

**BUREAU D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES
SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

308

TRAN57

Les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec

6211-08-012

POUR LA COMMISSION DU BAPE : M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR, président
M. JOSEPH ZAYED, commissaire

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEBJ : M. JOHN PAUL MURDOCH, président
Mme MANON CYR, commissaire
Mme MÉLISSA BROUSSEAU SAGANASH, commissaire
M. JEAN PICARD, commissaire

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEK : AUCUN REPRÉSENTANT

**ENQUÊTE ET AUDIENCE PUBLIQUE
SUR LES ENJEUX DE LA FILIÈRE URANIFÈRE AU QUÉBEC**

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

VOLUME 2

Séance tenue le 11 novembre 2014 – 19 h
Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Mitchuap building
Banquet Hall

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOVEMBER 11th, 2014 – EVENING SESSION..... 1

PRESENTATIONS :

Mr. SAUNDERS WEISTCHE, Cree Nation of Waskaganish 1
Mr. KEVIN WEISTCHE, Youth Council Representative 4
Mr. SAMUEL COX 5
Mr. EDDIE PASH, Chisasibi Local Elders Council 9
Mr ABRAHAM BEARSKIN..... 13
Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS..... 19
Mr. LEONARD HOUSE 23
Mr. ERNEST TOMATUK..... 29
Mr. DAVID BEARSKIN..... 30
Dr. DARLENE KITHY..... 33

SESSION IS ADJOURNED TO NOVEMBER 12th, 2014 – 19:00

**NOVEMBER 11th, 2014
EVENING SESSION
Mr. SAUNDERS WEISTCHE**

5 **THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

We are going to start. The first person to come up will be Saunders Weistche from Waskaganish. Would Saunders Weistche come up to the front?

10 (No translation – Cree) The discussion we are having here today is to get people's opinion and their ideas and their thoughts so we can give it to the Quebec Government on what stands we should have on uranium mining. This is what I wanted you to understand.

15 **Mr. SAUNDERS WEISTCHE:**

I can tell a little bit. First I want to thank for being able to be here all the people and especially the panel. I was invited to come here, okay. So I am thankful I am able to put a little bit of thoughts into this, on the subject.

20 I know this is the situation where people are standing together against something they do not believe in. The Cree land is very important and the way it's supposed to be looked after, that is why I am talking about it first.

25 There is a lot of people from the south that can tell about how they like and how they like looking at our land and when they say how things are done down south and how things are being exploited and then when they come up here, they notice, you know, the lack of disturbance of some parts of our land.

30 And then now, they understand that from the past, they could have looked after things better and then the way people look after the land is the way a farmer would look after his farm and his plants. And then people worry and are concerned because they have found certain areas that are disturbed on the environment and forests and about the mining and mining of rock.

35 They will look in the future that there will be extraction of ores from the lands but people do not want to see things that are harmful to the person and to the environment. People look to the future for these types of questions because you know that soon or later that the youth will go out on the land to look after the land as how the people are doing now. People respect the land and how they look after it and what they find on the land.

40 And people are getting better organized and they were better when things were not being disturbed as they are being disturbed today and they don't like to see those disturbances and there is a lots of us that are standing together, that do not like the idea of extracting uranium from the earth.

45 And before they did the hydroelectric, things were stable and reliable because I stay out on the land a lot of times and that is why I was invited to come here because of that knowledge that I accumulated over the years while growing up and living on the land.

50 When people arrive on the land, they don't go after the animals, this is the final way, the final time of harvesting, but they also set aside time for animals to recuperate. So the land was looked after good that way. And people that I stand with are not happy when things are disturbed; and now, when we saw how the Rupert River was treated, how it looked after the diversion, people felt really let down, and they almost lost the fishery that we had and I worked really hard to help to make sure that it didn't go away.

55 It has been heard that displacement of rocks from mining, and then there is lots of water under the earth, that something could happen with these aquifers that are down there and not only close but further from where the activity is. I have seen this happen when I was out on the land, where part of the land had been like perforated with rocks even coming out. I saw this. And then the water goes really far. And then when that water touches something that is dangerous then that becomes the spread of this contamination and things will be destroyed.

60 I am learning a lot from the past, and from the area that I hunted, even only when a beaver closes a creek for a dam, then things change in that environment. And the same thing goes with us that the Elder here said that we cannot drink from our river. And that is why we are so concerned because things will be destroyed on the land and things in the water. And I am not very settled with that. And then, when you have activity in only one area, there could be a wide range of impacts around that area.

70 And then looking after the fowl in that area, in Waskaganish, and then we saw some prospectors working around. But we have learned, from looking at agreements, that people should be consulted, but then all of sudden we see them working a way without having told us that they were coming.

75 We can do everything -- those people that do the exploitation have a hard time to recuperate things after the land has been exploited and their work sometimes cannot be trusted and they tell you all kinds of nice things, but they really come short of that what they are saying.

80 Not too long ago, only six years ago, and that road was supposed to be less than a
kilometer; now, that was six years ago. And when SEBJ was there, and finally they were happy that
they were building that road but then SEBJ came back and told them to stop building that road but
the contractor said: "No, I started this job and I am going to do it." So those are things that we're
trying to catch up. Things get started but not really finished. So if they do things in the future, then
85 we are not really sure if these things are going to be completed and all the agreements in place will
be respected.

Because a person that has people out on the land, right now it seems that there is quite a bit
of wildlife out there, and people know that I have hunted, that animals from the South are coming
up to the North, that's what we are seeing in our territory. And people are concerned about that
90 because it's a different way of what we used to know and some things are not -- are actually
dangerous that do come up and it is a good thing that people are standing together, that do not like
this type of activity.

I did not want to talk to long, just to say that I am not going with this kind of project and that
95 things can be difficult. That is what I have to say.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

100 Is there any questions? I have one question. It is quite a few years that I have worked with
these people, and I can relate with you when you say that you cannot really trust everything that
they say. What do you think is the most difficult thing to deal with, and also to be able to believe in
what they are telling you? So that is something difficult for you to deal with, but are there other
things that make it difficult for you to relay to these people?

105 **Mr. SAMUEL COX:**

I can tell a little bit. These people, the Cree, when the first Agreement came into place,
relating back to past Chief Malcolm Diamond telling us: "If you don't agree with what they are
offering..." He said: "If you don't agree with certain things then it's going to be very difficult for you in
110 the future." But people said: "We would rather try to preserve our land where people have grown up
and where they come from." This is the foremost thing in their mind because that's how people
survived when they felt bad. It was not always easy. And then with the animals, when they were
not plentiful, but in one day, I could not find any. And people, they knew how to treat those things.
He put things on the land to grow and animals, and when those animals grew -- and to this day,
115 things they did in the past are still working today out on the land.

That's how we look at things. We all stand together within Eeyou Istchee and then we are
going to have all gather and be support to each other.

120

If there are things that do not agree with us, there will be a lot of talk relating to this if things are not settled with us, that is how it's going to be. There is youth listening to these and that is what we are looking towards in the future.

125

I have grandchildren also and also I have great grandchildren. These are the ones, but we don't know what it's going to be, like what it will like for them in the future.

I don't think we can all be going the same way and whether things can go back the way they were before. So we have to be careful with what we do with the land today so that the land will not be destroyed and maybe it will last a long time in the future, if we do look after it well.

130

That's the way we think. We can always rely on the store and when they go on their land, it is like walking into a store, but it is handled in a very careful way.

Okay, thank you very much.

135

Mr. KEVIN WEISTCHE
YOUTH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE WASKAGANISH

140

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

Kevin Weistche, Youth Council Representative, Waskaganish.

145

Mr. KEVIN WEISTCHE :

Waachiyaa! Greetings. First of all, I am here to advocate for the Waskaganish Youth Council and all the youth of Waskaganish.

150

The reason why I gave you this paper is let's say this is the land and it is perfect the way it is right now, and if you could just crumple up the paper right now please? And try to straighten it out. How does it look compared to mine?

155

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

In a bad shape.

Mr. KEVIN WEISTCHE :

160

Exactly. And that's what is going to happen if people allow this uranium mining project to happen. I am still young. That was my grandfather you heard speaking before me and I want to grow up on the land as well. I am looking at future generations, my kids, and without the land, it is not going to be possible for me to do that.

165

It is a big responsibility bestowed upon us, us Crees, and we got to do it no matter what.

170

I am not so good speaking in public but ever since Hydro built the dam on my grandfather's land, it has never been the same. I have seen how troubled he was along with my grandparents and my family. I witnessed my mom cry after she saw how the river changed and I said to myself I am not going to let another project destroy our land.

175

I am getting choked up again. There's just too much going on right now. But what they said in Mistissini: "No." No means no. But can you understand? It's all I have to say right now.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

180

Kevin, if you have more to say in a while you can come up again. The first thing, I think you missed what we were discussing. We are not talking about uranium mining here in Québec. The Québec Government has decided, has passed along not to allow any uranium mining here in the Province of Québec, and it has been one year since the Québec Government done this and the Government has sent us to various communities to listen to the people whatever their opinion is, whether they agree or not agree.

185

And they want us to make a report so that they could understand of everybody's opinion here in the Province of Québec. And they want to get the Cree people's opinion too so that is why we are here. So, the words that you put today are very important. There's young people in Waskaganish who have a hard time understanding this and I just wanted to explain this. So if you have anything else you wanted to say, please do not hesitate to come up again.

190

Mr. SAMUEL COX

195

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

So the next person that I'll ask to come up is Samuel Cox. So Samuel Cox will come to the front and speak.

Mr. SAMUEL COX :

200

Thank you. I wish to thank you for let me peak and say what I have to say. And also, I wish to thank everybody that is here in the front and also in the back.

205

What I am about to say is my own personal opinion, not only from what I have seen and also thinking back to the future potential problems that I foresee.

