



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Quebec, QC

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Day 3

EVIDENCE

(Translated from the French)

Witness 10: Marc-André Paquette

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[0:00:00]

Samuel Bachand

Hello. My name is Samuel Bachand. I have been appointed by the Inquiry to act as prosecutor in this examination. Monsieur Marc André Paquette, please spell your name in full.

Marc-André Paquette

Paquette P-A-Q-U-E-T-T-E, Marc-André M-A-R-C A-N-D-R-É.

Samuel Bachand

I'm going to swear you in. Do you swear to tell the Inquiry nothing but the truth?

Marc-André Paquette

Yes.

Samuel Bachand

In a few words, what would you like to talk to the Inquiry about today?

Marc-André Paquette

As a kindergarten teacher and former medical student, I have had many email communications with pediatricians, public health physicians, and others. As such, my email communications reveal several elements that can help us understand what we've experienced.

Samuel Bachand

I would like to ask you in advance: Is there anything in your career path related to this theme that might be of interest?

Marc-André Paquette

Yes, from 1994 to 1999, I studied medicine at the Université de Sherbrooke, after which I obtained my bachelor's degree in elementary and preschool teaching. I've been teaching kindergarten since 2003.

Samuel Bachand

Just to make your testimony clearer—I'm not saying it's not clear, but to make it easier to understand—could you tell us what the main themes or sections of your testimony will be?

Marc-André Paquette

Yes, I'd like to touch on six aspects. Firstly, my e-mail communications with pediatricians, which clearly show at what point pediatricians were silenced or chose to remain publicly silent. Secondly, my e-mail communications with experts in pediatrics and public health—I had contacted 16 experts—show that they had no answers to basic questions about RNA vaccination, nor did they seek or find the answers. These communications also show that they had enough information to raise questions but they choose not to publicly defend the precautionary principle for children.

My third theme is about the APQ's [Association des pédiatres du Québec – Association of Paediatricians of Quebec] notice for the start of the 2021 school year. It's an announcement that was ignored and stifled by public health and the government. I'm the one who made it public and I'll talk about it in my testimony. And despite the fact that I made it public and sent it to 500 candidates in the 2022 provincial election, not one political party mentioned it. Nor did the vast majority of the media deem it necessary to inform the public. This is an important point. For my fourth point, I'd like to talk about how the media silence of pediatricians and other Quebec experts in the media has had a disastrous impact on all childhood environments. This is related to my expertise as a teacher.

As point five, I'd like to touch lightly, but with important references, on how the measures were excessive for children and detrimental to their development. Then I'd also like to present some documents for point six, which will help us better understand how misused data in Quebec created an exaggerated fear in the population; how this allowed the population to accept measures that were excessive and unjustified for the population as a whole, which included children; and how this exaggerated fear allowed the government and public health—this is the important point—to temporarily dismiss the concept of immunity that could be acquired by children and could serve as a shield for the entire population. This opened the door to the mass vaccination of children.

Samuel Bachand

Earlier, we added a voluminous, composite document to the Inquiry's electronic file: [Exhibit] QU-6.

Marc-André Paquette

Yes.

Samuel Bachand

In order to enable the commissioners to refer to it effectively, I'd like you to tell us what the primary structure of this dossier is.

Marc-André Paquette

Certainly. There are two documents, three folders. The first document explains how the folders work. I'm going to talk about the three folders first.

Folder A is my testimony folder. This folder is subdivided into other folders; and each deals with separate aspects and provides references. Each subfolder is independent, so if there's an aspect that's important to you, all the references are there.

Folder B consists of all the documents because, as you'll see, I've collected an enormous amount of paperwork over the last three years.

[00:05:00]

It's all the information that I have collected and referred to.

And folder C contains all my e-mail exchanges because I've had numerous exchanges with the media, with public health doctors, and also with a many other contributors. All my e-mail exchanges are there.

Then my second document is the authorization to use and share these documents if needed, to help understand what we experienced.

Samuel Bachand

Sorry, just a reminder not to speak too fast for the simultaneous translation.

Marc-André Paquette

Of course.

Samuel Bachand

So now that the plan has been announced and the documentation is available, you can go ahead with the first item.

