

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

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 M. HARM SLOTERDÏJK, commissaire CCEBJ

**CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE
SUR LA GESTION DE L’EAU
AU QUÉBEC**

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TABLE DES MATIÈRES

SÉANCE DU 16 SEPTEMBRE 1999 1

MOT DES PRÉSIDENTS 1

PRÉSENTATION PAR LE MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT 6

JANIE PACHANO..... 11

EDOUARD TAPIATIC 34

REPRISE DE LA SÉANCE..... 39

CHRISTOPHER NAPASH 40

ABRAHAM RUPERT 43

WILLIAM CHISKAMISH 46

VIOLET BATES 55

ABRAHAM BEARSKIN..... 64

ERIC HOUSE 67

CHRIS MERRIMAN..... 72

MICHÈLE ROBERT..... 74

EMILY RONDEAU 78

ROBBIE MATTHEW 78

DANIEL BEARSKIN 82

MOT DES PRÉSIDENTS

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

5 Let's say the Lord's grace. Let's all bow our heads.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman:

10 Thank you, Mr. Saganash. It's an honor and a pleasure for us to be here today. As you know, my name is André Beauchamp and I'm the Chairman of the Commission from the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement which is mandated to make a consultation around the Québec about the water management in Québec.

15 In this Commission, we are three persons. One is not here, Mr. Camille Genest. And the other one is Mrs. Gisèle Gallichan.

 Our responsibility is to consult all the population around Québec and we did it since the 15th of March this year. Our mandate goes from 15 March 1999 to 15 March 2000.

20 Since the 15th of March, we made the long trip from Montreal to all the 17 regions of Québec. But for the north part, under the James Bay Convention, we made an agreement with the James Bay Advisory Committee on the environment for the Cree nation and also a statement with the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee for the Inuit nation.

25 In both cases, we decided to visit two or three communities. In your case, I think it's three communities, Oujé Bougoumou yesterday, Chisasibi today and Whapmagoostui tomorrow.

30 I think it is important for us to work with the institutions you have in your own territory to make a such collaboration and to be sure that we can understand the problems you're facing, your feelings, your questions, your own experience which is quite unique, I think, mostly in the water management questions.

35 The purpose of the BAPE Commission on water management is not oriented directly on analysis of a project, but about the whole policies on water management which are the guiding principles for a water management in the years we are living in, which must be the priorities, what are the principal issues we must indicate to the government in the water management questions. Also, what must be the institution of frame to be effective and to be sure that this so precious resource, which is water, is well managed in itself and responding to the needs of all the citizens in Québec.

40 So, the work we want to make with you this afternoon is, after a few previous explanations, to hear you, to understand what are your questions, your fears, your hopes, your opinion, general opinion about the water management and policies related to that.

45 To help everyone here to have the best information we can have, we invited many representatives of different ministries in the government. So, if you ask a question, we hope you will have answers from the most informed people in these topics.

50 From the Ministry of the Environment, there are four persons here. From your right to your left, Mr. Jocelin Dufresne, Monsieur Daniel Berrouard, Madame Josée Brazeau et Monsieur Guy Fournier.

55 D'Hydro-Québec, monsieur Vincent Sioui. Et du ministère des Richesses naturelles, monsieur Paul Meunier et madame Nathalie Camden. Et du ministère de la Santé, madame Claire Laliberté.

On the second table there, there are two representatives from the ministère des Affaires municipales, monsieur Robert Langlais et monsieur Daniel Gaudreau.

60 We invited also representatives from the Federal Government, but there were conflicts of agenda and the people were not able to come. But a few people told us that they will be able to receive written questions and answer to the questions we would address them.

65 These people are Jeff Moore, Marianne Masson from ministère des Affaires indiennes, Michèle Geddings from Health-Canada, Gordon Bolton and also Mr. Gordon Walsh. They are in Ottawa and, if needed, we will fax them your questions. Thank you.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

70 Abraham?

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

75 Thank you, Romeo. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our community and to thank you to take the time to come and listen to our concerns about water management. We thank you and we hope you have a pleasant stay in our community.