So, my name is Samuel, Samuel Cox. I live here in Chisasibi, born and raised in Fort George.

210

I want to start off with the – it's going to take me to the uranium. I was born and raised after school and I was one of the lucky few, I believe, to spend a few years with my parents on the land before the dam was in place. And I saw what happened out in the land. I saw the beaver I was trying to catch lost into the flood. I almost lost a few traps and I lost, we lost a cabin.

215

After that, after the dams were in place, I was also there and like I said, I saw the water come up and flooded about 50% of the trapline where I hunt.

220

Now, I don't know too much about this mineral but so far, I have not heard anything good about it, except it's used for nuclear power plants, nuclear medicine. Also, I believe it is used to power submarines but even then, what happens when a sub is destroyed in water? What happens to the uranium? It's powered by nuclear. I also when off its passed news on Hiroshima. I think somebody already mentioned that, and its devastation effects on people; not only on the books and also on pictures.

225

If the uranium mine goes through or is permitted in Cree lands, I believe, just like other Cree, that tailings will eventually make their way into the surrounding lakes, ponds, streams, and finally into our rivers. Our river Chisasibi La Grande already contains waters from several rivers which have been diverted on to the La Grande River system. I guess it could also enter into our ecosystem, in the atmosphere. Until all this is going on, it will greatly affect our fish, animals and birds we depend on for our traditional food.

230

Unlike store-bought food, we so far have had not to warn people or make recalls about bush food to contamination. Hopefully, this will never happen.

235

Now, this uranium thing might bring in other potential problems which may contaminate our food sources, air, water, or other means. It doesn't sound very reassuring.

240 We have enough problems already from Hydro development that we don't want or shouldn't need to have more risks on our hands for future generations to come.

245 They told us it was clean energy. I heard somebody say that before in the past. Personally, I think if it was so clean, why did many of our people have to take medication to lower their mercury level from eating fish when the development. Why do they put chlorine in our water system? Well, many, especially Elders, do not like the taste or to use tap water for drinking.

250 I remember back on Fort George Island, after the dams were in place, we had to pay \$40.00 for a minute flight to cross the river in the spring time, and then we had to pay another \$40.00 to bring it back to the island. And on top of that, we had to put gas in our trucks to come up to the road to get the water.

255 It is still like that today because now we have bottles of water from down south. We buy it here between \$2.00 and \$3.00 a litre whereas gas is a \$1.30 or less a litre. As you can see, the drinking water is very expensive up here.

260 And finally, as I have already mentioned in the previous mining uranium meetings, when the people came up, representatives, they asked and I told them that Cree people should never have to worry about uranium if ever mined in the Eeyou Istchee, because it was used for or make its way to harm people, the war, talking about Hiroshima.

265 The Cree people should not have that hanging over their heads that this, some of it, came from Eeyou Istchee.

Hopefully I have not offended anybody, anyone by my presentation as it is not my intention but sincere thoughts on uranium.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

270 Thank you very much for your presentation. Just a question about mercury: do you still have to limit your fish eating because of the concentration of mercury in the tissue?

Mr. SAMUEL COX :

275 Even today, we don't eat fish from the reservoir because of what happened, because of the contamination. Many people had to take medication for a year and a half to get rid of it, especially the fish that eat other fish, those ones we don't touch.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

280 Just like that, what is the medication you took?

Mr. SAMUEL COX:

285 I am not sure but we got it from the hospital.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

The what?

290 **Mr. SAMUEL COX :**

We got the medication from the hospital after they took hair samples from my hair.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

295 Okay. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

300 I want to understand one point that you raised. I am not sure I got it exactly. Did you say that your are frighten that the underground water could be contaminated by uranium.

Mr. SAMUEL COX:

305 Any water that comes from where the potential mines is going to be, even the present mines, everything flows into the La Grande River. Everything is being diverted into our river. So I don't know how many rivers are running now in just one river.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :

310 Okay. Is it something that you think that will happen or if there has been tests showing that this type of contamination comes up to here?

Mr. SAMUEL COX :

315 Well, like I said before, all the river that has been diverted in the other reservoirs comes through La Grande River.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

320 Thank you very much.

Mr. SAMUEL COX :

325 Thank you.

**Mr. EDDIE PASH
CHISASIBI LOCAL ELDERS COUNCIL**

330

Mr. JOHN PAUL MURDOCH :

Eddie Pash.

335 **Mr. EDDIE PASH :**

Hello. I am going to be talking in Cree because I am not really fluent in English. I am more comfortable and know more in Cree.

340

I want to say I am thankful, I am going to thank you people for allowing us, to give us time to put down our thoughts; and as for me, I am representing the Elders. It is our Elders Council that gave me the -- to take the time to present this because I am been taking some of their thoughts with me here. And some of these things come from the Regional Elders Council and then there is a Local Regional Council. And they are the ones who were asked to put down their thoughts for the Elders Council, and that they would be able to put down their ideas and what they think about this subject we are talking about. As for me, they give me the permission to put down their thoughts.

345

My name is Eddie Pash. I come as a Cree. And I can say that I grew up out on the land, and that's where I come from. From Cree roots, that's how I grew up. And that's why I don't know as much English as I know Cree because I went to school for a little while, enough to get by.

350

And where I come from, there is not that many people, especially the Elders, and that they would be able to tell where they come from. We ask ourselves: where do we come from? How do we live is the Cree way of life? Cree beliefs? And then, when you really look at it, what do we mean by that? There is not that many that I have really seen this lifestyle, and for those that knew exactly where they came from. And for me, we say real Cree. We are real Cree.

355

360 Those were -- they were known where they came from, and also that they don't want, not to
show in a book where they actually came from. I am talking about the identification of a person; I
am talking about the tradition and the culture, the ID My ID represents genetic ID. My true ID. It's
not the ID that I am talking about that identifies by the law. By the law ID that I am talking about is
the one that is a paper with your photo on it. Be able to be identified who you are and it is signed by
the Government. They say that ID, if the government doesn't signed it, you are not recognized. And
who can change it, my true ID?

365 I have seen and I have seen people far away across Canada where people are at, and their
IDs are the same of what we would have here. So people across the land there, they have the
similar IDs as we have here. And what I am talking about and what they have been looking at is
what they are, what the Elders are telling you and what they have told me to put down what their
370 thoughts.

And sometimes, the thing is it that it takes a while or a long time for them to be heard in the
way that they see things. Were you looking at life? And if we really want to look at it and in what the
Elders know, if we look in the past where do we come from, we say where do we walk from, from
375 our ancestors and many years; and if we look at how they lived, the way they were, grandmothers
and grandfathers, their fathers and they will see what we are talking about here today. What is it
they lived from? And we say that whatever was given to the human being when they were put on
earth, they were given something to live by. And that is how they looked at it. They respected it
what they were given.

380 And maybe we think, sometimes we think that they did not know about the law, then there
was no court in their days in the way they looked at life. And with the useless laws and judgement,
it was not written and it was in their head because that is what they were given. You know, the mind
they were given to use.

385 It has been seen many times and been talked about many times which law that they looked
at. And when we say they live from what nature provided to them off the land, and sometimes the
law that they looked at and used and if somebody did not follow it, and the way that they were
judged sometimes came directly from them and how they should amend their way.

390 And then, if I remember the persons in the past, the ones from the past, our ancestors, and
what we see today, some of the things that we are talking about and things that we have seen, I
have heard them say that they have talked about other things and saying this is the way it is going
to be. And that is the way you are going to see things and experience things.

395

400 And even the way that we are conducting ourselves today with these activities, they foresaw those things but how did they know? And I have never seen somebody holding a pen and paper, and for all the heavy knowledge that they had, we still have a lot of knowledge from that. And when we say: where did they get this? Another hand, watching the culture, tradition, the nature was provided for them. They just slept-by what the nature provides, they respected that. By their law, they said if you do not respect the nature, the nature will not respect you in return.

405 This is very clear; you can see that what we are talking about. Do you recognize what the environment is? We are talking about the pollution; the polluting of the rivers, just for an example. I just gave an example on the river; the species of animals are affected of the pollution of the river, the waters.

410 You might say the river is just the only thing that is polluted. They also had scientific minds, they knew these things. If you asked them, one example, why the river is polluted, where does the pollution comes from; the pollution comes from by destroying the nature, the natural waters that were there. By doing this, putting dams, you are destroying the nature and that water that is polluted pollutes the land. You'll probably say: how can the land be polluted too with the water that is polluted? We all know that water out there evaporates and causes the clouds to float around on the land. When the clouds get to heavy, it starts to rain. And that rain, we can call lots of times, acid rain.

420 And all the animals, like we are talking about the animals too; they live on that and the rivers and they live off the land. Our ancestors lived off the land; if we want to live like our ancestors what is going to happen to us? There are a lot of things that are hidden, we are blindfolded; they are trying to be blindfolded, but you would never be able to blindfold these ancestors they are talking about.

425 Their minds are just like the computers, that we see the computers. Their minds were just like the GPS. They find their way, they communicate; there have a lot on their minds. They work everything through their mind and it was given for them to do the use. They even communicate with each other from -- from one settlement to another settlement. They can communicate like that. It is like goods. We might say we have come out with new technology today; our Ancestors had the same technology already.

430 These Elders that they sent me here to put their words in, sometimes they are touched when we tell them there is somebody there that they are going to teach you about your traditional way of life and your cultures. If you teach them that, those subjects, it's going to be somebody there that is going to teach you with a certificate. A person does certify, so one is going to teach you about your culture. When we tell them that, guess what they feel like; it's very touching for them.

435

440 I know they have been through a lot of hardships living off the land; they enjoyed that. This is where they got their knowledge. You get your knowledge from going through these hardships. And that's -- Now, when we're saying about the pollution, we know what the answer is going to be, what these Elders, when you ask them what they think, we can know what the answers are going to be because they have been through this again, and they have lots of knowledge about this, what is happening, what has already been happening.