Marc-André Paquette

Perfect. As a kindergarten teacher, I was already extremely worried about the impact of the measures that were being imposed on children at the very beginning of the crisis. I was also worried about possible excesses that we were already seeing. I felt it was important for people to speak out publicly and that's what I did. I wrote an article and then I was lucky. It was the only article that I published in the mainstream media, in *Le Devoir* and *La Tribune*; and I did an interview on Radio-Canada [CBC]. Both the article and the interview were on social distancing and its impact on the development of interpersonal relations in children.

I'm a kindergarten teacher and in my classroom, I work extensively on group cohesiveness by developing the children's interpersonal skills. In my classroom I had 27 images: 27 pictograms of relational gestures. There are many relational gestures, like inviting a friend to play, including a friend—as we saw during the crisis, everything was forbidden—consoling a friend, congratulating a friend, encouraging a friend, helping a friend: these are relational gestures. So I worked extensively on this with my students. When I returned from the first lockdown in May 2020, I went back to my classroom and found that 21 of the

27 relational gestures that I'd been encouraging in my students were now prohibited, impossible, or difficult to work on: 21 out of 27. That was sort of the trigger for me.

Samuel Bachand

Let's slow down.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. So at the start of the 2020 school year, the mandates weren't in place yet and I went on sick leave. I was incapable of imposing measures on children that I felt were detrimental to their development. Then for the next two years, I opted for an unpaid leave of absence, so I'm on unpaid leave this year in terms of teaching. I chose an unpaid leave so that I could continue to speak freely: that's what I'm doing today. So I really have no conflict of interest. I've sacrificed a lot to be able to keep this freedom of expression.

For you to be able to assess the relevance of my interventions today, you need to know that as early as May 2020, I was contacting all the pediatricians, scientists, and others who were speaking out publicly and whose contact details I found: those who were speaking out publicly to question the public health discourse and the government discourse, the measures imposed, and the consequences of the measures on children.

In my opinion, what was being done to children was unacceptable. I invested energy and time—a lot of it—to encourage others to band together to speak out publicly and better defend children. It's later in my presentation, but it's important for the points you're about to see. In a sense, I have participated in the development of three collectives: the first was a collective of parents, grandparents, and caregivers concerned for the children; the second is the collective for fairer media coverage about the health crisis; and the third is the school staff collective for a return to normalcy in the schools.

This gives you an idea of how the other aspects came about. Can I move on to aspect 1? Okay. Regarding my e-mail exchanges with pediatricians: at the start of the crisis, I was really worried about what was being inflicted on children. As a teacher and a medical student—maybe that's what made me unique—I was aware of what was happening elsewhere in the world and I could see that children weren't vulnerable to COVID. That's why I immediately tried to get in touch with the pediatricians who were sounding the alarm because there were pediatricians sounding the alarm at the start of the crisis.

[00:10:00]

Through my personal e-mail exchanges and my involvement in the three collectives I mentioned earlier, I've had many e-mail exchanges with pediatricians who have spoken out, including the three APQ spokespersons: Dr. Marie Claude Roy, Dr. Jean François Chicoine, and Dr. Marc Lebel.

Samuel Bachand

What is APQ?

Marc-André Paquette

Association des pédiatres du Québec [Association of Pediatricians of Quebec]. It's going to come up a lot. I also had e-mail exchanges with Dr. Annie Janvier, Dr. Gilles Julien, and

several other pediatricians, but especially the pediatricians who really spoke up. I've made my e-mail exchanges public in a compilation document. My compilation document is entitled: *Abandon des pédiatres québécois: protection des enfants à l'égard des effets dévastateurs des mesures sanitaires* [Abandonment by Quebec Pediatricians: Protecting Children from the Devastating Effects of Health Measures]. You'll also find the e-mail exchanges on the USB key I gave you.

Samuel Bachand

Which folder will it be in?

Marc-André Paquette

Well now we're at aspect 1, so in the testimonial "Aspect 1" is where all my elements for this aspect are to be found. In this document, I've placed a chronology of the positions that the pediatricians were defending at the start of the crisis. I've also included the e-mails I exchanged with the pediatricians which show their support for those same positions. My e-mail exchanges make it possible to illustrate—and this is where I felt my participation was important in the Inquiry— My e-mails make it possible to see precisely when pediatricians stopped supporting and publicly defending children.