80 As Romeo said, we regret that at this time of the year, as part of our culture, we all go out hunting, but we will try to make the best of the situation.

As you know, our community Chisasibi is the most affected by Hydro development concerning water and the quality of water, and what we have noticed since the development of Hydro up in our region.

85 First of all, it has greatly affected our drinking water, whereas before no chemicals had to be put in the water for it to be drinkable. Now, we have to put chemicals.

And the other thing I'm surprised about, so, I jotted it down here so I wouldn't forget, in this document here, there's a list of major rivers and our river is not listed. It's quite surprising.

And also it says here there is no data concerning La Grande. So, it's quite surprising that there is no data available after all what has been done to it. But you do have the service area of the reservoirs and also list how many dams and dikes there are. So, it's quite surprising that no other data is written down.

I won't have very much to say right now. The questions will come up as we go along in our discussions. So, I'll pass it on to my colleagues, if they have anything they would like to add.

MR. ERIC HOUSE

Hi! My name is Eric House, counsellor for Chisasibi Band Council, Cree nation of Chisasibi. I wasn't here for the opening. I was just wondering why the... are we here to regulate what's upcoming or... because I know of the transfer of the roads from Hydro to provincial Minister, I think Minister of Transport. And I was wondering if the resource water, the BAPE they call it, I was wondering if they were coming in to look into regulations or what's the future use of the water that's going to be in our communities here from our rivers.

As I understand that water is running out in the world and this is major gold item, better than gold, which is going to be coming out.

I've also been studying water since about 10 years ago looking into just information really from newspapers, people that have been coming up and saying that within the next 40 years, you know, there will be wars on water instead of gas and other things like this are coming up. I'm just wondering are we jumping ahead to try and to regulate these conflicts which are going to be coming up?

I've also been to an international world water conference in Montreal. That was just in the past two years ago, I think it was two years ago, which a lot of people were talking about conflicts of water and who owns it since it has no boundaries where it goes. And a lot of conflict... because I read the Canada Water Act also which says the provinces are the ones who control the waters in their own provinces.

So, we are the ones who control the water here. I just wanted to mention that. You know, the steps for water conflict issues are pre-negotiation, negotiation and implementing. So, is this our pre-negotiation here?

I just wanted to mention that my concerns are very much of the land, of the water, because that's our way of life, that's our culture. I could go on and on, but I just let you know where I'll be coming from. Thank you.

130

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Maybe I can give you a quick answer. Our goal is to consult the population about the policies. So, at this moment, we are more in the information and there will be a second part of the hearings where you can submit to the Commission some briefs about anything related to the water, not in itself the energy policy, but anything related to waters is in the goals of our Commission.

140

About what you're telling about the pre-negotiation, negotiation and the implementation, I'm not responsible about any negotiation. I'm not a representative of the government to negotiate anything.

145

But if you want to tell us what are the steps that must be taken, you're free to do and I will hear you with attention, maybe with pleasure. But I'm not in a position to negotiate anything. Our responsibility is to tell the government what we heard and what we think is the good way to do the better things in the water management for the coming century. Is that clear?

MR. ERIC HOUSE

150

Yes. I was just wondering, do you already have a plan for our water?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

No.

155

MR. ERIC HOUSE

Oh! That's what I...

160

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

I don't.

MR. ERIC HOUSE

165

... I wanted to make that clear that...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

No, no, no, no.

170

MR. ERIC HOUSE

You sounded like you had a plan going.

175 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

No, no, no, no. I don't even have a plan for my report.

180 **MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman**

Not necessarily to complete the answer here, but complement the answer, and I'll repeat to you what I basically wanted to explain in Cree in my introductory remarks.

185 As Mr. Beauchamp explained, the mandate for the BAPE came last fall and the mandate runs from March 15th 1999 to March 15th 2000. And their mandate is to consult and get information throughout Québec on water management issues for the purposes of development of water management policies in the province.

