

Hello, I want to thank you all for the invitation to speak to you about issues related to the feasibility of establishing a video relay service. My name is Wayne Sinclair. I live in the Vancouver area.

I am a deaf consumer, a deaf retiree, and a deaf advocate. I have spent more than half of my life in the United States where I was involved with schools for the deaf as a teacher and as an administrator. Also, I worked with several state associations of the deaf to promote a better life quality for all deaf citizens. I have two hearing children, now adults; and my parents were hearing. I grew up in Vancouver.

Anyway, I am not going to refer much to the letter I submitted to the CRTC last Spring. Instead, I am going to take you all with me on a spaceship trip to an imaginary planet.

The planet is called Eyeth. The characteristics of Eyeth – land, oceans, and atmosphere – are identically the same as those of Earth. Human beings live on Eyeth as we do here on Earth.

However, most people on Eyeth are deaf. There are only one or two hearing people for every 1,000 deaf citizens, just like the opposite is true on Earth. We – and by we, I mean, deaf people – call these hearing people on Eyeth deaf impaired. We call them deaf impaired because they don't think, communicate, and act like us deaf people. These deaf impaired people have been restricted in their daily lives.

We don't let them drive automobiles because we feel that their hearing will interfere their visual concentration to driving. Thanks to the absence of our hearing, we are more able to use our vision. We assume with a lot of

justification that the deaf impaired people's use of their sights is dulled and interfered with by their hearing. They rely too much on hearing. That's sad.

Because of this, their occupational opportunities are necessarily limited. We do not allow them to work at sawmills, highway construction, newsrooms and automobile assembly lines, for example. We would never ever allow them to fly airplanes. We fear that the noises from those places and airplanes would greatly affect their sight uses.

The most common occupations they have require working overnight in office buildings to wash and wax floors manually, dusting furniture, monitoring surveillance videos, and patrolling hallways. After all, they will be working in a very quiet environment, also a very safe environment. Their

unemployment/underemployment rate exceeds 60%, which is heartbreaking. Ours is less than 7 percent.

In spite of our efforts to help them to act and think like us, they still want to use their voices and hearing to communicate. That is why the B.C. Ministry of Education on Eyeth declared deaf impaired children too difficult to teach.

They are resentful of the 1880 resolutions that the educators of the hearing in a convention in Milan, Italy, made to ban the use of voices and hearing in schools for the hearing around the world. In spite of this, those deaf impaired people continue to make strange arguments that they feel most comfortable using their mouths and ears to communicate. It's far better to use hands to communicate; hands are pleasant for our visions!

We feel exasperated because the deaf impaired people continue to question our assumptions; they make us feel uncomfortable. Now they want VRS – vocalized relay service! Why can't they be comfortable with IP or TTY relay services? They can type and therefore can use these two relay services! Why VRS? Are they getting too much barley?

You in Gattineau will probably see that the division between the majority and the minority on Eyeth continues. The same is true here on Earth.

The problem is that the majority gets to make decisions without involving the minority in decision-making process.

Decisions made by the majority on Eyeth causes resentment among the deaf impaired about their limits in all aspects of their everyday lives.

It is that they do not get to help make decisions. They feel insulted that they are not allowed to drive or fly. They are not allowed to work at sawmills. Government decisions including the Ministry of Highways, the Workman Compensation Board, and even the Ministry of Education have made decisions that have harmful effects on the minority. The deaf impaired people were not involved in those decisions.

Here on Earth, we see that the hearing people can do a lot – they can drive, they can fly, they can work at sawmills, they can construct highways, and so on. They can communicate well with their mouths and ears! Wow!

If there is such a planet somewhere in the universe called Eyeth, I'm sure the

hearing majority on Earth would be impressed by what the deaf can do.

Well, we deaf people have been subjected to those same restrictions here on Earth! We can't access certain jobs. The Ministry of Education in B.C. implies that the deaf children are too difficult to teach. And those Milan resolutions. And so on and on. But we can do a lot!

Enough said, I have some suggestions to deal with decisions. My hope is to suggest a way to build a bridge between the two fantastic, unique peoples—the hearing and the deaf.

Work together. Learn together. How?

We can start with the CRTC. Get a deaf person in a key position within the CRTC to make decisions based on the best interest of deaf citizens and Canadian

society. Also there should be a group of deaf people and potential hearing VRS users along with some CRTC staff to develop criteria for VRS vendors to meet in order to be licensed to operate VRS. By the way, I am in favour of competition among Canadian VRS vendors, which should be run by deaf businesspeople. Together we can begin a VRS program within six months.

Because the rate of unemployment/underemployment among the deaf exceeds 60%, the CRTC through the Canadian Association of the Deaf should launch a public awareness programme to familiarize society with the VRS and what benefits the VRS can bring to both the hearing and the deaf in our economy. There has been a lot of public awareness in Maryland where I used to live in the last century about TTY relay



service. I remember on more than one occasion going to a place of business and they would tell me that they would call me through the TTY relay service. I did not have to tell them about it; they just knew it. I felt very included, and that was nice. Job opportunities are more widely available, thanks in part to public awareness. Finally, Internet providers should offer employment, especially at the decision-making level, to the deaf.

As you probably will tell, the biggest problem on both Earth and Eyeth is the failure to promote inclusivity. Even the majority needs that in order to benefit from working with the minority, and vice versa.

I believe VRS is an excellent first step towards the harmony of inclusivity as it frees both sides to communicate through

the air, the easiest communication mode for most of us.

I hope I have contributed in a small way toward this hearing. Thank you.