In the beginning, pediatricians were pleased with the support provided by our first collective of parents, grandparents, and caregivers concerned about children. Our collective supported the position that pediatricians and the APQ, had set out on October 5, 2020. This position was expressed in the letter, *[Deuxième vague:] la rentrée scolaire n'est pas coupable* [[Second wave:] Back-to-school is Not the Culprit], which became the APQ's official position and which was posted on their website. In this letter, the three APQ spokespersons talked about a "generational sacrifice." Our collective supported this letter; we had collected 402 testimonials by then. On November 25 and 26, 2020, we received an e-mail from Dr. Marc Lebel, president of the APQ, and an email from Dr. Annie Janvier, who were really speaking out publicly at the time. We also received an e-mail from Dr. Catherine Dea, a doctor specializing in public health.

The pediatricians were really happy with the actions taken by our collective— You'll see the emails on the USB stick. But the pediatricians' support for our collective fell off abruptly between November 26 and December 9, 2020. At that point, the pediatricians stopped defending the positions they had been defending publicly until then. Let me explain how it happened.

On December 7, we sent our open letter and the 402 testimonials in support of the pediatricians—these were the 402 testimonials from parents, grandparents, and caregivers who were concerned about the children—to 180 members of the media and all the MNAs [Members of the Assemblée nationale]. There was no media coverage at all: absolutely none. But that was to be expected given the single guideline that was imposed rather quickly at the media and political level.

I had already invited pediatricians to sign a second collective statement that I was working on; I was really active. I had worked with others in the previous collective—I wasn't alone—but this collective statement was about fairer media coverage of the health crisis. I had already invited them to sign this statement.

The day we sent out our open letter in support of the pediatricians, the APQ contacted me to ask me to retransmit the open letter about the other collective statement about fairer

media coverage. I did so. They wrote back to me and asked me to pass on the list of signatories that we had and would publish. Once again, I invited all the pediatricians with whom I was in contact to sign the collective statement.

Despite the pediatricians' initial enthusiasm for our approach with the first collective statement and the interest they showed—or seemed to show—in our second collective statement, not a single pediatrician signed this second statement. That's fine. But what's surprising and worrying is the response we received from Dr. Marie Claude Roy, who was a signatory to the pediatricians' position which our collective supported. Despite the fact that the 402 testimonials from concerned parents, grandparents, and caregivers were ignored by the 180 members of the media, Dr. Marie Claude Roy wrote to us, "On the contrary, I consider the media to have shown great objectivity and have made room for all points of view supported by science, whatever those may be."

[00:15:00]

Our collective was in support of pediatricians; we received no media coverage. This response is reminiscent of the June 3, 2020 opinion of the Collège des médecins du Québec [College of Physicians of Quebec]. My compilation document, which I mentioned earlier, clearly shows that pediatricians had abandoned the positions they previously defended. Between November 26 and December 9, 2020, the pediatricians quite clearly chose to remain silent or were forced to remain silent. I continued to write to the group of pediatricians because I wanted to encourage them to keep thinking, even though they were no longer replying to me. But in March, I sent them a paper that must have upset them—it's a French article called "*Impacts traumatiques de la politique sanitaire actuelle sur les enfants: un constat clinique alarmant*" ["The traumatic impact of current health policy on children: alarming clinical findings"]—because three of them wrote back to me, including Dr. Gilles Julien.

Dr. Gilles Julien passed on his reply to me and to the eleven other pediatricians I had contacted, including the three APQ spokespersons. Everything I say is important because you'll see the connection. Dr. Julien ended his e-mail this way: "We have a duty to bear witness and to act together as much as possible." It may be a coincidence but, the very next day, the APQ chose to no longer take a public stand in defence of children. And without fanfare—and this is important—without clearly informing the public of this reversal in the APQ's public position, the APQ discreetly published its new official position on its page: *Pandémie et mesures sanitaires chez les élèves du primaire - Position de l'APQ -2021*[03]11 [Pandemic and Health Measures for Elementary School Children - APQ Position -2021 [03] 11]. The APQ chose to dissociate itself from the parent pressure groups that were denouncing the recent imposition of masks in primary schools.

