the north.

Sometimes, RCMP members' duties forced them to perform actions that may have appeared destructive and inexplicable to youngsters who observed them. Those youngsters are now senior citizens whose memories of the losses their families had to endure may still cause them pain. Through the interviews we conducted and research into historical records, I can tell you that the overarching attitude of RCMP members serving in the north at the time toward the population was one of support and service beyond the requirements of their specific police duties.

I again wish to thank the standing committee for the opportunity to speak to these issues on behalf of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We will now start with Mr. Gary Lunn for the Conservative Party, for the first round of questions.

• (1240)

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you very much, Chief Superintendent Vickers, for your testimony.

I don't have any questions with respect to this. I appreciate your taking the time to try to source out the actual RCMP members who were in the community. This is something we're going to have to discuss at future meetings.

Let me just close by taking the opportunity to say that our thoughts and prayers are with you and all of your colleagues in the force during this very difficult week. We do appreciate all the work your comrades do for us throughout this entire country.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll now go on to Mr. Cleary from the Bloc, please.  
[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Vickers, your report seems too rosy to me, especially since we're aware of the other side of the coin. Your testimony is light years away from testimony presented by the Inuit people. As a result, we are forced to ask ourselves who is right, because we only have testimonies to go by.

On the other hand, you also say that there were anecdotal accounts. What I heard is not anecdotal. In my opinion, there is a population that is reporting and reliving moments which are not anecdotal. We are talking about the loss of their lifestyle, the loss of their means of locomotion, the loss of their ability to support themselves, etc. An entire culture was at stake. If for some, this story is anecdotal, for others, it is not.

You will understand that to hear talk of anecdotal accounts is hard to swallow for Inuit groups, when they are insisting on obtaining apologies. This account, for me, is unsatisfactory.

I find it strange that you are trying to defend what happened during that period, even more so when you tell us that documents were destroyed. You kept the documents that suited your needs. Documents supporting the interests of the Inuit population were destroyed and documents which served the interests of the RCMP were kept, and they are being used. Once again, that is a display of bias.

In your remarks, I would not have liked to see you blame the governments, but I would have liked to see you understand things from the population's perspective... They do not want you to state that the RCMP did not do its job, the population is simply asking that the RCMP recognize that some of its actions hurt this population and left it scarred. That is what I gather. Quite honestly, I admit I would have liked to hear you speak along those lines rather than hearing you defend what I deem indefensible.

Consequently, I would like you to collaborate with us. Our goal is not to blame anyone, but to make sure that this population feels respected. This situation is perhaps anecdotal for some people, but for the Inuit, it is not anecdotal. This issue is extremely important for the people I've met and for those I've heard today.

To shrug it off would not be a wise thing to do, especially since we know all sorts of things happened at that time. Inuit populations have suffered enormously from what occurred.

I would have preferred to see you take a more helpful attitude, to help the Inuit people, and to demonstrate that they were indeed "mistreated". I don't know how you can do this.

• (1245)

I believe that it would be important for the Inuit people to complete your information, which seems to have been prepared by someone—perhaps not yourself—who is trying to cover their tracks. Nobody's tracks have to be covered, we simply want to get to the bottom of this issue. I would like to see your position more in keeping with ours. Above all, I would have liked to hear you say that you will facilitate our work, and demonstrate that certain things were done, even if there was no intention to ruin a culture.

You are certainly right on certain points. I don't believe people slaughtered the dogs for the pleasure of it. I don't believe it was done for this purpose. But one fact remains: an entire population that was subjected to this kind of thing has been scarred. It is not surprising that these people experienced problems caused by such actions. One cannot imagine what it means to be deprived of one's sole means of locomotion, etc. If you were deprived, if we were deprived, of a car or any other mode of transport, we would certainly be taken aback. That is how I see this. Think about it. You can answer me if you wish, or not, but think about it.

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** Firstly, I want to tell you that I greatly appreciated your question and comments. I believe you talked about human respect and dignity. For the RCMP, and in this case specifically, respect and dignity are of the highest importance. It is obvious that something happened to their dogs during the 1950s and 1960s. For my part, I spent 10 years in the Canadian far north, where I was very much involved with the community as I distributed drugs to 2,000 to 3,000 dogs throughout my career. At the RCMP, it is common practice to get involved in the community by helping people, and not by hurting them. We have to work together with the community. It is the tradition of the RCMP.

