

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

Les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec

6211-08-012

ÉTAIENT PRÉSENTS :

POUR LA COMMISSION DU BAPE : M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR, président  
Mme MICHÈLE GOYER, commissaire

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEBJ : Aucun représentant

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEK : M. MICHAEL BARRETT, président  
(KEAC) M. CLAUDE ABEL, commissaire  
Mme BETSY PALLISER, commissaire  
Mme SYLVIE LÉTOURNEAU, commissaire

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

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**DEUXIÈME PARTIE**

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**VOLUME**

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Séance tenue le 1er décembre 2014 à 19 h 30  
Community Hall  
Kawawashikanach

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**DECEMBER 1st, 2014 – EVENING SESSION  
OPENING COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT  
OF KATIVIK ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (KEAC)  
Mr. MICHAEL BARRETT**

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**PRÉSIDENT BARRETT:**

Good Evening! Thank you for coming here. Thank you Noah for welcoming us and the members of your Community.

10

My name is Michael Barrett from Kuujuaq. And I have been appointed by the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) on this special Commission on uranium. So this is a special Commission on the uranium industry.

15

To my left is monsieur Louis-Gilles Francoeur and he is the chairperson of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement which we call the BAPE, sometimes, and he will also co-chair this session and he will make some open comments.

20

As I said, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you and it is important to remember the purpose of these consultations. Unlike other times, we have been here for consultations such as for the mine, the Tata Steel Mine or for the park along the George River. This isn't to approve a specific project; it is to gather information on the public opinion related to the uranium industry in Québec. So, it's the overall uranium industry.

25

I would like to move on to the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) to give you a little bit of background on it. It was created through the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. And certainly, with Noah on the Regional Council, it is part of the -- three members are named by the Kativik Regional Government, three members are named by the Government of Québec and three by the Government of Canada. It is a consultative body on matters of environmental and social protection in Nunavik.

30

So, from the nine members, four of us were named to this special Commission. On the far right of me, on the far end of the table, is Claude Abel and he is currently the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

35

Next to him, is Sylvie Létourneau who is the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission of the Advisory Committee this year; and Betsy Palliser is to my right and she is from Puvimittuq and she is one of the members named by the KRG.

40 I am going to talk about the uranium consultation process itself. For some time, now, there  
has been concerns in Québec about the uranium industry. About last March, close to a year ago  
now, the Minister of the Ministry of Development durable, de l'Environnement et la Lutte contre les  
changements climatiques, we will call that the Ministry of Sustainable Development and  
45 Environment and the Fight against climate changes, the Minister gave the BAPE a mandate to hold  
public hearings on the challenges, issues on the exploration, exploitation and the management of  
uranium throughout Québec.

In Nunavik, North of the 55<sup>th</sup> Parallel, this also falls within the mandate of the KEAC, so that  
is the reason these hearings are co-chaired for Nunavik with the BAPE and the Kativik  
50 Environmental Advisory Committee. The James Bay area, the James Bay Environmental Advisory  
Committee also co-chairs the meetings for their area.

So in May 2014, there was consultation throughout Québec and the final report is to be  
presented in May 2015, so next May.

55 Again, we are not reviewing any specific project, there is no mine plan right now but we have  
to gauge the public opinion and social acceptability of uranium industry in Québec.

In Nunavik, there were three phases planned, two which have already taken place. On June  
60 12<sup>th</sup>, there was public consultation in Kuujjuaq on the process itself. So that was the first hearing  
that we held. So we discussed the challenges and issues involved in the exploration, exploitation  
and management of uranium in Nunavik.

The Phase 2 process began in September and Betsy and Claude and Sylvie were present  
65 for that, and that was the session on information on uranium industry.

On September 25<sup>th</sup> in Kangiqsualujjuak, there was public hearing with the Community there  
and questions were asked and presentations were made, and information on specialists from  
70 different fields, and there were five Québec Ministries present.

Now, today's session is the third and final phase of the consultation. So it involves the  
presentations of briefs, presentation of opinions by individuals or organizations.

75 So this is the first hearing here in Kawawashikamach. There will be a hearing tomorrow in  
Kuujjuaq and a third hearing will be Kangiqsualujjuak on Wednesday.