445 I'm just giving a little example about that pollution again on the river. You have heard quite a few people saying about the fish in our river. What causes that? When I say about the natural waters that were there and that they are destroyed, it's just like the one -- sometimes they say hard water, the difference of hard water and the natural water. If you want to put, like if you want to add water to the batteries, you can use the natural water; and if you use the natural water, the battery is going to be good, it will charged. And if you use, even though it's natural water, if you use a cup, a tin cup right there, you are polluting the water. If you put that water in the battery, like an acid, you know that will destroy the acid.

455 This is the same theory that we use about the fish. You see, these fish in a polluted river like, I am talking about the Chisasibi River, you see that all the fish, they are very big, fat; why is that? If you ask me, it's just like same thing as you do to the chicken. To raise the chicken, have them grow fast, you inject chemical in their bodies. It's the same thing. We do the same thing to the fish. What is happening with us when we eat those domestic foods? That is what happens to us again too. And we try to blindfold these people now but we cannot. Because if you see these people, they are going to say, tell you they are going to go back to the nature, talk to the nature. They communicate through the nature. You might say: he's crazy talking to a tree. That's what they do, they communicate through there, that's what they you used to do.

465 There is a lot of -- like I've heard somebody say, not too long ago: "If you ask these Elders, lots of things they are not going to tell you because they don't want the precious gift that they received to be destroyed like what they do, like they do with the nature that they depend on." The nature is polluted in a way, corrupted, lot of wastes. And I just wanted to -- they sent me here. They told me to do this presentation for them, the Elders that I am talking about and just by this presentation; you can see what they feel and what their answer is going to be if you ask them what they think about this uranium mining.

470 I think that is about all I can say for now. I don't know whether I am going to be able to say anything anymore.

475 Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Thank you very much.

480

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

Meekwech. We will take a break for ten minutes and after the break, we will have Abraham Bearskin come up and speak.

485

10-MINUTE RECESS

490

Mr. ABRAHAM BEARSKIN

Mr. ABRAHAM BEARSKIN :

495

First, I want to say hello and shake hands with everybody. I am going to talk about almost, like a different way to approach the subject in what I will say.

First I want to say, my name is -- the name that I was given at birth (Cree). So I used that now but the Christian name that is given to me that is Abraham Bearskin.

500

So I want to speak on behalf of my ancestors, my dad, my teachers, their legacy; those are my teachers, they are both gone. Those were my scientists, they were professionals. They had the answers spiritually, they were never wrong. They knew the medicines. They knew the movement of the animal life. They were a way of life.

505

So you could see in them part of the pain they carried through the developments of the land; they looked at it but they had hope; they carried that pain for us.

First of all, for me, every river, every lake, trees, the plant life, mountains have a story. The rock that you speak about, uranium, there is a story that was foretold long time ago. I want to make it short, so you could go on a slide presentation. This character, he did things. If you would say no to him, he would do it; he wanted to learn. He knew the spirit of the land, everything about the land. He knew what not to touch, things that were meant for him and things that were not meant to be touched, to stay as they are.

510

515

520 Anyways, his parents were killed by this beast and he hunted them and he made two arrows:
one arrow, that's the story from these two men, was from that rock. Just to find out the strength of
that rock, and he put it as an arrow head and he shot at two things: a tree and a rocky mountain
and those things blasted. So he knew that that wasn't meant for us to touch. And it took years to
settle. Because I want to relate that to what I just told you.

525 Okay. For us, maybe this will add to the "no", it has to. We have the rite of passage that they
set for us to follow. Just by that you see the world. How the world was created, I don't have to go
into that. So I am going to speak from a spiritual part of a being. The power of the earth, nobody
knows the power but our ancestors did. Our people knew even the universe. So the spirit of people
and the spirit of the land and the spirit of who made them, they understood that. They were careful
not to disturb what was not meant to be disturbed. So first of all, foremost in our way, we always
acknowledge the Creator and the many gifts that he has given us to survive this world.

530 So our ancestors knew the protocols, the unwritten laws of the Creator; they knew that
without reading a book. Our Bible, if you could say, is the land.

535 Secondly, our ancestors have passed on this knowledge and some of the people carry it
whether be hunters, trappers, fishermen, medicine and this knowledge you see, you have heard
some of this knowledge right before you.

540 Thirdly, we are us that we honour; when I say "us", that's all people, all races of men. So we
have to approach this in that manner when we speak about this spirit which is uranium. That is very
key in our life.

545 So this way of life that you still want to somehow destroy, in this case, it's a task to do it; this
spirit that is so strong that it was meant not to be touched: uranium. And the consequences of a
Elder tells you, he is going to tell you the truth but you have to do research to validate that
knowledge.

550 This has been proven in the medicine when they did the diabetes medicine and the Elders
shared their knowledge of medicine, the herbs. They took that medicine and studied it in the lab.
They broke it down. You see, our way, we don't do that. We know it is going to work because that
was meant, the Creator made it. When they came and validated that to the Elders, a friend of mine
was translating and this Elder spoke to him and this professor wanted to know: "What did he say?"
He said: "They are not telling us something that's new. They already knew that." We told them that.
He didn't believe it. They had to do this, they had to research, research. They have to know.

555 So we work with two things. One has to do with love; one has to do with the wisdom. And to
me those are spirits, the minds of people. So you touch the very core of a being in the

560 developments you do, you forget the spiritual aspect of healing and you see the results now. And with the development, there are new diseases that come with it. Our people knew that. Why? They tell us everything is alive so that uranium, it will react because it doesn't know you. Because you have not asked permission in the right way, in a spiritual way, because everything you look at is wealth; they have to make money, create jobs, but there is something you miss: how do you address that if it's good to go ahead? And you see it in the world the disasters, the reactions, the results.

565 So our ancestors knew these. What I am talking about here is, you know, there is a purpose. The Creator chose Eeyou Istchee for us to live and our purpose is to manifest what was given to us and then everything within, but my dad told of a story, well his grandparents told him. There are certain lakes that were not meant to be touched, they are thick, they are like clay; that's what people call it bad medicine. It is going to, once you fool around with it, if you don't know what that is, it's going to react. So, sure you have these studies, researchers' answers, but you don't know, nobody can really know the outcome, because you are part of the Creation, of that spirit, so you know how to honour that; you leave it.

570 So the rites of passage has a process and you are disrupting that life. You have to look at the human aspect of any development and in this case, uranium. See, our strength lies with things, how we do things. All these tell a story. I mean, everything is there, the knowledge, traditional knowledge, protocols, the loss -- you haven't even considered that, the loss of nature. The best people to tell you is *Nishiyuu* or the Elders.

580 You know, I want to relate a story here. Here it has to do with knowledge, happiness, what the animal life brings: life, good health, good thoughts. When this was dammed, people used to go to the riverbank and watch the breakup. Lot of joy, lots of good health. Now, we cannot do that so you still carry that pain that somebody took that away from you. One woman spoke earlier about the fishing up river; same thing, that was togetherness. People were expecting, excited to see the power of the river. It is the same here.

585 Rites of passage for me, what are they? Every nation has a rite of passage; why are they important in our lives? Why do we need them? How do they facilitate in our growth, how do we honour lives in various stages?

590 Now there is sexual abuse, there's child incest, family violence, there is something wrong. Something came in-between the process of life. So that's poison; the very essence of poison of development. So I would ask you that in your own culture.

595

600 Every state has its ritual. The Creation, you know, for me, I don't just see you in front of me or behind you, I see more than a human being but the respect, understanding. I understand you, I have been in your schools but you haven't been in my mine and yet, you bring this to me in my home. You are visitors in my home, and in my home, for me, if I go into your house, I want to respect your house. The protocols and rules you set, I will want to know so I do not disturb your place.

605 But you come into my house, you don't respect that. You don't respect my spirit so you attack my spirit. But even though that is happening, I am not going to hate you. I want to study you more but I am going to invite you to know me, who I am, and what values I have, and why the process of life is so important to me. It's like a small tree that is growing or a flower. That tree has a process of life so it has a history. The tree teaches me witnessing. He stood many high winds, many types of things happening around him; I want to learn it from him; same with our ancestors, same with me.

610 So what I am telling you is the truth but you are going to ask me why. You are going to ask me at the end questions, and to me you haven't listen, you listen from here, not necessarily from here. These two have to work together and if you understand me, you and I are going to sit side by side and exchange.

615 I have gone to your schools. I have studied the western curriculum. Our curriculum is this. That's the highest education you can ever have. You will never graduate from that process. You will not have something to show that says that you have graduated. That's the difference because you are speaking about my ancestors, my late parents, my late relatives and there is some that have laid their life, the children, babies so the diabetes arrived today and history tells you that. But now, 620 it's in a different manner where you're bringing diseases, different types of diseases. And yet, you are going to study and do research and tell me why these things are happening and I will tell you otherwise. I will tell you the reasons. You might end up arguing with me.

625 So it has to do with personal development, not just being human, but the development of Mother Earth, the development of the plant life, the medicine, the water; that's very essential, even the bird life, the little life or the ones that live in the water. So you started the discovery yourself; you start to know every aspect of your being, and you start to connect with you, with others, and you start to connect with other cultures.

630 So you don't approach this necessarily with hatred; of course the anger is going to come in there because it's an emotion. And it can all destroy some people from inside, it will eat away your stomach and it will create certain diseases.

635 So I want to focus on this. Thanks to this person that sent me that picture, I forget who. I hope this will have an impact on the "no" for Eeyou of Eeyou Istchee.

