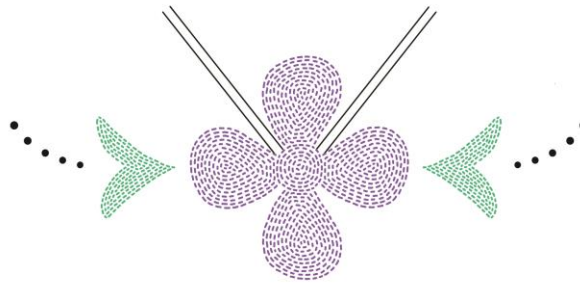


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale  
sur les femmes et les filles  
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process  
Part 1 Statement Gathering  
Prince George Conference & Civic Centre  
Prince George, British Columbia**



**PUBLIC**

**Tuesday February 6, 2018**

**Statement - Volume 226  
Karissa Joseph (Carson) & Nina Joseph,  
In relation to Bonnie Joseph**

**Statement gathered by Francine Merasty,  
Commission Counsel**

Coast Reporting Services Inc.

**II**  
**NOTE**

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

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**Commission Counsel: Francine Merasty**

**Documents submitted with testimony: none.**

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

**1**

1 [FEBRUARY 6, 2018, 9:24 A.M.]

2 FRANCINE MERASTY: All right. We're on the record.

3 The date is February 6, 2018. It's 9:24, and  
4 we're in Prince George. This is Francine Merasty with  
5 the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
6 Indigenous Women and Girls speaking on the record with  
7 Karissa Joseph - and her other name is Carson - and  
8 Nina Marie Joseph. And they're from the Yekooche  
9 First Nation and they've travelled here from ...

10 Where did you travel here from?

11 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Burns Lake.

12 FRANCINE MERASTY: Where? Burns Lake? Okay.

13 And you?

14 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I live here.

15 FRANCINE MERASTY: We're here in Prince George. And I've  
16 stated the date already.

17 Karissa Joseph, also known as Carson, you're here  
18 to voluntarily give your statement in the matter of  
19 your mother, Bonnie Joseph, who went missing October  
20 2007.

21 And present with us also in the room are ...?

22 JONI CONLON: Joni Conlon, guardianship worker with Carrier  
23 Sekani Family Services.

24 DENISE MCKINLEY: Denise McKinley, mental health  
25 clinician with Carrier Sekani Family Services.

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

2

1 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. Your statement will be audio  
2 recorded today and you have also allowed us to  
3 videotape your statement. Can you please confirm that  
4 you agree with this?

5 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: We agree.

6 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. And also as the legal guardian,  
7 you're ...?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm consenting, yeah.

9 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. And, Nina Marie Joseph, you're  
10 present with us in the room. Your statement will be  
11 audio recorded today and you've allowed us to  
12 videotape your statement. Can you please confirm that  
13 you agree with this?

14 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Yes, I agree.

15 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. So who wants to make their  
16 statement first?

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Not me.

18 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. You can start talking, Carson.  
19 You can begin anywhere.

20 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I just wish I knew my mom.

21 FRANCINE MERASTY: How old were you when your mother went  
22 missing?

23 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: It was in 2007 and I was seven.

24 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. And where did she go missing?  
25 Like ...

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

3

1 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: On the Highway of Tears.

2 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay.

3 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I don't know. All I know is that  
4 my mom told me that she was trying to get to  
5 Burns Lake for [S.]'s birthday and she was  
6 hitchhiking and she never showed up. That's what I've  
7 been told.

8 FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm. Can you tell us a little bit  
9 about what you know about your mother. Like, how she  
10 was as a person?

11 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I don't remember much of her.

12 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. So where was she living at the  
13 time this happened?

14 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Prince.

15 FRANCINE MERASTY: Prince George?

16 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: *(Moves head up and down)*.

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: *(unintelligible)*

18 FRANCINE MERASTY: And you guys were living all together?

19 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: At the time we were in a different  
20 foster home than we -- than the one she's in right  
21 now.

22 FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

23 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: We're with the Ministry now. Carrier  
24 Sekani at the time.

25 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. Well, we can let your sister talk

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

**4**

1           if you're nervous or shy.

2           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH:   *(Moves head up and down)*

3           FRANCINE MERASTY:   So you can begin sharing.   Like, we  
4           don't really have a script.   It's what the person  
5           wants to share with the Inquiry.

6           NINA MARIE JOSEPH:   (unintelligible) I don't remember  
7           anything much about our mom.   I don't know what to  
8           say.