Finally, there will be hearings in Montréal on December 15th and that will be composed of the  
KEAC, the James Bay Environmental Advisory Committee and the BAPE.

80 Today, please feel comfortable making presentations. You can come up, anyone can come up to speak; if there is a brief, we will listen to it, and as to the development of the uranium industry in Québec. It's important that we hear you and we may ask you questions if you come up also.

85 So this session is very important. All the information will be recorded and we will use this information to draft the final report that will be written by the BAPE and the KEAC will participate in the drafting of the Section for Nunavik.

90 The drafting will start early next year and will be presented to the Minister in the spring. This should provide the Quebec Government with a perspective with regards to the public opinion on the uranium industry.

Before turning the floor over to monsieur Francoeur, I again would like to thank you for the opportunity of being here and seeing some old friends and shaking hands again with you.

95 So, Louis-Gilles.

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100 **OPENING COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT  
OF LE BUREAU D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
Mr. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR**

**THE PRESIDENT :**

105 I thank you very much Michael. Welcome to all of you to this hearing and we are very glad to be here in your community to hear what you think about the mandate that has been given to us.

110 You don't know very much probably what is the *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement*, what is called the BAPE. The BAPE is a body created by the law to evaluate the most important construction projects in the south of the province. But occasionally, like in the present mandate, the Government asked our organization to make an inquiry on a specific subject and to propose solutions or policies to it.

115 In the present case, the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Fight against Climate Changes has asked us if the Government should authorize uranium mining in the province; that is what we are working on since many months and we will present a report next May. In fact, the limit to present our report will be May the 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and there will be a section on the territories governed by the Convention of the Bay James and the North part of the Province, and this section

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we could have a common report if it is possible to reach an agreement on that or we could have separate report, all the possibilities are there.

We have worked with high interest and with a warm full collaboration until now with our colleagues from the CCEK, and we hope to continue this collaboration up to the end.

125

So that's why we are here tonight to hear what you think about uranium mining and I am accompanied by two Commissioners in this task. There is only one with me tonight, Mrs. Michèle Goyer, on my left, and I am also accompanied by one of our analyst, Mrs. Karine Jean and the coordinator of the Commission, Mrs. Rita LeBlanc in the back. She is the lady that takes the names of those who want to intervene.

130

And we are also accompanied by people of the le Centre des services partagés du Québec, Mr. Michel Filteau and Mr. Michel Guimont are here to make the whole system work and also to transfer on the Web what is said here tonight, so that everybody in Québec and elsewhere can follow the discussions here.

135

So, Micheal has explained you the work we have done until now and what is exactly the purpose of our presence here tonight. So I think that I will transfer to him so that we could start listening at the people.

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**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT :**

145

Thank you Louis-Gilles. Are there people who would like to say things or ask questions on what we just said and on the uranium industry.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

150

Yes. please come up to the front.

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT :**

155

If you could say your name when you start because, as Louis-Gilles said, this is being recorded and it is also on the Web, so you are life.

**PRESENTATION OF Mr. NOAH SWAPPIE  
CHIEF OF THE NASKAPI NATION OF KAWAWACHIKAMACH**

160

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE:**

165

Okay, my name is Noah Swappie and I am the Chief of Naskapi Nation. I come in front of you to give you the position of the Naskapi Nation because -- on the subject of uranium.

170

Uranium is something very new to Naskapis. We don't know, there's lot of questions that I think are going to be raised regarding the uranium, and I do understand that uranium is -- this is a consulting phase, the third phase I suppose, and after the consulting stages then the Province of Québec will decide if they want to proceed with the uranium operations in Québec. Okay.

So we put together this document on the subject of uranium.

**(CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE READS HIS PRESENTATION)**

175

So this is the position of the Naskapi Nation for now until we further receive the... When is the inquiry report in 2015 is going to be available?

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

180

The report will be available – you know, we have to send our report to the Minister at the latest on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015. And the Minister, from then, has 60 days to make it public. So it means that the 20<sup>th</sup> of July is the latest to have the report made public. So it will be between May 20<sup>th</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup> that the report will be public.

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**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

Thank you. I am just going to summarize what I've just read to my people here in Naskapi. I think I probably read it a bit too fast.