The rites, the seven values of *Nishiyuu* rites of passage. We know where Creation comes from one Creator, two spirits work side by side to create the life and that is sacred. All life, not just the human life, the animals life, the birds life, and we do come from a place, some people call it heaven; others refer to it as a place of afterlife.

640

The preconception for us is important. The women could speak on this. I have a brother and she caught this disease, I forgot what it's called, babies don't live till after nine months. Cree encephalitis, something like. We never had that, we never encountered that until the development. So there is something not right in the environment. You haven't studied that yet. They haven't studied that yet, and yet you want to do this and that.

645

So it affects before birth during pregnancy. The causes of development, you have not addressed that. You will see that also in the animal life, birth defects. So there is also disturbance right there; it has to do with health in their conception during pregnancy, childhood, youth, and adulthood, older. You want to be able go full circle, to go back naturally without really being sick. Long time ago they weren't sick, they were old, they died, left this world naturally. Now, it's different. Our Elders, they take all kinds of pills for what? Some don't know.

650

So for me, I see the disturbance; it is already disturbed and you want to disturb that more but we do respect all life and how it comes into this world. And it shows feasting, celebration. You celebrate life, not something that's going to destroy the world or affect the world. You celebrate something that is going to do good and develop healthy people, healthy beings, healthy communities.

655

So, what I want to get across here is after so many years in Eeyou Istchee, 200 or 300 years North America, maybe 500 years, the disruption of a way of life, the rites of passage is still there. The process of our own being, we have adapted, adapted the best we know how, though now most of us work to build strong families in the healthy in Eeyou Istchee. We have to have healthy minds, healthy spirits. They have to take that into account, the effect of the psychological being, effect of a human being. So if you look at the world, this is the world, this is a human being; everything that you do to the earth, you do the same, you affect a being.

660

665

My teachers. This is being healthy. We feasted after this. That's one on a winter walk. Now, rites of passages, naming ceremonies, walking out ceremonies, new name... all that. This is the first snowshoe. I was about 54 when I did that. It's me. At the same time, to be healthy and to understand, us that went to school; the process of the transfer of knowledge from the Elders to us, this is the process. There, snowshoe and that what you do; that's wisdom and that's love.

670

675 So I want to make a quote to you, Elders' quotation. It's from the Hunting Law that C.T.
worked on it, and this is from an Elder. Eeyou define Eeyou culture simply as the way of life
adopted by Eeyou; in fact, Eeyou describe Eeyou culture as Eeyou (Cree word) or Eeyou way of
life. For Eeyou, culture is determined and shaped by Eeyou. The Eeyou way of doing things and
680 encompasses the complex whole of beliefs, values, principles, institutions, morals, customs,
traditions and knowledge of Eeyou.

You know, there is teaching here; some of those people are gone but they left something
here. As one Elder, he's long gone, said: "The land is and has been for thousands of years.
Thousands of years, the economic base of my people left alone for another thousand years, we
685 would still survive". Elder John Petagumskum Senior.

There is another Elder: "The passage of knowledge does not flow one way, the student must
have a desire to learn that is how it is, if you seek knowledge you will find it." Chisasibi child, Joe
Bearskin, as translated by Irene House. So you also for me, you reflect on that. There is a youth
690 that made that journey, and this is his quote: "My father said not to take my eye out to me, but to
listen to what the land was saying. I discovered the sound of my snowshoes and toboggan, those
sounds became music to me." Jordan Mastay. These quotes, these teachings, you have heard them
before but they have to be repeated again.

695 So if I can say *Nishiyuu* way, human development is all about choices, good choices not
divided and conflict. The greatest gift of a human being is their gift to choose. You don't leave us
that. What's your right is the government that will say yes or no. The *Nishiyuu* way is the freedom to
choose without depending on conditions. The *Nishiyuu* way is the individual who creates his own
environment and conditions as every person; it's the individualization of one spirit and, therefore,
700 not limited by environment and conditions. We are free.

What I just shared is the history, the knowledge of Eeyou history, preservation of ancestors'
teaching, the *Nishiyuu* philosophy, the way of life, our language. So you have to have healthy
minds. We cannot have, really have healthy minds, because we are going to be fighting to be able
705 to live and enjoy life within Eeyou Istchee.

I want to maybe point this out and close this off. I don't know how to put this but the best way
I could put is you are dealing with our spirit. I don't know if you understand that. I respect your spirit.
It is our spirit that makes every part of our own human being. We are a spirit with a body, not a
710 body with a spirit; that is how it is set. We cannot change that. That's why we are strong when we
speak about the land. It has to do with our identity and destiny to healthy living and to discover our
own spirit and our own self.

I thank you.

715

Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

I am going to ask Violet Pachanos now to have her say.

720

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Good night!

725

Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS :

Good evening to all. My name is Violet Pachanos, I live here in Chisasibi. I am a member of the Council, here in Chisasibi Councillor. I am also the president of Niskamoon Corporation in which we have to deal with social acceptability. I am also a commissioner on the Regional Police Commission and many other things that I do. So those are the main things.

730

I will not take up much of your time. I just had a few things that I wanted to put forward. Just trying to remind people, today is Remembrance Day, November the 11th, which is celebrated for past wars; and also for the Cree, it's for the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement which was November the 11th, 1975 at midnight.

735

So it has that purpose for the Cree. Maybe there would not be a celebration or the commemoration of the World Wars if it had not been for the vast destruction and the wars of men fighting over land. Majority of cases we know, it is about the land when people are fighting in the world and there again, somebody mentioned Hiroshima and if it had not been for uranium, maybe there would have not been Hiroshima. And also talk about Chernobyl, the disaster.

740

And from all these and various other disasters that happened in the world are from man himself having invented and developed resources that they did not really know how to handle, because they are of nature. And many people have mentioned here that if you disturb and destruct the environment, the earth, the land, nature itself will come back on you and maybe destruct you, as we know in various places, that has happened.

745

So these hearings are all about uranium and the mining of uranium. And we know mining even if it's not uranium, it destroys, destructs the land, the environment and the people, and we have heard many people mentioned what the development is doing to people, especially the people who live off the land, who live on the land and take their livelihood from the land.

750

755 This land, this Eeyou Istchee has supported and given the life to our people. Eeyou of Eeyou
Istchee, and that is how we survived and we will continue to survive if we take care of the land. And
by saying “no” to uranium mining, we will be saving lives, we will be saving a culture of people, and
we hope that whatever the people who will write what comes from these hearings, will be able to do
it in a way that will be respectful of what you hear from the people, the Cree. And I find it very
difficult when people who – we’ve heard of experts and people who are considered experts, and
760 who have knowledge of the subject that is being discussed and talked about, and it is only when
you have a piece of paper that you are considered to be knowledgeable and you have the wisdom
of that particular subject, but I wonder how it will be written and how it will come across when
people in the Eeyou speaks from the heart, and particularly if people who will write what comes
from these hearings, if they don’t understand the Cree language, if they have not lived on the land
765 like the people, how is that going to look on paper in the report?

When somebody speaks from the heart, it is from the heart; they are not looking at anything,
it is their lives, it comes from within. And when we look at Eeyou Istchee, the people go there, go
out there to heal; we know our lifestyle has changed but we are in a situation where we can still go
770 out to the land whenever we want, and we still have some freedom but we are tight to time and the
process of doing things in a none-native way, because we look at the clock for everything that we
do.

But we do get the chance to go out to the land and I think this what keeps a lot of us who sit
775 in offices, have to go down south and when you come back home, that is where you want to be.
And the Cree people like to travel, they drive long distances; they like to drive but for me, that drive
which I do a lot, and most of the time I am alone driving the hundreds of kilometers, but you are on
the land. You look at the land and it gives you time to yourself and you’re able to see nature and
that helps your soul, your mind and body.

780 There was a person, an aboriginal person, one time told me, he says: “You people are lucky,
you still have your land, you still live up there in James Bay; the land is still open for you and, he
said, and I know that is what keeps you people going. You are strong and you are able to speak for
your people.” But, he said: “For us, we live near towns and cities and all you see is concrete and
785 glass and, he said, that does not do much for our soul.” So that is an observation from a person, an
indigenous person who lives in the city, I guess.

And somebody mentioned: “There are many places in the world that are called paradise,
especially vacation places like in the Caribbean and wherever, it is called paradise because you go
790 there to vacation in the sun and all that, but for our people Eeyou Istchee is our paradise.” It is
paradise for us because you get peace when you are out there and you clear your mind of the
pressure from work, from life itself.

795 And I just want to mention also that people, other indigenous people in the world, I have met many indigenous people from around the world, and the problem that aboriginal people, indigenous people have is universal: they all have a problem with the development, especially when it comes to their territory.

800 And I know they look to the Cree in many things because I guess the Cree have been considered leaders in what they have managed to accomplish and live with the so-called progress and live with that development or try to live with the development. But somewhere, somehow, disasters occur, and what do you do? Nobody is prepared for that because you don't know which way they are going to go as we've learned from places around the world that have disasters.

805 Somebody asked the question earlier: "What could be done to establish or re-establish trust in governments?" I don't think it is answerable because you don't know what the government will do. They give you promises, that was said before, we sign treaties with them but they always manage to find a way to get around to live up to the trust. And indigenous peoples, aboriginal peoples are trustees or the government was the trustee of them, but I think it would be a good start if the final analyses whatever their report will state that if the answer is "no" to uranium, and this is what the Crees are saying: "No to uranium."

815 Whenever development takes place, I know the developer is obligated to return the land as much as possible to its original state, but how can you put the land back to its original state when you destroyed what was originally on that land.