If you look at my document where I set out all the positions of the pediatricians and see the e-mails, the pediatricians were initially fighting against the imposition of masks on daycare providers. When I spoke with them, they were concerned about the imposition of masks on preschool children; there were no masks for preschoolers, but there were for all the teachers. And at this moment, they disassociated themselves from that. Furthermore, in their letter on the position of pediatricians, the APQ specified that its role was "limited to maintaining the quality of its members' workplace conditions."

I've compiled another document entitled *Censure et autocensure des pédiatres et autres professionnels québécois* [Censorship and Self-censorship among Quebec Pediatricians and other Professionals]. In this document, there are several parts, but among them are my e-mails with Dr. Mathieu Bernier. Dr. Mathieu Bernier was one of the doctors who spoke out

publicly at the start of the crisis, denouncing the measures being applied to children and adolescents. He found himself under investigation by the Collège des médecins [College of Physicians], retracted his statement, and then stopped defending what he had originally defended. My e-mails are on my USB key. Maybe that concludes my aspect 1. How's that?

Samuel Bachand

We have about twelve minutes left. I know your first two points are longer, but just to let you know.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. As a former medical student and father of three, I had questions about RNA vaccination for children. I wrote down my questions and passed them on to doctors. My questions were basic ones because I'd only been in medicine for five years and it's been 25 years since then. I wrote these questions with my teenagers. I forwarded these questions to 17 Quebec doctors, including 16 experts in pediatrics and public health. Most of these doctors held key [positions] in their institutions. Several of them had already spoken out in the public arena. I don't know if it's important—I know time is limited—but perhaps quickly, I'll name a few: Dr. MéliSSa Généreux, specialist in public health and preventive medicine, director of public health in the Estrie region from 2013 to 2020, medical advisor to the public health department [of the CIUSSS] de l'Estrie and to the Institut national de santé publique [du Québec], professor at the Faculty of Medicine—

Samuel Bachand

You're going too fast. I'm sorry, but it's just not possible to translate at that speed.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. Maybe I'll pass, but they were real experts in pediatrics: people who had spoken publicly or had roles in their institutions.

[00:20:00]

My article, "*Les médecins québécois 'experts' en pédiatrie et en santé publique ne semblent pas avoir de réponse au sujet des injections ARN des enfants*" ["Quebec's 'expert' doctors in pediatrics and public health don't seem to have any answers on the subject of children's RNA injections"], and my compilation document, *Mes questionnements sur les injections ARN* [My Questions About RNA Injections], both explained my approach to these experts. My exchanges clearly show that these experts in pediatrics and public health had no answers to my questions and that they did not seek and/or find answers to even basic questions.

I also have another document, *Vaccination ARN des enfants : les pédiatres québécois ont choisi d'ignorer le principe de précaution* [RNA Vaccination for Children: Quebec Pediatricians Choose to Ignore the Precautionary Principle].

In this document, I provide all the information that I've passed on to pediatricians and public health doctors. This one is for pediatricians and it shows that pediatricians had enough information to have doubts, but they did not defend the precautionary principle. If they were aware of the unanswered concerns—if there was any doubt—they too should have questioned the authorities in order to protect children. In the document I had sent them, there was an open letter—there were three open letters on child vaccination—but

there was one with 1,441 signatories. The pediatricians not only failed to defend the precautionary principle, but worse, one of the three APQ spokespersons, Dr. Jean François Chicoine, appeared on television in the presence of children to promote RNA vaccination of children on November 18, 2021.

On my USB key, I've filed all my communications with pediatricians, but I've also filed my communications with three public health physicians and my open letters to two of them: Dr. Mélissa Généreux and Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger. These two public health physicians ran in the 2022 provincial election under the banner of an opposition party. Despite the responsibilities incumbent on them—in terms of their considerable expertise in public health and also of the role of political representation they wished to exercise—they too did not answer questions. Nor did they seek out or find answers to our questions. They didn't publicly question the government and medical authorities. They didn't choose to assume this responsibility.