190

**THE PRESIDENT :**

No. no, that's fine. For us, it's okay but you may go in Naskapi.

195

**COMMISSIONER LÉTOURNEAU:**

Excuse me, can you let us copy of your document?

200 **CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

I am going to leave this copy with you people, so you can distribute it among yourselves. It was last minute thing so that is why I have one copy.

205 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

No, no, it's okay. But I think that if you want to address your people in Naskapi, you can do it when seated.

210 **CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

Yes, okay.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

215 Just to make sure that...

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

220 Because I am used to facing them.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

225 Yes, I understand but we want to make sure that the "captation" of sound is perfect, you know, for the transcription.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

(Addresses the audience in Naskapi – no translation.)

230 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

Quelqu'un veut poser des questions? Michèle, Sylvie?

235 **COMMISSIONER LÉTOURNEAU :**

I have a question for you or maybe for someone in the room. It's a question about how the Naskapi use the land, like how far do you go in the land for fishing and hunting. Can you give me an idea of how far you can go for those activities? Do you go everywhere or just to a few places or?



**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

240

I will give you a bit of history of the Naskapi people. We are originally from Fort Chimo which is now called Kuujjuaq, and in 1956 we were moved here to Schefferville. And in nowadays, we still always try to go back to Kuujjuaq. Right now, we are planning to make a route from Kuujjuaq, from Kawawachikamach together.

245

We already did our part, Naskapis, now the other half is being conducted by I think Sandy Gordon in Kuujjuaq, and so speaking of how far we go, we go right up to Kuujjuaq, it is about 500 kilometers, give or take.

250

**COMMISSIONER LÉTOURNEAU:**

So for myself, Kuujjuaq is pretty far from here but do you go there often or, I mean, if you leave Kawawachikamach to go over there, do you go there once in a year? Do you do that trail once a year for fishing and hunting?

255

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

Well, the Naskapis, we venture out quite a way. I mean, it is not every year that we do the trip to Kuujjuaq because it's far. But pretty much every year, there is a trip that we try to plan but there was none last year, but the year before rangers from Kuujjuaq came down, we met them half way and there was a big ranger activity here.

260

So, if you want me to give you a radius of how far we go, I could say 250 kilometers around Schefferville Region.

265

**COMMISSIONER LÉTOURNEAU :**

Okay, and I would like to know when you hunt, I don't know, caribou or other animals, do you use everything of the animal or do you prefer to use just the mussel? That's because we know that when uranium goes in the environment, the contamination is not equal in each part of the animal so I would like to know how Naskapi use the parts, for example, of the caribou piece, what do you use?

270

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

We use every bit of the animal. I think the only part that we don't use nowadays is the stomach. That's pretty much it. We salvage everything, we crush the bones to make pemmican.

275

We dry the meat, we crush it, turn it into powder, and to make pemmican, traditional Naskapi food. So every part.

280

**COMMISSIONER LÉTOURNEAU :**

Okay, thank you.

285

**THE PRESIDENT :**

Michèle?

290

**THE COMMISSIONER GOYER:**

Good night! We know that there are a lot of activities of exploration in the land, how those activities interfere with your traditional activities? How do you feel about noise, about numbers of flights? How your people are, I don't say bothered but with the activities of exploration on your land?

295

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

Well, I am going to give you my personal opinion. I am sure that the others have their opinion and I think I share some of their opinion with my opinion because I have heard others' concerns as well. For sure, the mining activity has brought a lot of human activities and some people think that it is because of this activity that drove the caribou away from near Schefferville. But, you know, there are many factors that could cause the declining of the caribou herd.

300

Sure, it's affecting the traditional hunting ground because, you know, right now and 20 kilometers from there is Tata, the operations. We used to go pass that to go hunting animals. Back then, there used to be caribou but it's unfortunate that we don't have caribou these days, but we're starting to have -- we see more moose.

305

But, you know, it happens because, for example in Kuujjuaq, caribou numbers are diminishing and they have more musk-ox. So it's a similar situation with the moose here. But I can say that the level of activities is interfering with our livelihood of being out on the land more, I think.

310

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

When your people are travelling for hunting and fishing, do they see many camps that have been abandoned with fuel and machinery? Are there many abandoned sites of exploration mining?