820 My mother, my late mother, I used to take her to the camp and she would look around and see, and we had our territory, our camp is way passed the LG-3, we have to cross the LG-3 dam, drive across it to get our trapline, and she would look at it and wonder, you know, how can this be? And she would say: "I guess they can never replace anything that was there to its original state." Because I said to her: "Oh, they are supposed to put trees, plant trees and grass and all that and try to put it back the way it was." And she said: "They never can do that." I did not quite understand it then, but then all of a sudden I realized what she meant. There was a tree there, a particular tree; you are not going to plant that same tree because you have destroyed it and even if you put another tree, it is not the same tree at all. So, I think this is what she was saying.

825 So I think that is all I have to say. I thank you for listening to me and giving me the opportunity to say a few words, and I wish you well in your endeavour and in to write what the people are saying, and what is it they do not want and I guess it's: "No to uranium."

830

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

835 Thank you, Ms. Pachanos. I would like to ask you a question. Just one, this time. I have asked you many more but this time just one.

840 You said that to establish trust, a good start would be after the report, if the governmental decision would be “No to uranium.” If the government was doing that, what in your mind, what would they be protecting most? What would be the deepest signification of that decision for you, for your people? What would it recognize?

Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS :

845 If you allow me to write the decision for you, I will do it.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

850 No, no, I would like -- what would be the meaning for you if they would say “no”. You said it could re-establish trust, yes, but would be the meaning of that decision for you? What would be the most important gain or the most important signification for you?

Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS:

855 It might mean, it could mean that they heard what the people are saying and there is an understanding of what the people are saying and what their life means to them or what life means to people, because when the uranium is mined here, it is not the worst; only do the damages would be around the world, what they would use uranium for. And also, scientists and people in their wisdom should be able to find alternative ways of producing energy and producing medicine with
860 the knowledge that they were given.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

865 So, it would be a kind of recognition of your way of life.

Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS :

870 Yes.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

875 I understand. Thank you. Other questions? No. So we thank you very much. And it was a pleasure.

Mrs. VIOLET PACHANOS :

880 Thank you.

Mr. LEONARD HOUSE

885

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

Leonard House.

890

Mr. LEONARD HOUSE :

Waachiyaa! My name is Leonard House. I am from Chisasibi. I was born in Fort George which we call Chisasibi. And in a house; not in a hospital, in a house.

895

And I guess they did not want to deliver me in a hospital, and I have problem with everything, speaking my own language. I speak Cree-English. Cree language mixed up with English and Cree.

900

I am a foolish man, you know, I do silly things and I was in Gatineau when they announced the project here, the James Bay Project. I was going to school in the -- and Bourassa said something. I never got in politics before, I never did want to get mixed up in that, and he said something profound to me, well what he said. He said, he announced the project, you know the project of a century; he said there is nobody over there. I said in my head, I said: I come from there. I am from there. I live there, that's where I was born. How can he say nobody is there?

905

And I remembered my parents, they were living there. Who are they, nobodies? There are other people there, I was always afraid of people but I have seen people.

910

So back in -- when I say a foolish man, my father, when I came back to Chisasibi in 1972, my father was always hunting. He invited me to go hunting with him, so I had nothing else to do, so I thought it would be good. So, he said: "Let's go. Tomorrow, we'll go." So in the morning he was getting all ready and I only had my jeans on. It was just January, winter, I only had my jeans on. My father said: "Shouldn't you wear something else? Shouldn't you wear something else?" He said. I

915 said: “No, no, I’ll be okay.” So we went by the highway, the river was the highway at that time, there was no road. You had to come back by plane. So it must have been 50 degrees below 0, me and my jeans, you know. Wow, the winter, the frost is -- well, the frost there really put a bite in my legs. You know, talk about a foolish man. No ski-doo pants, just jeans and my long johns underneath, but the cold just went through it, through my pants and into my legs – talk about a foolish man. So I learned, I had to learn that wisdom doesn’t really come by age, you know, so I had to look somewhere else for wisdom.

920 I could not look at people because of residential school. The church sort of -- I was disappointed with the church. It was supposed to help. I was disappointed with the government; they can change the laws any time they want according to their own desires and what they are governed by. I thought how can these two Nations work together? They cannot work together because one is governed by the all mighty dollar and one is governed by an idea. This group does not have time for this group.

930 We talk about spirits, they talk about money; what it will cost? How much it will cost? It has nothing to do with life. These people talk about life, there is two cultures. Eventually, I tried, I worked – well, when I was young the people told me here as I was growing up that I had no knowledge, I had no wisdom. So, I should keep my mouth shut as a teenager during the Hydro; they wanted to stop the project. So I did not say anything. I just went to work there. The Hydro, I worked for Desourdy Construction and in LG-4, I went Kiewit Construction, working on the dam, and that middle stuff there, they call the moraine clay, that is where, most the time I spent my time.

935 When I was in LG-4, my wife called me here and she did not like me working out there. So I came back and I worked here during relocation. So I worked with that, and they were moving the houses over there, trying relocating them here, and I didn’t know nothing about housing, and I just talk about experts. I said to one, the one I worked with from the outside, who was my instructor, I guess: “You know what? The town, the septic tanks they are building here will not work. You know what is going to happen?” I said: “The town where we live is silt, clay. The water in those septic, like we are going to be flushing toilets and adding more water to the land, and the water is going to come up and you need a...” So that was the... he told me, well I told him another thing there: “The drain, we need to drain, that’s what we need to do is drain the water that is going to come up, so it does not flood the place.” He tells me – I go see another guy there, an inspector, he tells what I told him, he tells me: “They are experts, you don’t have anything.” I didn’t have a plaque or, you know, some kind of a thing, I was just a heavy equipment operator over there, and I came to work here.

950 So there are experts that had planned this move, and I went to another person, a native person, I said: “Why are you moving those houses over there? There are not built right. Why?” And he tells me: “The government said: “You have to move those houses because we have to justify the moving of those houses, the money we spent on those houses over there, built them over there.”

955 But most of the time, there was only three inches of insulation on those houses, so people had to turn up the heat in the house and in the roof, ice would form in the roof on the island, and it would rain whenever there was warm weather, you know.

960 So this is all planned by experts, and just recently they changed the drainage, they put in the drainage here in Chisasibi. They tore up all the pavement to put the drainage in, just recently. But the move was when, almost forty years ago. I was no expert; for me, it was just common sense, you know. I worked on the dam and I noticed what was happening, clay and water, because that was keeping the water on this end from going to over here on this end on those dykes.

965 So I thought wisdom, where do we get wisdom? It's not man; you can get no wisdom from man because these people, the government who represents the people are governed by money. All they seem to want to do is oppress the people. Like right now, we are joining the United States and other and bomb the hell out of these people over there, you know? If they don't think our way. But we are doing over there is going to come back to us here. That is what I believe because right now, I am seeking wisdom; and where can I get wisdom if I cannot get it from there or the government or from here?

970 Like my father hunted, that's what his life was. You know, like I worked over there in James Bay and when I get laid off, I would go hunting with him, you know, but it's not an easy life. He used to get up early in the mornings. He said: that is when the animals move, and I used to get sore in our muscles and – muscles sore, and I went: "Ah! Pain." And he would say: "Never mind, let's go anyway." He was not interested in my pain. Anyway, I would go out anyway but then the pain usually went away.

980 So I would like to read something here because it is from the Bible. I don't know if anybody reads the Bible any more, I seem to have an opposition every time I talk about the Bible, but I find that it has many... I find it has wisdom. When you read, I have to meditate on it. And I am just going to read about the land.

985 In Isaiah 45:18, it says: "Therefore, thus said the Lord that created the Heavens. God himself that formed the Earth and made it, he has established it, he created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited." Than he says: "I am the Lord and there is none else."

990 Well, God who created all -- this is my note on that. God who created all tells us to love one another, and thank him for the abundance of all things. In Deuteronomy 28:47-48, it says there: "Because you did not serve the Lord, thy God, with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore shall thou serve thy enemies whom the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things. And he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he has destroyed thee."

995 So God created all things, he created man. Man was told to have dominion over what happened over here on earth and he is supposed to have dominion over the animals and whatever you have, but man is not supposed to oppress man; that's what we do. You know? We oppress each other because of our desires, of our greed for money or for other things.

1000 And this God created man and created nations; around the world, there are different nations, you know, and they all believe in something. Like I don't know if I should mention the Muslims, they have a different view, I don't know, they seem to be angry about something, about us. You know, the twin towers in 2001, two planes went through that -- one plane went through that building, one plane went through that building and there was a third one that fainted, you know. In the news, you never heard about the third one. You heard about the twin towers being, you know, being -- a plane and then, I guess with the fuel and the fire went down. But the third one, why did they go down? 1005 You never hear about the third one. This is a building that just fainted.

1010 You know, men did not report the third building. The news did not really report it. I don't know who was suppressing the news. But in those governments like around the world, they are elected for the benefit of the people to do things for the people. But it seems like it's only oppression now. They want to oppress the people they are supposed to love; because of what? Greed, money. And how can we say -- like Canada is a country who is supporting the States. Canada used to be a Nation who would send the Red Cross to the nations, to bandage them up, you know, bandage the people who were wounded in the wars. But what do we send now? Planes that bomb certain places, you know.

1015 In the Bible, it says: whatever you sow on earth that you shall reap. Whatever we do to other people, we shall get the same thing. I find that saying true because what we say, what is the golden rule for here? Treat people the way you want to be treated. That is what God says. Whatever you sow you shall reap.

1020 So don't be surprised if they bring something here from the old countries because what we are doing to them, they are going to do it here. That is what you are going to sow. Well, that's what you sowed, you are going to reap it.

1025 So governments, that's why I ask the -- like the government is most to make a decision on uranium; right now, everything is falling down South: the money markets is falling, people are unemployed. Governments want money and they are governed by that money. And they are bought off -- I hear on the news that Montréal is corruption, construction corruption; corrupted by even the people in the government. Are these the people that are going to make those decisions, 1030 the same people?