As for the principle of informed consent: well, it was completely swept aside during the RNA vaccination. While a vaccine passport was being imposed, fingers were pointed, people were publicly denigrated, and all those who questioned it were socially excluded—even if pediatricians and public health experts had no answers to the questions. And without answers to basic questions, when the experts have no answers, we can't talk about informed consent for the population, especially if the population doesn't know that the experts have no answers.

The public seems to have put their trust in doctors, perhaps believing that they had a responsibility to ensure the benefits and safety of vaccines. But my research shows that those who were questioned did not feel this responsibility. Doctors seem to have placed absolute trust in their institutions: the Collège des Médecins [College of Physicians], the public health department, the pharmaceutical companies, the government. It appears they didn't question themselves; it appears they didn't seek to validate the accuracy and validity of the information they were given; it appears they didn't question the sources of this information, or the presence or absence of conflicts of interest.

Samuel Bachand

Let me briefly interrupt. What you're telling us are opinions. And I understand that it's a summary of the lessons you've learned from your interactions with the medical profession.

Marc-André Paquette

That's why I also linked all the e-mail exchanges in easy-to-see documents, but they really have a lot of information. And I received several responses. But one of the open letters that was forwarded to many people was the open letter sent to Dr. Mélissa Généreux and Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger: *Demande d'intervention au sujet de la vaccination ARN des enfants dans un contexte où le questionnement et les inquiétudes des médecins, des scientifiques et des citoyens semblent interdits, ridiculisés, banalisés et censurés* [Request to intervene on the subject of RNA Vaccination of children in a context where the questioning and concerns of doctors, scientists and citizens seem to be banned, ridiculed, trivialized, and censored]. But Dr. Mélissa Généreux's answer to this question—we don't have much time—but to answer that—

Samuel Bachand

Yes, but even if we don't have much time, if you talk too fast, we're no further ahead. You're caught between a rock and a hard place. Just talk slower.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. Well, she answered me. It was really a question about vaccination. It was the third open letter. I'd already sent in my questions.

[00:25:00]

I put her in touch with the scientists and doctors from all the exchanges that I submitted to you. These weren't inconsequential; these were issues where there were genuine questions raised by people other than myself. She replied to this last open letter, "On returning to the office this morning, I can confirm that my mandate as a public health physician is in Estrie and that decisions regarding the Quebec immunization program are made at the provincial level. I think you'd get more answers if you were to address the proper authority, such as the Minister of Health, Dr. Luc Boileau, the INSPQ [Quebec Public Health] or the Comité d'immunisation du Québec [Committee on Immunization of Quebec]." So looking through everything I have, you can see that there was never a response. It's not just supposition. There was no response. There was no feedback.

Aspect 3?

Samuel Bachand

We have five minutes.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. In August 2022, I published an article entitled "*Les pédiatres doivent briser le silence*" ["Pediatricians must break the silence"] on the *Nous Citoyens* platform. Following the publication of the article, a citizen sent me photos of the APQ's notice for the start of the 2021 school year—a notice that had been sent to the government and public health by the APQ on August 9, 2021. The notice didn't seem to have been made public. It didn't appear—and it still doesn't appear—on the APQ website. The only reference to the notice was in an article in *Le Soleil*: "*Les pédiatres du Québec réclament une rentrée 'normale' pour les écoliers*" ["Quebec pediatricians call for 'normal' back-to-school for schoolchildren"] published the following day: August 10, 2021. But one day later, on August 11, there was a new article published in the same newspaper, which presented a totally different position: "*Les pédiatres 'globalement satisfaits' du plan de rentrée scolaire*" ["Pediatricians 'generally satisfied' with back-to-school plan"]. The APQ's opinion on the start of the 2021 school year is extremely important; the two spokespersons—Dr. Marie Claude Roy and Dr. Marc Lebel—signed this opinion. They didn't want primary school children to have masks on their faces, and they questioned the RNA vaccination of primary school children. The opinion was completely ignored, dismissed, and kept under wraps by the government and public health; it was I who made it public.

Samuel Bachand

I think at this point it's worth explaining how it was that you're the one who released the document.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. I published my article, “*Les pédiatres doivent [briser le silence]*” [“Pediatricians must break the silence”]. A citizen sent me the photos. This citizen had obtained the photos because, following the article—

Samuel Bachand

Photos of what?