9                        I just remember, like, when we were younger,  
10           we -- we all -- we all had to do, like, a whole bunch  
11           of DNA tests and stuff 'cause they found, like, stuff  
12           of our mom and -- yeah.   Other than that, I don't  
13           remember much about her.

14          FRANCINE MERASTY:   How old were you when your mom went  
15          missing?

16          NINA MARIE JOSEPH:   Uh ... I think nine.   Eight or nine.   I  
17          don't know.

18                        I'm two years older than you; right?

19          KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH:   *(Moves head up and down)*

20          NINA MARIE JOSEPH:   Yeah.

21          FRANCINE MERASTY:   And you said you were in foster care?

22          NINA MARIE JOSEPH:   Yes, with Karissa and [V.] before.

23                        Till I was at age 11.   And then we moved in -- well,  
24                        we switched from the Ministry to Carrier Sekani so  
25                        that we could live with our little sister, [S.].

**Statement - Public**  
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**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

5

1 FRANCINE MERASTY: How many kids did your mom have?

2 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Five. 'Cause there's [B.], there's  
3 me, there's Karissa, and [V.], and [S.].

4 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: (unintelligible)

5 FRANCINE MERASTY: And how long were you guys in care  
6 before your mom went missing?

7 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: That I couldn't tell you, 'cause I  
8 don't know when -- what age we went into care -- or I  
9 did.

10 FRANCINE MERASTY: Were you younger or ...?

11 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I don't -- I remember the first day,  
12 like, going to the foster -- or, yeah, the foster home  
13 in Prince George when I was younger. But I don't know  
14 age. All I remember is I was young.

15 FRANCINE MERASTY: And who told you about your mother when  
16 she went missing?

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Hmm ... maybe the Ministry? I don't  
18 know. Maybe our worker. I don't know. I don't  
19 remember.

20 FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you --

21 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Or I -- or I don't think we got told  
22 for a while. Like, we didn't get told, like, right  
23 away, like, when she got -- went missing.

24 FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm.

25 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I think it wasn't until, like, we were



**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

6

1           older they told us. Yeah.

2           FRANCINE MERASTY: And how did you feel about it?

3           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well, I was young. I didn't really ...

4           I don't want to, like, sound mean or anything, but I

5           didn't have, like, really any feelings, 'cause I

6           didn't really know her. So ... I mean, like, even

7           now -- I mean, I miss her and stuff, but I just didn't

8           know her enough to ... I don't know.

9                        But I'm here for my dad though, because he's

10           still struggling with Mom being missing, you know.

11           FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you want to tell us about that?

12           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: My dad?

13           FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

14           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well ...

15           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: [*One line redacted - personal*  
16 *information*].

17           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: No. [*One line redacted - personal*  
18 *information*].

19           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: 'Til he starts drinking again.

20           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: [*One line redacted - personal information*].

21           And also he's been drinking still. I'm still mad

22           about that, but ...

23                        Our dad has, like, a drinking problem. Ever --

24           like, 'cause of being in residential school. And then

25           it got, like, worse when our mom went missing. [*Five*

**Statement - Public**  
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**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

7

1           *lines redacted - personal information*]. He's still in  
2           pain though, but he's still drinking.

3           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: That's his fault.

4           FRANCINE MERASTY: So what residential school did your dad  
5           go to? Do you know?

6           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: [Indian Residential School 1].

7           FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay. And how long was he there?

8           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: That I don't know. That's all he told  
9           me was that he went to [Indian Residential School 1],  
10          him and Mom.

11          FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you know the reason why you guys got  
12          put into foster care?

13          NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I sort of have an idea 'cause, like, I  
14          got this letter from the government or whatever, like,  
15          when I aged out of, like, the many reasons why we were  
16          in care -- or got put into care.

17          FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm. Do you want to talk about that?

18          NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Kind of. But I kind of don't 'cause  
19          it's, like, harsh. [*One line redacted - confidential*  
20          *information*]. Well, I -- I don't know  
21          what he did to my -- like, Carson or [V.], [S.] or  
22          [B.], but I know what he did to me. And getting  
23          that letter was, like, hard.

24          KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Mom told me that when Dad -- when  
25          he said that Dad beat her, Mom told me that wasn't

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

8

1 true.

2 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well, I got a letter from the  
3 government.

4 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Mom said it's not true. She said  
5 that only [G.] did that.

6 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: She lied. I can give Mom the letter  
7 and she can read it herself.

8 [Nine lines redacted - confidential  
9 information].

10 FRANCINE MERASTY: So during this time, like, she was  
11 reported missing, is that still ongoing? Like, it's  
12 an open case?