1035

They are supposed to be for the people. That includes health that includes money. You know, we are blessed with everything in Canada. We don't have the wars they have in the old -- we are blessed here, like here in 1971. I remember the old type, the old way of life, I remember it, I vaguely remember it, but it's not the same today when money is concerned. People here don't know how to handle money. They never had it. We never had it but they are willing to give whatever they had. That's what we have been taught here.

1040

I went to Montreal sometime this summer. I went to a restaurant and this guy, this young guy comes and sits down in the restaurant, asked me: "What can I eat to get the most of my money?" He was hungry. I guess he didn't have much, he was a young guy. And I said: "What if I buy you your breakfast?" I am not working, I only got a pension, but it wasn't that. "What if I buy you breakfast?" He said: "I don't know you. I don't know you." I said: "Do I have to know you to buy you breakfast?"

1045

In the Bible, it says give and it shall be given to you. Good measure, press down and shake them together and running over shall men give on to you. But the government doesn't have time for that. It is money. And they don't have time for God because it is money.

1050

Right now people are crying for jobs down South because of the collapse. Somewhere, I don't know where, the employers had this company, I think Carterpillar, I don't know in London, Ontario, or somewhere around there, the company asked the workers to lower their salaries. The Union said no. They closed the plant. People were out of work. I don't know what player replaced it, they moved to the States.

1055

So the people who have money don't invest because they want to put the wages down, that's the idea. So eventually, the people will have to work maybe minimum wages. That is what I get out of the Bible, but we don't have time for God either, life is too fast. We cannot wait. Patience is what is needed out there but we need to be careful also to what we do to the land as custodian, people who take care of the land. The government is supposed to be working on the land for the people so that, you know, they will protect the land.

1060

1065

I am sorry to -- no, that is all I read now. That is all that is coming out of me, the Bible, from the Bible. So, in our minds, why did God destroy the world? Because of the wickedness; thoughts were evil. Our thoughts were evil. That is why he destroyed it, that is what we are told in the Bible but I have no idea who is reading the Bible now.

1070

So, I say we should be careful with uranium and the costs it will cost and the cost and effect of uranium. I have no problem with people working. I have no problem with development. Native people have always been known to help people. That's all they were -- on the islands, what I remember, because most of the time I went to school, I didn't live with my parents. They shipped

me around from town to town or anywhere they wanted and even now, you know, the Cree School Board, the Cree Health Board, all these were negotiated.

1075

This is going to be the last remark I am going to make. Even those companies where I -- agreement, I only dealt with the Cree Health Board two years; I had a heart problem and I told the Cree Health Board: "Can you put me somewhere near, like not too many inclines, stairs?" And the Cree Health Board tells me: "You stay where we tell you to stay." I'm only, this is only -- I was talking not to a native person but to a none-native person. She tells me: "You stay where we tell you to stay." But I said: "Is this not a negotiated agreement?" "You are not paying." That's what she told me. So I figured: it is controlled by something, by maybe money.

1080

So this uranium, I think, it's going to affect a lot of people health wise, I don't know how fast. So I just say that I hope everybody makes the right decision for the benefit of the people, you know. I understand people need jobs, people need... but I figure they need God more.

1085

I thank you for coming and hopefully you will make the right decision.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1090

Thank you.

Mr. LEONARD HOUSE :

1095

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

1100

Ernest Tomatuk. The next person to speak is Ernest Tomatuk after a five-minute break. We will take a five-minute break.

1105

5-MINUTE RECESS

1110

Mr. ERNEST TOMATUK

Mr. ERNEST TOMATUK :

1115

I have a few things to say, not too much because people have said a lot. So just some ideas that I had. But I understand when people talk here, they are talking from the heart. You can understand people when something really affects them, the way that we that live on this side, on the North.

1120

It's mostly Chisasibi people that were talking and the things I want to tell would be the same, related to the mining, with the damming of rivers and there is some mines in our territory. I just want to remind people here how the experience is affecting us. So there's a lot of activity there.

1125

I just want to touch on the subject of that activity around the mine is affecting the animals in that area. Not only the non-native people but also the native people, I just wanted to remind people of that. I didn't want to take too long at this.

1130

I thought that I would be able to, but it is understood but listening to people, which way they are forming their talk, and when there was a meetings in Waskaganish, three or four years ago -- I think J.P., you were there, that's when the subject was opened and the people already said they would not like to see this development, and I say again that I don't want to see this development.

1135

It would take us a long time if we brought everything out, not one day, not two days, maybe a whole day if we wanted to talk about everything in detail, but Abraham said that there is a separate thing and what Deputy Chief Daisy House said, I want to touch on that subject of that there're people -- her family is happy when they are out on the land, and that's exactly the same thing in our town, that we don't want to lose this hunting way of life; not only work, and we have to do it for our kids for the future.

1140

Work is okay. It's good and for the younger people, but there are people, but not everybody can work in an office or have a job, so we used part of the operation of the mine, that's why we agreed to it so that some employment will come to the community. But we have to be careful not to destroy the earth, not only for us but also for everybody, non-native people too, while we are on this earth. That's basically what I wanted to say.

1145

I came in this morning from Waskaganish, and now tonight, I will be driving back. Okay. I would take a long time if I had prepared more for it, but I was told later on that I should come here to present something here at the hearing. I did think about it but I did not write everything down. But I believe that there are people here that have more wisdom than I and I learned a lot by listening to this people.

1150

But it's clearly understood that people do not want to see this type of development in the Eeyou Istchee, and I also stand with that position.

1155 Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

Meekwech Ernest!

1160

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

And drive safely, because you have a long run to do.

1165 **Mr. ERNEST TOMATUK:**

Yes. Two and a half hours. Two to three hours.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1170

Thank you.

1175

Mr. DAVID BEARSKIN

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1180 Good night, Mr. Bearskin.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

David Bearskin.

1185

Mr. DAVID BEARSKIN :

1190 Okay, Hello everybody. Those people that are visiting us, we thank you why you are here, that there is something that needs to be talked about and a subject that Cree people are against. And the talk that I have heard since I have been here, I've heard the same message that they are not agreeable to this development, and also for myself, that I do not agree with this particular

subject of exploitation of uranium. But at this point, I would like to ask a question, I don't know if it can be answered. In the past, we dealt, we had sessions with Hydro when they were developing but they did not answer certain questions. And for certain things, we haven't heard any answers.

1195

Our river here, the way it has been dammed, before it was dammed, the water was pure and my mother used to tell me to go down the river and get a bucket of water, and the water was as clear as a bottle of water that you get from the South. Only when there is a wind blowing with different stuff blowing on the river, that's the only time you did not see it clear.

1200

The thing that bothers me the most: why is it that we are losing people fast? We seem to be losing a lot of people that are dying. It seems, we noticed -- me, I think that the river not frozen over the winter, mostly not frozen, and the number of dams we have, there is a lot of stuff that comes through those turbines and those dams, and now we can't just go down and grab of cup of water from the river, we cannot drink the water directly, and maybe, what I think is that there is a lot of stuff because the river doesn't freeze, that a lot of the sickness comes from that river.

1205

And also the cold, the cold humidity at minus degrees is not good for us and that is what I believe, and it seems that I am asking the question here. That is why I believe we are losing a lot of people more than usual. Children not even ten yet. I know a child who, before ten, who had a stroke but he is recovering. I never saw this phenomenon before, and when we are out along the island, we never saw the water during winter. And also, we noticed that when we settled the community here, we settled again right by the river, you know, I would have preferred that we were away from the banks of the river.

1210

1215

And I think that's why we are losing our salt water here because of the volume of water that comes through us, the effluents that go with the water. Because somewhere along the river, many parts of the river, there was a lot of blasting done in order to build those dams and those, the blasted rock and rock that was destroyed is under the water, and it seems that it's going to be like that for the future, that this water will not be as good as it was before.

1220

Even when our river, before other rivers were diverted here, we still had that same experience with the river not freezing. And the first dam, LG-2 dam was the first one. That's, I believe, that's where that we had these diseases come from the effects of the river. I had that sickness, but they managed to find a solution for my health problem. Now, we are talking about something else that sounds very dangerous. It's the first time I have heard of this.

1225

My great grandchildren, is there something for them, something that will affect them negatively in the future? That is why I touched on the subject. And because it has impacted us a lot, but when a woman had talked about before, about the fish that were caught on the rapids, on this river, that's true because I saw that. And we were told that the impact would not be good but they

1230

would make a place where we could get fish. I did not believe it. Where the water comes south from the turbines, that's where something is not good for us anymore and those fish, are we going to eat those fish? Where they passed through stuff that is not good for them either.

1235

And at LG-2 dam, the Hydro told us about the temperature of the water that comes out of those turbines; it's quite hot, it could almost steam in that water. That is totally unnatural and I believe this is where we get some of our sickness. And even the animals are affected like this.

1240

It seems that we are dying faster since the Hydro dams were put in place. I am talking about the disease and that I believe that it comes from the impacts, and that is why people are dying. And what they are talking about now, the exploration and exploitation of uranium, I don't know how much longer I will live, I am not young anymore, on April 13th, I will be 82 and that's why it affects me, because I think about my children, my grandchildren and great grandchildren, what will be the impact on them.

1245

And this is what I am saying to you, that I stand against this project because I am trying to think of the future, and I believe that the Hydro development that has taken places put us in a negative situation.

1250

Somebody mentioned my name about a trapline or hunting ground where my father last hunted and that trapline hunting ground, it had a square shape on the reservoir, and that's where our hunting ground was. And then we couldn't get any more fur from that area. We had the decline of beaver in the past, but when they recovered, and when they brought back the beaver to good levels, but then when they started impounding the dams, a lot of these animals went under water and could not survive.

1255

At LG-2, there was a little island. They found some – lynx were found on that little island, maybe three of them and Hydro's plan was to feed those lynx instead of just put them on the main land.