Marc-André Paquette

The notice. Following the August 10 article in *Le Soleil* which talked about this notice—it’s the only reference we found—he contacted the newspaper because he was in proceedings with his ex-wife and children. He wanted to have the notice, so the journalist or the newspaper sent him the photos of the notice. When he saw my publication, he passed them on to me. With all the actions I had taken since the beginning of COVID, I got myself organized to make it public.

Samuel Bachand

What did you do afterwards to validate, or attempt to validate, the authenticity of this document, which is ultimately an image of a print?

Marc-André Paquette

Yes, well, every time I published something like this, I’d pass it on to the pediatricians involved—so to the two signatories and all the other pediatricians. I no longer get replies from the pediatricians but they never disagreed. This notice was widely circulated. The pediatricians knew about it because I had put them in touch with other people. So if it hadn’t been a true announcement, they probably would have said so. Is that okay?

Samuel Bachand

I’m just going to interrupt you for a moment. You have one-and-a-half minutes left on the clock. The witnesses are of course entirely at the Inquiry’s disposal. We still have two major topics to discuss.

Marc-André Paquette

Yes, but I think this point is more important than the other two.

Samuel Bachand

Okay.

Would you like to hear the witness for five minutes, let’s say, so that he can finish his presentation? [This question is addressed to the commissioners, who give their assent]. Okay, go ahead.

Marc-André Paquette

To make the notice public, I sent it to the media. The mass media didn’t publish it. I wrote an article, again on *Nous Citoyens*, which is an alternative platform. Then I was contacted by

Radio X, which is a somewhat alternative radio station; I did an interview. I was contacted by 107.7 FM, which is a more traditional radio station; I did an interview. I did a video testimonial that was seen by just over 10,000 people, but I also sent the notice to the 500 candidates in the Quebec elections—there were five main parties—that’s almost all the candidates; we forwarded it to the candidates whose e-mail or Facebook address we had. Despite the fact that the notice had been kept under wraps for a year, no opposition party, in the middle of an election campaign, felt it important to inform the public.

[00:30:00]

And the content of the notice is quite crucial. For almost a year, the children were masked, and then vaccination began in November 2021. The existence of the notice also shows that contrary to what the media, public health, and the government have always said—that there was a scientific consensus—there wasn’t one, even within the APQ. The three APQ spokespersons had signed the initial position which spoke of a generational sacrifice on October 5, 2020. But when it came to vaccination, Dr. Jean François Chicoine went on television to encourage vaccination, while Dr. Lebel and Dr. Roy signed this notice questioning vaccination.

As far as the scientific community is concerned, this has certainly had an impact. Because if the notice had been made public, more scientists or stakeholders probably would have spoken out publicly or would have had the courage to do so. In the case of Patrick Provost—indeed an expert researcher on RNA who was sanctioned by his university; he’s still an expert researcher on RNA—he expressed reservations about vaccinating primary school children, as did the two pediatricians who spoke on behalf of [the APQ], except that he did so publicly, while they did so discreetly. When scientists, pediatricians, or doctors have questions, it’s important for the public to know so that we are able to give informed consent.

I don’t know whether I can go on to the other two points or whether I’ll drop the other two.

Samuel Bachand

Ah, you have three minutes left. Use them!

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. This notice also shows that a public silencing had been imposed on pediatricians. Nonetheless, a number of pediatricians continued to defend the children in the political arena and in their institutions, as did Dr. Roy and Dr. Lebel in signing this notice. But the media silencing of Quebec pediatricians and experts has had a disastrous impact on childhood environments.

Let me explain. There’s an open letter in which I explain this too. In childhood environments, educators, teachers, and caregivers who wanted to minimize the impact of the measures—who wanted to create a more humane environment for children—had no credibility. They were called out, dismissed, and ignored because they were few in number and because there were no public experts to back them up. On the flipside, managers and public speakers who were afraid of the virus, or afraid of public health measures such as closing classes and schools, had every possible latitude to impose their vision. Some managers and public speakers—probably thinking they were doing the right thing—even went beyond what was required in terms of measures. In this way, unknowingly and

unconsciously, they probably contributed to a vicious circle of fear in the childhood environment, which led to more drastic measures for children. So it had an impact.

