



Letters from the LCC President

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Letter # 26

30 October 2025

On the first day of October, the world lost Jane Goodall (1934-2025), remarkable anthropologist and primatologist best known for her lifelong and groundbreaking work with chimpanzees. At the Law Commission of Canada, we marked the loss by reflecting on how one individual can serve as source of inspiration well beyond the domain in which that person dedicates their energies and entire lives. We noted Jane Goodall's insistence that young people are key to enriched understanding and curious exploration. And we underlined some of the quotes included in the stories remembering and celebrating Jane Goodall's path and impact: "Hope isn't just wishful thinking" and "It's no good just talking – we've got to flipping well do it!".

The fall of Year 3 for the Law Commission has been full of encounters with people who, reminiscent of Jane Goodall, are rolling up their sleeves. From Prince Edward Island to the Yukon, individuals and institutional actors doing the work of law and justice reform have taken time this season to share with us their priorities and projects. Since it launched the "Listen and Learn" program in October 2023, the Law Commission has been paying attention to the range of places and formats in which Canadians are engaged in law and the pursuit of justice. Two years later, the importance of hearing frontline stories and participating in face-to-face conversations keeps growing.

In Charlottetown in late September, we learned about the dynamic child and family services program overseen by the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI and about an upcoming launch of a Bachelor of Arts program in Indigenous Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island. We heard about the challenges of planning long-term justice programs in an environment of short-



term funding commitments, and about the need for better widespread understanding of the roles, capacities and responsibilities of lawyers and judges. From community legal information services, the John Howard Society of PEI, the province's Law Foundation, and the Reaching Home coordinator for the Native Council of PEI, we learned about on-the-ground realities of homelessness and limited access to help with legal issues. In a conversation with representatives from organizations in the charitable sector, we



were overwhelmed by the incredible dedication of individuals truly on the frontline – whether in accompanying individuals in repeat encounters with police, recruiting potential donors of crucial medical equipment, or supporting stray cats on the streets of Charlottetown.

In Whitehorse in late October, we learned how the Public Law Library combines personalized front desk service with thoughtful care for rare books and strong support for the entire justice sector. Lawyers with the Department of Justice shared the cutting-edge and always dynamic nature of their concrete engagement with First Nations across the Yukon. From the Association franco-yukonnaise, we heard about efforts in place to strengthen support for the significant francophone community in the Territory. We learned how people in public legal education, court operations, and the Council of Yukon First Nations continue to draw inspiration and guidance from Dave Joe, the first and going-strong Indigenous lawyer in the Yukon who generously took time to share some of his justice-related insights and projects. In conversations with current and past Chief Justices of the Yukon Supreme Court, we discussed the need for big thinking on access to justice in the Yukon and learned how self-governing First Nations are exercising responsibility in all areas from wildlife management to community wellness to economic development in the Territory. Leaders of Yukon University shared their sense of responsibility and responsiveness in shaping what Yukon could be, and how their vision for the future – developed in consultation with First Nations – includes a program of legal education. Hosted on their territory by the Teslin Tlingit Justice Council in their light-filled Heritage Centre, we learned of the striking accomplishments combined with high expectations tied to the negotiated and recently established community safety and corrections programs within the Nation's Administration of Justice agreement.



When asked what motivates the incredible ongoing commitment on display, one participant in a roundtable exchange in Whitehorse responded, “I like building things”. The range of “building” projects the Law Commission of Canada learned about over the past few weeks is truly extraordinary. Building First Nations governance structures, building university programs in law and justice, building delivery of legal services and support, building responsive library resources: all are ongoing construction projects that demand energy and provide outstanding opportunities

for people keen to roll up their sleeves and get to work. Throughout our meetings, we discovered striking ambition, an embrace of open-endedness, and huge enthusiasm for creativity. Nothing felt fixed or stale; everything was in a state of transformation and aspiration. Fragility and strength, crisis and potential, dismantling and renovating were combined in dynamic coexistence. If Jane Goodall recognized that investment in young people is crucial, so do the people and projects we met in both PEI and the Yukon. Indeed, as the Teslin Tlingit Justice Council reminded us with remarkable confidence and optimism, each new generation promises to be healthier and stronger.



In between the visits East and North in this country, the LCC participated in a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Law Commission of England and Wales. This was an opportunity to reintroduce the comparatively young Canadian Commission to the international community of independent law reform agencies and to be on the lookout for interesting ideas and constructive suggestions. We shared with our counterparts our openness to trying out a range of approaches to problems and possibilities in law, nourished by “listen and learn” encounters that include surprising shapes and structures of law reform. While 60 years is an important milestone for our fellow Commission based in London, it is interesting to note that neither Prince Edward Island nor Yukon has a formal law school or law reform agency. As we have



seen, that doesn't keep them from being places full of learning and change in the realms of law and justice.

Frontline narratives and actions serve as reminder that it would be a mistake to develop or present the Law Commission of Canada as an isolated, removed, or somehow sacrosanct site of knowledge creation or policy directing. Instead, it acts as caretaker, steward, translator, connector, and – if truly successful – long-term and intergenerational spark for valuable questions and conversation. Every encounter becomes part of the work of law reform: the impact of the Commission exists in the bringing together of people and learning from them what pathways forward might look like. It turns out

that sharing forms a crucial part of what Jane Goodall would refer to as “flipping well doing it”!