190 What I mainly tried to explain also is that although the mandate covers the entire province on their part, it is also important to remember that there is a constitutional document call the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement where institutions were set up to look at these matter as well.

195 And that's where I come in. I presently chair the James Bay Advisory Committee. We believe that we have a role to play in these questions as well. I informed the audience just a while ago that the Grand Chief had written to the Minister, when the mandate was given to the BAPE, saying that... well, basically questioning the mandate of the BAPE for Northern Québec or, at least, the territory covered by the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement.

200 The James Bay Advisory Committee, rather than entering into an endless dispute over jurisdiction or constitutional issues, we said, «Well, why don't we try to achieve a collaboration with the other institution so that we can work together for the purposes of consulting the Cree people to whom, we believe, that whole question of water is a fundamental one for them.»

205 So, that's why we are sitting here jointly, the BAPE and the James Bay Advisory Committee, to come in here to Crees on their experience with water management issues. And that is one of the reasons why we also chose to come to Chisasibi, to listen, to hear your unique experience, as Mr. Beauchamp rightfully pointed out earlier.

210 But like Mr. Beauchamp also said, we're not here to try to negotiate anything, but hear you out, listen to your concerns, your opinions, your positions on these matters and report on them. That is the main objective that we have at the present time. This is the information part of the consultation.

215 There is a second part coming up or a second stage where organizations and different people are invited to submit briefs to the commissions. So, that's going to come later on. But I just

wanted to be clear on that aspect, make sure that everybody understands that it is only the BAPE, but also the James Bay Advisory Committee which has an important role to play in these matters.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Before inviting you to ask the question you want to ask, I will ask first to the representative of the Ministry of the Environment, Mr. Jocelin Dufresne, to present you the essence of this document.

225

Please, Mr. Dufresne, also don't forget if you have some information about la rivière La Grande, if you find it in your papers. Thanks.

MR. JOCELIN DUFRESNE

230

Thank you, Mr. Beauchamp. The answer to your question concerning rivière La Grande, we should consider this river included in the reservoir that appears on the table in the document.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

235

Can you go minute by minute so that translation can be done as well? Because I notice that there may be a few people that don't understand English.

MR. JOCELIN DUFRESNE

240

Just before presenting you the regional portrait of the region, which is the situation as we know it as this time, I'd like to remind you some important events that occurred in the last few years concerning water.

245

We remind, in 1996, the government produced a draft groundwater policy. In 1997, the government held the Water Management Symposium as mentioned earlier. In 1998, the government proposed a draft dam safety bill. And this year, the government produced the base document for the consultation concerning water management. This paper is available at the entrance of the room.

250

As mentioned, the government gave the mandate to the BAPE for a consultation all around the province of Quebec in all the 17 administrative regions.

255

After this consultation, the memoirs and all comments will be analyzed and they will support the elaboration of a water management policy.

The main principle themes which are discussed in the base document are concerning groundwater, surface water, municipal infrastructures and water service management, and water as a global strategic issue.

260 You have on this slide the contents of the document representing the regional portrait. We will have a socioeconomic portrait of the region. We'll talk about quantitative portrait of the resource, surface water; the qualitative portrait of the surface water; portrait of the groundwater; municipal portrait; industrial portrait; agricultural portrait; and wildlife and recreational-tourism portrait.

265 So, this is the map of the region from James Bay, Hudson Bay to Ungava Bay and the Labrador limit. This is the largest region and the least populated one. The population of the region is approximately 38,000 people. And in the James Bay sector, the nine Cree villages have approximately 11,000 people.

270 We have to consider the presence of the Native people that are here for 5,000 years. And they are engaged in traditional activities like fishing, hunting and trapping.

 Concerning the presence of non-Natives, we observe three phases of the presence of the non-Natives. First, in the 1940s, it was related to colonization in the southern part of the region. In
275 the years 1950s and 1960s, it was the mining and forestry development. And in the 1970s, we observed the hydroelectric development.