Before I quit teaching, I was starting to see it. A letter had been written in the newspaper and I passed it on to the other teachers; I had started to be a little lax with the children. But with 18 or 19 students, you have 30 or so parents in front of you, and you can't afford to deviate when everyone is pointing the finger at those who do. You need experts to back you up and you need a dialogue, and there was none of that. So it was disastrous for the childhood environment. And in my e-mail exchanges, I challenged a lot of people by saying, "You've got to speak up; you have to because, in the childhood environment, there's nothing else we can do."

Is that okay?

Samuel Bachand

You have 30 seconds left.

Marc-André Paquette

Okay. About the impact of the harmful measures imposed on children, I'm just going to make one comment. I hope that my comment will help you to grasp the extent of the mistreatment that we've inflicted upon children. Five years before the crisis, in a time when there was no pandemic, if—and this is five years before the crisis— out of a personal and perhaps irrational fear of viruses, I had decided to impose the same measures on the students in my classroom and my children at home, I'm sure I'd have lost my job and probably the custody of my children. It's not because public health suggested the measures, or that the measures were imposed by the government, or that the media trivialized them that the measures suddenly overnight became less harmful to children's development.

[00:35:00]

The mistreatment inflicted upon youngsters was imposed on us—but as adults, we contributed to it for two whole years by participating in it. And then we made it even worse by agreeing to systematically insert it into our society and into every corner of our children's lives.

Samuel Bachand

We need to close on this.

Marc-André Paquette

That's fine.

Samuel Bachand

Marc André Paquette, thank you for your testimony on behalf of the Inquiry. You're free to go. Ah, there's one question, sorry.

Commissioner Massie

I'd like to ask you two quick questions as I know we're running out of time. First of all, I'd like to thank you for all the massive amount of work you've done documenting and trying to publicize all these exchanges to try and raise people's awareness. You've had some successes and then we've shut off your mic, if you like.

On a personal note, I understand you're no longer an active teacher. What's the reason you're still in this frame of mind of not returning to teaching, given that now, for all intents and purposes, the measures have been eliminated? Do you intend to go back to your milieu and do the job you used to love?

Marc-André Paquette

Yes, I intend to probably go back in August. I didn't return this year because we have to decide beforehand whether or not to take a leave of absence. So I took my unpaid leave last year when I knew there was an election as I was afraid the measures would return. I didn't want to find myself in a position where I'd have to resign. I wanted to keep the option of maybe returning, so because I had the right to a second year without pay, I chose that. I couldn't go back and impose the measures.

So now I'm going to return to teaching but if the measures come back, I'll leave again. During the two years I was without pay, I did other training. I became a carpenter-joiner; I'm an apprentice. That's the way I work now; I'll go back to being a carpenter-joiner. But I love my job as a teacher; otherwise I wouldn't have become involved like this.

Commissioner Massie

My second question is: Do you hope that with all the actions you're taking right now, you'll be able to see an impact, at least in the area where you intend to return next fall? Do you think that the teaching milieu, the parents, and students will be more receptive to the position you've tried to defend?

Marc-André Paquette

I don't think so. I don't have a lot of ties to that community. Some communities were a little more open than others. But I don't think so. Rather, I think they're going to pretend it didn't happen. And I'm going to be the best teacher I can be with my students. But above all, I hope that what we're doing today will have an impact.

Anyway, we haven't had the impact I would have liked to benefit my children, who were unvaccinated, discriminated against, and excluded. It made them grow up. But I hope that we'll have an impact at least for their grandchildren and that the next time—I don't think it'll necessarily be viruses—but the next time there is going to be malfeasance—whether ecological, health, or political—that there will be people able to stop them early on, and that more interveners speak up. We see a lot of people at the Inquiry speaking up. I think the people who are talking today are going to keep on talking every time there's something that's not appropriate for society and for human beings.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you very much, Monsieur Paquette, for your involvement.

Marc-André Paquette

Thank you.

[00:39:07]

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The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an “intelligent verbatim” transcription method, and further translated from the original French.

For further information on the transcription process, method, and team, see the NCI website:
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