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**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

320 Yes, we see quite a few of those around here. Even, not just mining exploration camps it is even with the outfitting camps that they were supposed to be mobile camps, but they became permanent after a while.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

325 But this type of mining, not mining activities but exploration for mining purposes, is it an important factor in the territory or something marginal?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

330 I think it's important to try to keep the North as clean as possible.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

335 Did you make a list of those abandoned sites in the territory in order to clean them eventually?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

340 Yes, we have a very detailed map of all the abandoned mining camps and exploration camps and even mobile camps that we want to enforce the government to do something about it.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

345 On this map, do you make a difference between exploration camps and outfitting camps?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

350 I believe so, I don't have the map with me but I know there is a map that was put together just for that specific reason.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

355 The answer that you just gave us is very, very important for us. Would it be possible to ask you officially to make a copy of that map and to forward this to our Commission or to the CCAQ, so that they could transfer it to us? But we would need, it would be very important for us to have a copy of that.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

360           Okay, I am going to hunt for that map and – Michael, can you send me an e-mail to remind me?

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT :**

365           I will remind you but I also, just to add on to the question, certainly Naskapis work very closely and worked on the site at Blue Lake; that was one of the major abandoned mining exploration sites in the past, and there were two or three others sites in this area which Naskapis also worked. Correct?

370           **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

                  And for us, you know, to have an idea of the intensity of this phenomenon, you know, it would be very important for the work of our Commission. So we rely on you to send us a copy; would it be possible?

375

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

                  Yes, it is possible. Like Michael said, we work closely with our KRG and with the Hunting, Fishing, Trapping Co-ordinating Committee as well.

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**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

                  Okay. I would like to ask you another question. You said that there are many unknown risks, you said: there are too many unknowns on health, on environment, and you said also that you had problems with enforcement of law and regulation; could you detail what you think on that?

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**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE:**

                  Excuse me?

390

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

                  Could you explain more on what type of enforcement of law problem do you have?

395

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

400 Well, an example is these abandoned mining camps. Who was there to tell these mining companies to clean themselves after they've finished their operations? That is one example.

**THE PRESIDENT :**

405 Mm, hmm.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

410 And the unknowns of uranium, I mean, I looked it up; this mineral or chemical, whatever you want to call this, it's...

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

415 A very complex problem.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

It is a complex mineral.

420 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

425 Yes, I understand that. And you said that you don't have the means to go deeper on that question until now; what kind of means would be necessary so that your people and the community and the people who are the elected chiefs, you know, have a real opinion on that? What would be necessary for you to have this type of information so that the whole question would be understood by most of the community?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

430 Well, we don't have specialists that work for us. And, you know, when we look for specialists to do this kind of research, they always come with a high cost. And, you know, we don't have funding for this kind of research to be done on the part of the Naskapis. Because it is always a question of mistrust, you know? If we had our own specialists, we would bring in our own people to conduct studies, you know, because you and I know that there is a long history of mistrust within  
435 the white people and the First Nation' s people.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

440 You said also that not only it would be necessary to have financial means to better understand this complex questions but you said also to have, and I quote you : “*to have an unbiased education program on uranium mining.*” What kind of program you are thinking about when you say that?

445 **CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

I don't know. Like I said, this is a really complex and maybe technical subject, you know. I think maybe if we put together...

450 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

You think that your people would be interested in listening at specialists that you would hire to explain what it is, how it goes, what are the problems, what are the solutions, all this complex thing, you think that if you would have the means, you would have a public to be interested by that?

455

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

Yes, for sure. I think the Nascapis have always been very open to listening and exploring other ways of sustaining the community in the economic development.

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**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

You are not opposed on a principle...

465

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

How can I be opposed to anything when I don't know much about it, you know?

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

470

Hmm, hmm.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

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That's why I am in here now, to present you this document stating that I don't know nothing about it, basically.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

480 I understand your point. But I also get your message because I think that without this  
education program, without an awareness on this whole question, you don't want any project to be  
done?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

485 Pretty much.

**THE COMMISSIONER GOYER:**

490 In the way of educational, not educational but communication about all those technical  
things, in the way of life you have, how much time you need to get more informed? Because we  
are very conscious that just one night or two nights is not enough; you need a program, you need  
time; in your community, in your point of view, how much time and what kind of support you need to  
495 get the good information? I don't want to be technical, but I mean you have other conversations  
about other problems so most of the time you need.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

500 I cannot give you a timeframe, I mean, I am not the one calling the shots on dates here, but  
as much as possible, you know.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

505 It's not the question of a one night show, it would be something much deeper and something  
that would be prolonged, you know?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

510 Yes. And even the timing, I think. I would have expected, I would have like to see a better  
turnout of people tonight, but I don't think that we're going to have many people tonight.