13 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well, ever since, like, we, like,  
14 started doing, like, DNA tests -- like, we had, like,  
15 a certain detective and his name was Tom.

16 FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm.

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: And when I had a phone, I would get  
18 into contact with him every month. But, like,  
19 because, like, I don't have a phone, I don't really  
20 have any way of contacting him, so I haven't contacted  
21 him in about a year now.

22 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I contacted him.

23 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Like, I would always contact him to  
24 see -- get any updates or if he found anything. But  
25 usually when I'd ask him that, there was, like,

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

9

1 nothing really new.

2 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I still have his number in my  
3 phone.

4 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Hmm?

5 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I never deleted the number.

6 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: It might have changed. I don't know.

7 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Oh.

8 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Like, his number. I mean, you could  
9 try testing it.

10 FRANCINE MERASTY: So have you received counselling in  
11 regards to your missing mother?

12 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Yeah, I did. But it didn't, like,  
13 really help. So, like ... I don't know. I guess I  
14 went down my dad's path and I started drinking. And I  
15 was, like, drinking, like, heavily and everybody got  
16 worried about me. So I went to treatment last year  
17 for four months, and that really helped. I went to  
18 (unintelligible) Canyon.

19 FRANCINE MERASTY: That's good.

20 So who's the oldest in your family?

21 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: That would be my older brother,  
22 [B.].

23 FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

24 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: He's 22.

25 FRANCINE MERASTY: And what is he up to?

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

10

1 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well, he's in Prince now. We're going  
2 to see him later. We're going to visit him. 'Cause  
3 we -- well, they rarely get to visit him.

4 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: He's always busy.

5 FRANCINE MERASTY: We'll just take a break. Okay? All  
6 right. So it's 9:39 a.m. and we're going to take a  
7 break.

8 [PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 9:39 A.M.]

9 [PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 10:14 A.M.]

10 FRANCINE MERASTY: All right. We're back on the record  
11 here in Prince George. It's 10:14 a.m., February 6.

12 And did you want to add something else, Carson,  
13 to what we've been discussing?

14 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I'm pissed off because the  
15 investigators aren't -- I feel like they're not doing  
16 a very good job in looking for her. I feel like they  
17 just stopped because they forgot or something.

18 FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm.

19 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Yeah, I'm just pissed off 'cause  
20 they don't -- they don't keep us in the loop. They  
21 don't really talk to us any more. Well, they never  
22 really talked to us. And I'm just pissed about that.

23 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: But they're, like -- you got to  
24 remember there's, like, missing women. Like, not just  
25 native or First Nations, but everybody. That they're

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

11

1           probably -- they probably have their hands full.

2           (unintelligible)

3           FRANCINE MERASTY: And what police department is this?

4           Like, Prince George or ...?

5           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well, our, like, detective's from

6           Prince George. Like, he lives here.

7           FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you know his name?

8           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: His name is Tom.

9           FRANCINE MERASTY: Tom ...?

10          NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I don't know his last name.

11          FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay. And you've been in contact --

12                 like, he's been working on this case for how long?

13                 Like, since it started or ...

14          NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Yeah.

15          FRANCINE MERASTY: And then he updates you every - every  
16          month, you said? Until about a year ago.

17          NINA MARIE JOSEPH: A year or two ago. I think two years.

18          FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay. So a -- what's a

19                 recommendation you would make? Like, you said they --

20                 they don't contact you on a -- on a regular basis. So

21                 you're saying that --

22          KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I want more information. Like,

23                 when they get it, they just contact us right away.

24          FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. Well, that's good to know. Thank

25                 you for sharing that. Yeah.

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

12

1           I know on the way here that you talked to your  
2           social worker. Like, you were more open with her  
3           'cause you feel more comfortable with her. Do you  
4           want to share some of the things that you talked about  
5           with her?

6           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I just said that I missed her and  
7           I wish that she was there for us when we were kids and  
8           that she was still with us.

9           FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm. Yeah. Let's see.

10           (unintelligible)

11           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: (unintelligible)

12           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: (unintelligible) family.

13           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: (unintelligible)

14           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: She wanted you to say that. That's why  
15           she showed you.

16           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I just want to know more of our  
17           family too. Like, we don't have that much contact  
18           with our family.

19           FRANCINE MERASTY: Like, your brothers and sisters? Or  
20           your extended family, like your aunts and uncles?

21           NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Extended.

22           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Extended.

23           FRANCINE MERASTY: You've never had that or what?

24           KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I mean, we go to Yekooche, like,  
25           every year for that Christmas in July thing. But --

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

13

1 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Whenever we can.