1260

I didn't want to talk too long it is getting to too long in the evening, and I use to be in bed by this time. But this is what I wanted to say and what I am telling you that I believe that we're losing our lives to the state of the river and that is where I will end my talk and I am grateful that you have put me here to say these things.

1265

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

1270

Meekwech.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Thank you very much. Do you have questions?

1275

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

No.

1280

Dr. DARLENE KITHY

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

No? So we thank you very much. Your message was quite clear. We wanted to tell you that we thank you very much. My colleagues and I, we have no additional questions because your message was very, very clear. So, we thank you very much.

1285

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

Doctor Darlene Kithy.

1290

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Waachiya! You heard me speak in September. So this time, I wanted to give one last chance to say my point of view.

1295

I come here wearing basically four hats. So I am a teacher, I am a commissioner, I am an advocate and I am a Cree.

1300

As a teacher, I work here as a family physician, I teach medical students and residents. I have a Faculty Lecturer Status at McGill University and Assistant Professor at University of Ottawa. So I teach in both medical schools and my strength is teaching indigenous health and social issues.

1305

I am also the current president of the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada. So I advocate as one of our strength of our organization to advocate for indigenous communities, families and patients.

1310

And as a clinician, I work here in the territory as a family doctor and I do work with the Cree Health Board, Board of Directors.

1315 As a Cree person, I came back to Chisasibi after many years in the South, going to school and working, and finally coming back here to start family practice. But I now come back to my traditions as well, and I have a cabin on my family's trapline. So I understand that connection to the land that many people have spoken about.

1320 My expertise in indigenous health and teaching is quite – it's a lot, you know. I have learned a lot over the years and one thing I must encourage you is to look at the concept of health for indigenous people is quite different than main stream society. So with someone down South who is not indigenous may go to the hospital when they have a disease condition or illness symptoms, go to the doctor in a hospital or the clinic to get treated and their problem is resolved. Well we know that it's not as simple as that, there is many people with other health issues that co-exist with that medical conditions.

1330 For indigenous people, it is not only the physical health, it includes mental health, emotional health and spiritual health and you have heard this from Leonard House and also incorporate tradition and culture as part of health as well, and you have heard that from Abraham tonight.

1335 So when you are looking at uranium mining and the potential impact on health on the Crees, you must look at those other rounds. And so, it's easy to look at science and say: okay, this is uranium, these are potential scientific effects on the human bodies, on the environment, but for the Crees, you have heard that this also has a significant impact on the culture, traditions and the connection to the land, and the animals, the plants. So you have to think outside the box.

1340 When I teach this, it is something that I emphasize, and eventually those who I am teaching understand. And they understand when they see it first-hand when they are working in those indigenous communities, whether there are urban, rural or remote. Well up here, you know what is a remote territory, there are many potential factors that can impact health care and, you know, environment is one of them.

1345 When the James Bay Hydroelectric projects started, nobody realized at that time the impact on the health of the people and we still see that impact today.

1350 Residential schools, same thing; when they first started up here, two in Fort George Island, nobody realized the impact that it would have for generations. There are continuous losses, you know, loss of traditions, loss of language, loss of the children, loss of the environment, lands were flooded, traplines were lost. And all these impact the health of the people and the Nation.

1355 In medicine, we learn about risks, risks to the health of people and, you know, uranium mining, although we are told that there could be safe ways to mine it, there is always that risk that something could happen, an accident, a mining accident that increases exposure to the environment or the communities or to the miners. That risk may be small but it's not zero. And same thing if you look at the environment, you know the animals and the plants, they don't speak, they cannot speak up for themselves obviously. So the Crees being stewards of the land are advocating for those animals, plants, bodies of water that are so connected to our traditions and our culture.

1360 As a clinician, you know, I am always asking questions when somebody comes to me in a grocery store or in the hospital or even down South, they will ask me questions about their health so and I am getting more questions about uranium mining. So I try to explain this. And I have shared what I have learned through science and occupational health, you know, what the risks and benefits of uranium mining are, and I shared this on the radio and also at community meetings here.

1370 And so people do understand and it really boils down to being a no-brainer. You know, they don't want uranium mining, neither do I, and they want to protect the land and their future. So that is something that I hold dear to me as a clinician and as a Cree person.

1375 So I think, for the most part, when you're considering your report, I strongly recommend that you incorporate academic literature on indigenous health, the concept of health and I advocate for those communities, I can provide you with references if you want to incorporate in your report. Unfortunately, I was unable to submit a document or a statement on line because my uncle passed away, so I hope so that you might consider that I could help you with some references to incorporate in your report.

1380 I think that's all I have to say. It's just, I don't want to go into too much details like I -- because I already spoke in September, but bottom line, as I mentioned, we say no to uranium.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

1385 Well, thank you very much Doctor. You mentioned that you can give us some references on the concept of health for indigenous people. I think the Commission has some few papers on that but if you can add some more, it would be very important for the Commission.

1390 Let me ask you some questions, very short questions. You left for a few years, I imagine to study in Montreal, when you came back, it was in which year? When you came back at Chisasibi.

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Oh, I started to practice here in 2006.

1395 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

'96?

1400 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

2006.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

1405 2006?

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Yes.

1410 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

Okay. What is your opinion about if you have to give a general advice on the health of the people in Chisasibi? What would you say?

1415 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

You mean how I would summarize it?

1420 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

Excuse me?

1425 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

How would I summarize the state of health in the people today?

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

1430 Yes. With respect to the definition of the health concept as you mentioned.

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1435 If I would compare it to remembering how things were in Fort George, you know, the community at the time, 35 years ago, was very different. Life was simpler, there was no running water, like...

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

1440 I have to the earphone because I hear better.

DR. DARLENE KITHY :

1445 Okay. 35 years ago on Fort George Island, life was simpler, you know, there was less economy but people were happier. People were more fit, they were out in the bush more often, going out to their traplines, fishing, hunting. If you look at it now, physical health has changed so much because of lifestyle. So we now live in Chisasibi, we have Hydro, we have running water, we have rent to pay in the houses, people must work for a living to provide for their family. The food has changed because if we have to work, there is less time to go to the bush, so they go to the grocery store. And if you go to the grocery store here, there is a whole isle of junk food.

1450 But the good thing, there are vegetables as you come in to the grocery store. So unfortunately, junk food is cheaper than healthy food and people tend to go to the junk food first. We are trying to teach people to eat healthier.

1455 Physical activity has lessen so people drive cars now and they travel a lot more between communities and to the South, so sedentary lifestyle has affected their health. We now see diabetes climbing over ten times the rates since the early 1980s in a matter of thirty years. So it was 2% to now 22-23% and because of diabetes, we now start to see heart disease, obesity...

1460 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

How can you explain that?

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1465 So that's physical health. It really boils down to the lifestyle and changes in our society. The demands of progress, having to work more, you know, you need money to live, spiritual health, people are less involved with the church but it still important to people, you know, it's just they don't go as often. Unfortunately, it's more expensive to go to the bush, s it's harder to carry out your traditions and emotionally, people are suffering because of the perpetuated losses over the

1470

generations. You know from residential schools, post-traumatic stress, drinking, use of drugs, dysfunctional families, domestic violence, all this has an impact on every person in this community, every person in this Nation. Someone might not be a victim of all that but it still affects their family, it still affects their own health.

1475

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

And is there any advantage for this new style of life.

1480

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Well there is, we have to progress with society, the rest of Québec, the rest of Canada and people are getting more education, they are learning new skills like computers, but unfortunately that takes you away from the bush and your traditions, you know? But it is still the most important thing in people's life. It is a source of healing, a source of medicine, a source of food, a source of strength. So to understand how the Crees are so tightly connected to the land, you know, really, they're one, they have been here for thousands of years and you cannot change that. That will always be our being, our health.

1485

1490

So if you throw in a uranium mine here and there, you know, it's important to the people right now that you are hearing across Chisasibi, you know, the other communities; that is so important, it's something that I am sure you're hearing at every hearing you're holding, even though there is only 16,000 people up here, it's the largest territory that is looking most interesting to Strateco and any other uranium mining company because of the potential, the deposits that are here in the territory and even in Nunavik.

1495

So that's why the Crees, because of the history of our fight against Hydroelectric development, they continue to advocate for their Nation and for the land.

1500

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

I have just a last question. What is your major fear with regards to uranium mining?

1505

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

My own major feelings? I learned about uranium, taking physics courses in University and I understand the concept and the dangers of radioactivity and half-lives, the daughter progenies of the radioactive decay. Even radon is a leading cause of lung cancer in none-smokers and that is easy for me to say because I have bachelor's degrees in biology plus a degree in medicine, and emphatically say no to it.

1510

I even have a degree in nursing that has a focus in community occupational health nursing, so I learned about exposures from an occupational health point of view, and I still am against uranium mining.

1515 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

As I understood, your major fear is related to exposure to radon?

1520 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

Radon and radioactivity.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

1525 Okay.

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Yes.

1530 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

Okay.

1535 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

And I know when they are refining uranium, producing yellowcake, 15% of the radioactivity goes with the yellowcake but 85% of the radiation is left in the tailings which is stored in tailing ponds forever and ever, there will be radioactive.

1540 **COMMISSIONER ZAYED:**

Thank you.

1545 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

1550 Doctor Kithy, I was told that here in Chisasibi, that some doctors, when they want to treat somebody, that they will sometime write two types of prescriptions: one for the time the people will stay in Chisasibi and a lighter prescription for when they go in the bush. Were you aware of this practice and can you explain why some doctors do so?

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1555 Well, because many of our Elders go to the bush for a month, sometimes two months at a time and having grown up on the land, there are very self-sufficient, very aware of, you know, getting food and checking the weather and things like that. So they can stay out in the bush that long, and you know we consider their medical conditions, we prescribe their medications accordingly and then sometimes the prescriptions are only given a month at a time, we'd have to prescribe some for the two months.

