

## **PRESENTATION OPPOSING PRESERVATION OF APOPROX. 1000 SQ KM IN VICINITY SOUTH OF TEMISCAMING**

My name is Bob MacLeod . I am present at this hearing as a citizen and own 2 properties ( house and cottage ) within the town limits . I am a chemical engineer by trade , now retired but have held many management positions in the pulp and paper industry , one company of which was Tembec . My dad started to work in Temiscaming at age 16 until his retirement for the local pulp and paper company which was then C.I.P.( Canadian International Paper company ) , the precursor to Tembec . As you can see , I have very strong ties to the immediate area .

I am also a member of the Committee for Free Access to Public Lands which is acting on behalf of 78 % of the citizens of Temiscaming who voted against the proposed Parc National Opemican in a non binding referendum held in conjunction with the last municipal election in Nov. 2009. This park will preserve 300 sq km , 55 % of which is within our town limits . Our committee made a presentation opposing the creation of this park at the public hearings in June 2012 and to date there has been as yet no decision made . We are remaining consistent in that any form of preservation is detrimental to future growth and development , especially when it is in our back yard . I must point out that I am here as an individual and not as a representative of the group "Committee for Free Access to Public Lands" . The majority of the Committee felt betrayed by the support given for the park project by our town council and the M.R.C. However I am putting our town ahead of politics and that is why I am making this presentation . This time I am very happy to see that our mayor , Mr. Phil Barrette and all 6 councillors in addition apparently to our county reeve, Mr Arnaud Warolin , are opposing the proposal to preserve the approximate 1000 sq km to the immediate area to the south of our town .

It must be pointed out that I have a problem with a simultaneous public hearing on this preservation project going on in Rouyn , a city which will not be affected no matter which direction the decision takes . In addition this local hearing was very poorly advertised if not at all . At least the hearings on the proposed Opemican National park project were only in Temiscaming and very well advertised .

To repeat ,I definitely do not support the Quebec government's initiative to preserve the approximately 1000 square kilometers in the immediate area south of our town . I would like to take this opportunity to clarify one very important point . The politicians and special interest groups keep using the word "protection" in their press releases concerning certain government program initiatives about territory, which is extremely misleading . What they really mean is "preservation" which has no direct correlation with present environmental regulations being compromised . What preservation means is no development allowed period ! Presently in Quebec permits must be granted for forests to be harvested or mine development to commence and these endeavors must meet environmental regulations . Why is preservation therefore needed . The answer is to give some big city politicians a name and legacy at our expense . This game is continuing with this approximately 1000 km2 just to the south of Temiscaming being scheduled for so

called "protection" i.e. preservation . Tembec Forest Products , our main employer is dependent on the harvesting of trees – a renewable resource with a growth cycle of approximately 50 years. Also the potential of a successful mining endeavor is high due to Temiscaming being located in an area where there has been volcanic activity in the past . Already there is a good possibility of a mining company , Matamec starting a rare earth mining project in our area within 2 years .

I am extremely concerned with what is happening to our town and the immediate area , including the county . The population of our county has decreased from 25000 to roughly 16,000 today . Temiscaming was once a thriving community of close to 5000 people vs. the 2800 of today . In addition to the mill now operating under the Tembec banner , there was also Commonwealth Plywood and Booth Lumber . There was a much higher number of students and few attended North Bay schools . The teachers in the schools lived in Temiscaming instead of making a bee line to Ville Marie once classes are over . We had a hospital with local administration , not a branch of Ville Marie . There were four grocery stores in the immediate vicinity . Today there is none . What would allow us to reverse this direction – the answer is development ! Yet the Quebec government agencies continue in their quest to shut us down under the guise of protecting territory . It must be pointed out that Quebec has one of the highest debt to GDP ratios in Canada in spite of depending on an annual transfer payment of 7.5 billion dollars from the federal government . The problem is that our neighbors in Ontario and other provinces are following the same path . Ontario has recently become a have not province like Quebec . When everyone becomes a beggar , where is the food going to come from . When is the government of Quebec going to see the light ?

I prefer to look at the big picture and in my opinion the policy of preservation is a symptom of a serious disease .

The 2 key factors to grow wealth are technology and resources , which lead to development . Quebec has both in abundance and with a proper thinking process from our elected politicians , we can generate the funds for social programs without going further into debt and depending on the federal government through transfer payments . I understand presently that the Parti Quebecois government plans to preserve 12 % of Quebec territory , down from 20% as their goal as stated in the last election . The Liberals under Jean Charest were aiming for a target of 15 % to satisfy a promise made to foreign interests to make Mr. Charest look good in the eyes of the world while building his legacy . Quebec has an area of 1,542,000 sq . km . If the 12 % preservation target is met , an area of roughly 185,000 sq km or 73,000 sq miles is off limits for development . Where will this area targeted for preservation be located – in rural Quebec where growth and development is badly needed. It is my sincere opinion that the greatest divide in both Quebec and Canada is not one of language and race , but is between urban ( big cities ) and rural ( smaller towns in remote locations ) . It is my opinion that the people in the cities understand what is required in rural areas as much as people in rural area understand about theatre and the arts – virtually nothing .

My recommendation is for the government of Quebec to get out of the preservation business completely as championed by the Coalition Avenir du Quebec in the last election ( the Committee for Free Access to Public Lands officially supported this party in Temiscaming ). In the case of Quebec National Parks – tourism YES, ultra severe restrictions over large areas – NO . In conclusion please drop the decision to preserve approx 1000 sq km in the vicinity south of Temiscaming and everywhere else throughout Quebec . The welfare state consequences of these preservation actions must come to an end for the benefit of the people.

Thank you for your time and please excuse my lack of sufficient French to make a full length presentation in that language . This can be often the case in Quebec border towns like ours and in reverse in Hawkesbury , Ont. and Edmunston , New Brunswick .

Bob MacLeod .