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

515 You know, in a small community and when it's cold like tonight, to have all those people, I  
think it's very interesting.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

520 No, no, I think it's just the timing. You would be surprised of how many people would come out and...

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

525 Okay. It ends up my question. Have you some other questions, colleagues on my right side? No.

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT :**

530 No, not at this time and Noah will supply the information on the abandoned mining sites survey and on the work that was done in this area that was done by the Naskapis.

So thank you very much for your presentation. If any of the other people would like to speak or ask questions, they are certainly welcome and we'll see if anyone else would like to speak.

535

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

Alright thank you. Who do I give this to?

540 **LE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Yes. You could give it to Mrs. Rita LeBlanc, the lady with blond hair. She is the co-ordinator and she takes care of all the documents.

545 Thank you very much, Chief.

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**Mr. DAVID SWAPPIE**

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**Mr. DAVID SWAPPIE:**

(In Naskapi – no translation).

555



**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT :**

560 David *nakurmiik!* Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts, the experiences you've had and other people from Kawawachikamach.

I think there was a question Sylvie asked about the distances Naskapis travel and you've confirmed, you and many Naskapis have travelled long distances and I know you continue to do that into the future. So thank you again for your thoughts.

Do people on the panel have questions for David?

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

570 I would have one question. Were you forced, in 1956, to be moved here? In '56, were you forced to come here or if you came because it was interesting in terms of jobs?

**Mr. DAVID SWAPPIE:**

575 (In Naskapi – no translation)

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**Mr. MATHEW MAMEANSKUM**

**Mr. MATHEW MAMEANSKUM:**

(In Naskapi – no translation)

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT:**

585 Thank you for your thoughts Mathew, you were very clear in your presentation. Do the members of the Commissions have questions for Mathew at this time?

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Non.

595

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT:**

600 Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts and your experiences with mining and with your land. So thank you again Mathew.

I believe we have coffee, maybe we could take just a few minutes break and if anyone would like to talk after we take a few minutes break, just tell us and we will restart again and if not, we will adjourn after the coffee break. So please join us for coffee.

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**FEW MINUTES RECESS**

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**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT:**

615 Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee, at any time in the future, should you have questions or comments, certainly you can communicate with the Secretariat or Betsy or myself as members of the Committee or with the KRG certainly. Perhaps, Noah did you have any final comments?

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

620 Thank you Michael. Thank you for your visit to our community and giving us this opportunity to express our thoughts on this and like I said, we don't know too much about the uranium subject until next year when we will have that report. Thank you very much.

625 (In Naskapi – no translation).

**THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

630 First, I want to thank my colleague from the KCCE – I think I got it this time! But mainly I want to thank your community and you, the Chief of this Naskapi Nation, for your involvement and your presence here tonight.

635 So we were very pleased and it was something very interesting for us to hear what your preoccupations are, what your objectives are in this debate; so we thank you very much.  
*Nakurmiik!*

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT:**

640 He is going to speak Inuktitut to you.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE :**

645 Well, he was saying, like I said before, that maybe the timing is not the best because – off the record – there is a bingo, and the train is coming in. I think that now, there are people that need to go to the train and pick up some people.

Thank you very much.

650 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Thank you very much.

655 Alors on va ajourner la séance là-dessus et on vous remercie beaucoup de votre présence.  
Au revoir.

**THE PRESIDENT BARRETT :**

660 So we will close the hearings and thank you again for your presence and good to see you all again.

**CHIEF NOAH SWAPPIE:**

665 Thank you and have a safe trip back.

\_\_\_\_\_

**SESSION IS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 3rd, 2014 – 13:00**

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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

680 AND I HAVE SIGNED:

685 \_\_\_\_\_  
Yolande Teasdale  
Official Bilingual Court Reporter

690