As I said during my presentation today, around 1959 or 1960, we noticed that a catastrophe was occurring with respect to the dogs of the Canadian far north: 90 per cent of the dogs disappeared, dogs belonging to the Inuit as well as the RCMP. Of course, something serious had happened. I believe the testimonies of the witnesses today. We have to find out the reason why dogs were killed during this period. In my opinion, it would be difficult to know exactly what happened with the exhibits available, but as I've told you, members of the RCMP who were stationed in that area during the time are still alive; perhaps we should invite those people to appear as individuals before the committee.

I also want to say that if the RCMP did anything to hurt the Inuit, today I would like to offer my apologies on behalf of the RCMP. These acts committed by our organization are not acceptable. They are completely at odds with the reasons why we have served and continue to serve our communities, in the past and in the present.

Members of the RCMP who worked in Canada's far north during this period—these members have been identified—did a lot to improve the prevailing situation at the time: they administered inoculations and gave out drugs to the Inuits' dogs, and assisted in birthing puppies in order to strengthen the canine population throughout this time period. I'm not here to defend the members of the RCMP who worked in that area at the time, but to share with you information that we gathered during our research. I also want to tell you that if you need any further assistance from the RCMP, we are here to help you.

•(1250)

[English]

**The Chair:** We have time for a short question.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** Thank you for your answer. The conclusion I'm coming to, is that you are going to collaborate 100 per cent with the investigation that we are calling for in this motion.

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** Of course, that is clear.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cleary.

Because the Conservatives passed some of their time on to the other questioners, I was a little more generous with the time.

Next is Mr. Martin for the NDP.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I won't use all of the time allocated to us as well.

Commissioner, in your testimony you acknowledge that 90% of the dogs on southern Baffin Island were wiped out, in your terminology, and you went on to say that clearly something did happen.

We heard testimony today from eye witnesses from various regions that something did happen, and it was a systematic slaughter of their dogs. They claim to have 150 such witnesses documented as saying there was a systematic slaughter of their dogs, whereas you paint quite a different picture, that from time to time your people may have made a determination that a dog was sick and had to be put down.

Wouldn't you agree that people who have used sled dogs for thousands of years were probably a pretty good judge of whether a dog was sick enough that it had to be put down, and that the arbitrary decision of a person who has probably only used sled dogs for a few months shouldn't weigh as much as the opinion of an expert who has used sled dogs for generations? Why would the RCMP even feel justified to make the determination, for the well-being of the residents, that this dog should live and this dog should die when the actual owner of those dogs was comfortable with them? Doesn't that smack of some kind of colonial arrogance?

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** I think it's very important to realize that almost all of the RCMP dogs succumbed as well during that period of time due to the epidemic in 1959-60. I think as well, from speaking with the six members we've identified, it's very important for the committee to take into consideration that the RCMP officers were providing food and rations to the Inuit people at that time. They were giving medicine to their dogs and inoculating their dogs on an annual basis and providing breeding stock to the Eskimos.

•(1255)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** We do have two very conflicting stories here.

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** There are very different things here. I have no difficulty with the evidence of the Inuit presenters this morning. The only thing that really troubles me here, and what we really have to focus on, is whether we can get some evidence as to what the magnitude of that epidemic was in the late 1950s as to the destruction of dogs.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I'm having trouble understanding how documentation disappeared. I come from Winnipeg, and we have Northwest Mounted Police documentation from 1885, never mind 1965 and 1975. I don't understand why this documentation has disappeared. RCMP documentation is highly valued by archivists, especially the records of the outposts in the far north, where that was essentially the only documentation of what was happening socially, culturally, and economically in those regions. We rely on that documentation. How come this particular issue has disappeared?

We've all read Farley Mowat's *People of the Deer*. We know a bit about the history of trying to bring people in off the land. Could it not be that there was a misguided policy on the part of the government that in order to get these people off the land and clustered into what we view as modern settlements, one of the solutions would be to kill all of the dogs? Does it not ring true to you that this could in fact have been a policy that we're now embarrassed about and it has conveniently disappeared from the records?

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** All I can say is that the six RCMP officers we spoke to in our preparations for our presentation today have no recollection or evidence to support what you've just suggested.

With regard to the collection and retention of records, there are strict federal government laws as to what will be retained and what will not be retained, and we as a government agency have to respect and abide by those laws. If in fact there was material that was germane to this question, it's very unfortunate that such material would be lost. We're not saying that the material existed or did not exist, just simply that during the research of our files, we found nothing that would support any allegation that there was some federal government philosophy or public policy that these dogs would be destroyed.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Well, you're saying that your search failed to reveal any such documentation. Others have said—and I believe in your own document it said—that records from that period have been destroyed. In other words, it implied or led me to believe that there was some material that may have made reference to this, but it no longer exists. That's quite a difference.