2 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Yeah, whenever we can.

3 But sometimes we get there late and then it's  
4 over, and then sometimes we're just too busy to go.

5 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Or because of the weather.

6 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Yeah, the weather.

7 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I remember one time we got stuck.

8 Like, that was the day that (unintelligible)  
9 throwing-up flu. 'Cause he ate candies for breakfast.

10 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: That was me.

11 FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you know any --

12 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: (unintelligible)

13 FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you know any of your aunts and  
14 uncles? Like, their names?

15 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: No. I don't.

16 FRANCINE MERASTY: So you don't know your --

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Well, I know --

18 FRANCINE MERASTY: -- your mother's siblings?

19 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I know Aunty Dora and Aunty Sharon.

20 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Darlene.

21 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Oh, yeah, and Darlene.

22 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Don't we have an uncle in  
23 England?

24 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Yeah.

25 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: I don't know his name.



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**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

**14**

1 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: His name is Dan.

2 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Yeah. We have one uncle. I used  
3 to talk to him every day, but I got rid of Facebook  
4 and he hasn't talked that much any more. I asked him  
5 if I could visit him. He's just, like, "Sure, if you  
6 get on a plane." I was just like, "Oh, where do you  
7 live?" He's just, like, "England." I was just, like,  
8 "Oh."

9 FRANCINE MERASTY: So what brought you here today? Why did  
10 you want to come share with the National Inquiry?

11 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: To honour our mom.

12 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I came here to support her.

13 FRANCINE MERASTY: How would -- how would, like, Canada --  
14 what would you say to Canada or to the government to  
15 make things better for people that have lost loved  
16 ones, like, through them going missing or murdered?

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: What was the question?

18 FRANCINE MERASTY: How do you think things could be better?

19 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I don't know.

20 FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. Do you feel that you've been  
21 heard? Like, did you get what you needed to get out  
22 of coming here and sharing?

23 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: *(Moves head up and down)*

24 FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah?

25 You?

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

15

1 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Sort of. I was, like -- I had  
2 different feelings from Karissa and [V.] and all  
3 them.

4 FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you want to talk about that?

5 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: Oh, I don't know. Like, my -- like,  
6 all my siblings, like, miss her and stuff. That  
7 they -- I ... I don't know. I don't know how to word  
8 it. It's just, like ... I do miss her. It's just,  
9 like, I just didn't know her well enough to, like,  
10 miss her that much. So I have, like, different  
11 feelings than Karissa and (unintelligible). So ...  
12 yeah.

13 FRANCINE MERASTY: Well, I guess that's -- if you guys  
14 have -- if you don't have anything else to add, we'll  
15 close.

16 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: (unintelligible) them about the park?

17 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Oh, yeah. I only have one  
18 memory, but it's kind of about our dad. But the only  
19 memory I have is me and Nina were at Fort George Park  
20 and --

21 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: And [V.].

22 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Hmm?

23 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: And [V.]. That was the day that --  
24 you know that picture that we have of, like, the whole  
25 family? It was that day.

**Statement - Public**  
**Karissa Joseph (Carson) &**  
**Nina Joseph (Bonnie Joseph)**

16

1 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Oh.

2 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: (unintelligible)

3 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: We have the picture of our mom  
4 and dad and then all of us. And then I remember ... I  
5 guess this is why I'm scared of heights, but -- 'cause  
6 I got scared. But our dad -- we were on the swings  
7 and our dad pushed us and he pushed us so high that  
8 our -- the tip of our toes could actually touch one of  
9 the trees.

10 FRANCINE MERASTY: Mm-hm.

11 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: And I guess that's why I've been  
12 scared of heights. But -- I don't know. We -- that's  
13 the only memory I actually have of them.

14 FRANCINE MERASTY: Wow. How old were you?

15 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: Young. I don't remember.

16 FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

17 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: I think that was the last time we saw  
18 Mom, too.

19 FRANCINE MERASTY: All right. Well, we'll close if there's  
20 nothing more to say.

21 KARISSA (CARSON) JOSEPH: (Moves head up and down)

22 NINA MARIE JOSEPH: (Moves head up and down)

23 FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah?

24 All right. The time is 10:23 a.m., February 6 in  
25 Prince George, and we're closing.

[PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 10:23 A.M.]

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Joanna M. Cross, Official Reporter in the Province of British Columbia, Canada, do hereby certify:

That this is a true and accurate transcript of these proceedings recorded on sound-recording apparatus, transcribed to the best of my skill and ability in accordance with applicable standards.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 9th day of March, 2018.