1560 The other kind of prescription that we write for people going to the bush is for those who are having difficulty, and let's say because of a mental health issue: depression family dysfunction. Some of us will prescribe, although it's not on a piece of paper, we will prescribe them: go to the bush and spend time with your family or your grandparents.

1565 That's a prescription for them to go out in the bush and heal, and gain strength from that connection, from doing the daily traditions of keeping care of the camp, going fishing, hunting, whatever. That's a prescription that is important for everyone.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1570 So the best prescription is to in the bush?

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1575 It is, really. It is. They get their food, they get their medicines from there. You know, they get the importance of feeling well mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1580 Hum, hum. So you need less medication at that time.

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1585 Well, we try to make sure they have all the western medicine type pills but, you know, the healing comes from also just being out there with their family or the grandparents with their children and whatever.

1590

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1595 We heard a lot tonight, and you agree with this that the impacts of the Hydropower were very important and especially on the public health. You described many of those impacts, but did I understand the things wrong? Because I think I remember that now, because of the change in the health system, you lose fewer kids at the birth and the lifespan is longer. Is it so or if it is a mistake I do when I say so?

DrR. DARLENE KITHY :

1600 Well, those kinds of numbers you are probably going to get from the profile that Public Health will give at the hearing in Montreal. The Cree Health Board Public Health Department will submit their final document to the committee, and they will speak from a public health point of view and an environmental health point of view. And the Chair of the Cree Health Board, Bella Petawabano, will be part of that as well. So they will explain kind of the current health status of the Crees in that profile.

1610 For the most part, I think over all we do live longer but knowing the changes in lifestyle and all the other changes in the Crees over the years, the social changes and the realities, you know, alcohol, social issues in the communities, the struggle with economy, you know, especially by the youth who are trying to find employment, all these impact health; but for the most part, I think we are living longer, I just don't have the actual numbers off the top of my head.

1615 There are much more stress and other factors that affect health, so you see more comorbidity, chronic diseases, mental issues, depression, suicide, anxiety and people are trying to deal with this and sometimes successfully, sometimes not, or they take longer to get better. But the common theme to help our patients and their families is having them go back to the land.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :

1620 So the Crees live longer but necessarily better.

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1625 Exactly. The health is worse now than it was 35 years ago. People were more lean and fit and had good food security from the bush, you know. Big families, but many families could still live fairly well in that traditional way, but it's less traditional now, we have to live with all the realities of needing a job, needing a car, you know, et cetera. We are progressing with Canadian society but on the other hand, it's more stressful in some ways too, to meet those demands for the families and the communities.

1630

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1635 I see. I would like to add a remark to an offer that my colleague made to you because he said he would appreciate to have the references you talked about, you know. I would add that you can also send us a written brief if you want to detail important facts that you want to bring us to our attention or that you would like us to take in account more deeply. This written brief could be accepted any time and it would be really appreciated, especially because you are a specialist in that very specific field. So this was a personal remark.

1640 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

Thank you very much, I will do that.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1645 Okay. My last question is something that was raised, because I am not sure I understood very well what you said. I thought that the poorest Cree were going to get food in the bush because they would not have a job to buy so much they want at the store. But you, I thought that you told me the contrary, because you said that sometimes people have not the money to go to the bush. 1650 So do I have to understand that the rich or the people that are a bit more rich than others have the money, the truck, the gas to go and it's not for everybody? Because is it what you are telling us? For me, it is a surprise because I was thinking it was the contrary. Could you precise what you think on that so we could have an accurate picture?

1655 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

I think what most people try to do is to supplement their regular food that they get, you know, whether they are having their income security cheque, which is a type of welfare, income security or other kinds, like family allowance cheque, they supplement their income by going out to the bush nearby – they could go fishing down at the river, they could go snare rabbits or shoot ptarmigan nearby just close to town. And sometimes they are given food by their family, their extended family.

1660 So some family who struggle do try to do that or they go, tend to go the junk food isle, you know, or get the canned soup and process food which tends to be cheaper than vegetables and you know meat.

1670 Most families can get out to the bush, probably just not as often as they used to because the cost of gas and buying a greater canoe, you know, can be very expensive, but I think for the most part, most families do get out. We just worry about these families who do struggle financially but I think most do manage to get traditional food by some means.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1675 But do I understand right when -- to make a real big expedition, you know, to go get moose or to get caribou, you need some money and it could be quite expensive at the end to do this type of, I would say heavier hunting, I would say. So it's not everybody that can afford that.

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1680 No, but the Band Office does arrange for some people through their Cree Trappers Association to go hunting for the community and they will go set some nets for fish and bring them back and then they give them out to families or to go kill some caribous and bring them back for families to have some meat. So I know this happens intermittently over the year.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1685 So you mean that the Band will help them to finance this type of expedition that serves everybody?

DR. DARLENE KITHY :

1690 Yes.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1695 Okay. I understand. This was my last...

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

1700 And they say that's true.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :

Yes.

1705 **Dr. DARLENE KITHY :**

I just wanted to confirm with the Deputy Chief there.

1710

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

No, no, they know the situation, that's fine. This is my last question. John and your colleagues have you some?

1715

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

You know, one of the challenges we're going to face in, I mean it's a challenge that we face in just about any exercise where we are evaluating a project or an impact or some potential is when we try and communicate the Cree point of view, the Cree way of life. I know, even from doing this last phase with some of my colleagues, there is a frustration and how do you communicate to, you know, the people who will be making the decisions, the administrators and so on, so my question was I think the teaching part, the teaching hat that you wear, I am sure there a wealth of information there that we could learn a lot from and my question to you is: what tool or exercise stands out most in your mind when you are trying to demonstrate to let say your none-native students, the relevance and importance of indigenous spirituality when we are looking at modern medicine or a modern medical issue?

1720

1725

You know, I am assuming there might be one of your favorite lessons or your favorite exercises or, you know, to help impress upon somebody that native spirituality, it is not just a concept, it is not just -- you know, it can be very concrete and very relevant. I am not sure if you had anything like that that you wanted to share now or later?

1730

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

I have quite a few stories but one of the things that comes to mind is a palliative patient I had from Great Whale, an elderly man in his mid-nineties, he was coming back from Val-d'Or and hospitalized here in Chisasibi. He was given a prognosis of cancer and was dying. And we were waiting for his family to come from Great Whale the next day. So I was on call that night, and I heard about his case from the daytime doctor on the medical ward and I knew him from several years before when I first met him he had come to Chisasibi for different medical problems.

1735

1740

But when I met him again, I could see, you know, he was in pain and he was getting close to the end. He had trouble breathing, you know, he looked uncomfortable and I checked on him before I went to go try and sleep a bit and then they called me when he passed away. And only his grandson and a cousin were, like the grandson's cousin was there and for the Crees, when someone passes away or is dying, usually the family gathers around and when I say family, I mean the extended family not -- to us, family is everyone not just immediate family. And so I felt bad and obviously sad because he passed away, but bad because not much of his family was there and we came to comfort the son, the nurses were there and we became that man's family that night.

1745

1750

We said prayers and saying hymns with the Minister who came in and we comforted the grandson and the cousin. And that just tells me that no matter when someone has gone or is about to pass away, you just become part of that family and that it is so important for them to cope with the loss of that patient.

1755

So after that was done, I talked with the grandson and he thanked me for being there, and I stayed awake with him for some time. We talked about his grandfather and I told him when I had met him before, what a nice man he was, and he told me stories of his grandfather.

1760

When someone passes away, you know, it's refreshing to think of stories of how that man lived or how that person lived, and it's more important that they are in touch with God and family at the end, you know, and even though his family wasn't there, we became the family and prayers were said and the grandson was so thankful.

1765

So when I tell this story to medical students and residents, they often get a little teary-eyed because it is something that you don't see in mainstream society. They have told me stories of how they have been on call in Montréal and they are called when a person is passed away and, you know, say an elderly patient with no family around them, and nothing is done, no prayers are said you know, the nurse will just take care of the person and the person goes off to the morgue.

1770

So they can appreciate the Cree tradition of being there when someone is dying and passing away. And that spirituality is evident. It is so important to us and, you know, sometimes, we don't go to church as often as we would like but that's something in our traditions that is very important across the Nation.

1775

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

Just my last comment, not really relevant to the subject but based on what you said actually, it is sort of is. I was a couple years behind you in the study of your chosen profession, and my mother was particularly proud of you. So anytime I felt like giving up, I was kind of tired, you know, she was always sharing some stories about how you were pushing away, and so for young professional who is trying to get by, you are quite a big help. So thanks.

1780

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Thank you.

1785

1790

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

So we thank you very much and as I told you we would highly appreciate to receive a brief in which you would highlight what you think would be the most important for us in our work.

1795

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

Sure. I would be happy to do that.

1800

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

So thank you very much. And we will close the hearing on this, thanking everybody for their participation. There were many people here today and it means a real implication of the community. And this, for us and for everybody, is very significant. So we thank you very much for this participation.

1805

Dr. DARLENE KITHY :

And I would like to thank the Committee for hearing me as well. I am sure over the last three sessions for the hearings you've learned to be like a Cree. You have to be patient and you listen and you let the Elders speak as long as they want. So on behalf of everyone, thank you very much.

1810

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

We thank you. So the hearing is over. Thank you.

1815

THE SESSION IS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 12th, 2014 – 19:00

1820

1825

1830

I, YOLANDE TEASDALE, Official Bilingual Court Reporter, duly sworn as such, do certify that the foregoing is a true and faithful transcription of the evidence herein to the best of my skill and ability, THE WHOLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW

1835 AND I HAVE SIGNED:

1840 _____
Yolande Teasdale
Official Bilingual Court Reporter