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** And it would be pure speculation on my part to answer that question as to whether it didn't or did exist.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Martin.

We now have Mr. Valley from the Liberal Party.

**Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thanks for coming today, Chief Inspector Vickers.... Chief Superintendent. I didn't mean to demote you.

We're talking about a different time and place, many decades ago, and conditions none of us sitting around this table right now can understand. We've heard testimony from some before. The conditions they lived under and worked in were far different from those we hear about now.

I do have some experience with community policing. I spent some years on a board back in my hometown. We talked a lot about community policing and the values of it. The officers who served in the RCMP back in those days were the first ones who brought it about. They understood community policing because, as I understand it, they moved into communities, often by themselves, lived there isolated, out of contact. They were part of the communities, as I understand history, and they used dogs. Anyone who has a love of dogs, as I do, understands this.

I don't think any of us believes the suggestion that they would go around just shooting dogs indiscriminately, but there were reasons for which dogs were destroyed. I'm just wondering if you can comment on the devotion or the commitment RCMP officers have to their community under those circumstances.

• (1300)

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** Well, sir, regarding these questions, first of all the philosophy of community-based policing is the very basis, is the very essence of what the RCMP is all about, and it has been since we've been a police force working with the community.

I can only answer your question on the basis of my own personal experience, and that is having served ten years in the Northwest Territories. I have personally inoculated thousands of dogs. I have personally witnessed dogs savagely attacking children. I've personally witnessed the incredible suffering that was the result of a wild

dog attack on a child. And I've personally been involved in many instances when I've exterminated packs of dogs in first nations communities.

I recently served in the community of Burnt Church, New Brunswick, in the year 2000. It was not uncommon and is still not uncommon today for the RCMP to receive complaints of packs of dogs that are posing a danger in the community. And though we're talking back in the 1950s and 1960s, I can tell you that it's still the practice of the RCMP to ensure the safety of the communities, and I personally have been involved in cases when I've exterminated dogs that were in the process of roaming within a community. As I mentioned to you earlier, I can give personal evidence of when I've witnessed dogs attacking children in first nations communities.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** And back when we were first discussing this, in the 1950s the RCMP would have been using dogs themselves, right?

**Mr. Kevin Vickers:** That's absolutely correct, yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. This brings us to the closure of our morning and noon session.

I want to thank all the witnesses who were here today. I know it's very difficult for us at times, in the year 2005, to imagine what it would have been like at the times we're talking about.

And you know, Inuit have gone through a tremendous amount of change in the very years we're talking about, and I think for us to be able to move forward we have to understand what people went through at those times. We, today, in our forties, are the ones who lived through a lot of that change. We remember what it was like when we really did not have control of our lives, and we didn't always understand the policies that came down from probably Ottawa at that time, before territorial government came into place, and before we even had the settlement councils and municipal councils of today.

So trying to put the two worlds together I think is sometimes very difficult for us to understand. And using today's judgment we could say that could not possibly have happened, but there are people who lived through maybe different interpretations of different policies. I think our job is to try to understand where the disconnect happened and to hear both sides of all stories, because I know there are many parts of our history that are very difficult for us to understand. So I hope hearing from the witnesses will give us a bit of an idea of what we have to hear from people to understand how we can move forward with some of the issues concerning the first peoples of Canada.

I very much want to thank the witnesses that were here before us today to try to give us a snapshot picture, in the little time that we had, of what issues this committee should be looking at. Again, I thank all of you for being here this morning and giving us your presentation. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Cleary.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

I have just noticed—as you will perhaps—that some of the witnesses we would like to see have not been summoned. There is no representative from the Department of Indian Affairs slated to appear. Yet, I believe that it would be important, because there is a political aspect here that we are ignoring completely, albeit involuntarily. There are scores of political questions to which there are no answers.

It would be necessary to invite political figures to appear, ideally the Minister of Indian Affairs. I suggest that you look into the possibility of inviting a few representatives. These people can perhaps shed light on the political side of the story. Similarly, perhaps we should add a few more appearances by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We are learning of a lot of things which deserve to be studied in greater detail. It would certainly be important to invite these people, even if it means allocating less time to each one of them.

Thank you.

• (1305)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The clerk and I were trying to see who could come on Thursday. Unfortunately, we haven't been successful yet, but we're working on the file.

Just for historical information, going back to 2000, the Minister of Indian Affairs did refer the question to the Solicitor General. So the clerk and I have been working on that, and we'll see what happens on Thursday. But we do have other witnesses on Thursday who will be appearing before the committee.

Again, thank you.

I adjourn the meeting now.

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