 And the territory has a frame-up from the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement that was signed in 1975 and the Northeastern Québec Agreement signed in 1978.

280 This table indicates the principal characteristics of the region. I'd like to mention that the percentage of forested territory represents almost 16 percent of all the territory located in the southern part of the region.

285 The principal economic activities are based on forestry and mining. And the region is the third productive region of Québec concerning forestry and mining.

 Tourism activities are important in the region. And James Bay hydroelectric development is also an economic activity, important activity.

290 Now, for the quality of the surface water, concerning rivers, you have the Table 1. Table 2 indicates the most important rivers in the region. Five of these rivers are in the Baie James sector. And we observe that these rivers, that are indicated in yellow, they have more than 22,000 square kilometers of area.

295 They represent the most important watersheds of Québec and nine of them are in excess of 20,000 square kilometers.

300 Now, concerning lakes, the Table 2 indicates the most important lakes of the region with their area and the principal vocations or uses of these lakes. We have lakes and reservoirs. Most of them are for fishing and some are source of drinking water.

So, for the lakes, as you know, they are countless and are variable in size. They are among the biggest natural lakes of Québec, let's mention Mistassini Lake, the main vocation associated with sport fishing and traditional activities, and lakes of hydroelectric reservoirs.

Now, concerning the dams, we have in the region 296 dams and dikes and the majority of them are operated by Hydro-Québec. And the main ones are LG-2, LG-4 and LG-3.

Now, concerning the quality of water, concerning the rivers, we have to mention that the data we have to appreciate the quality of water is from many sources. The Environment Department doesn't have a monitoring system, but the promoters of the big projects, and specially Hydro-Québec, had to produce many studies related to their projects. And all the information we have, many of the information we have is from these organizations.

And we have to mention that the hydroelectric projects necessitate exhaustive follow-up of the quality of the water.

We can say that the region's water is often of good quality due to low human pressure. And the main problems we have are related to the priming of the reservoirs.

When a reservoir is priming, we assist to a process of decomposition of organic matter that reduce oxygen and then there's a release of nutrients, phosphorus and carbon dioxide. And this is the carbon dioxide that when we're talking about acidification of water, it's the presence of carbon dioxide.

We observe that in general, the quality of the water returns to normal after three years. But we observe a completely environmental balance, new balance, after 10 to 15 years, depending of the situation.

Concerning now the mercury contamination of fish, we have to say that it's a slow natural process, the acceleration of the process of the bioavailability of mercury in the food chain through the priming of reservoirs. It means that the mercury is accumulated in the chain food during the priming of the reservoirs.

The scope of the contamination varies according to numerous factors like the flooded land area during the priming of the reservoirs, the duration of the priming, the time that water spends in the reservoir and the dynamics of the fish populations. These are the most important factors.

And we find higher concentration in fish-eating species and it represents from 3 to 7 times greater than in a natural environment. And the return to natural conditions may occur between 15 and 30 years. And mercury has effects on health. So, we have to limit the consumption of fish.

Now, concerning the acidity of lakes, the data we have is for the southern part of this region. And we observe that approximately 2 percent of the 228 lakes that have been visited are acidic. And according to this assessment, the region doesn't seem to be affected very much by acidification.

Now, the portrait of the groundwater, what we have to say is that the uses are mainly in the southern part of the region. And 14 percent of the population is supplied by groundwater. And we have a drilling report only on 120 wells out of 500 wells in the region.

Now, the municipal portrait in the James Bay sector, we observe that the situation is approximately similar to the rest of Québec. The nine Cree communities have an aqueduct network. There's an error here, it's not five out of nine, it's four out of nine are supplied by surface water and five out of nine are supplied by groundwater. And six of the communities have a chlorination system.

This slide concerns the Chapais, Chibougamau, Lebel, that have aqueduct network. Five are supplied by surface water and two are supplied by groundwater.

Problem associated with uranium limits being exceeded, mainly north of Matagami and in the LG-4 and Brisay sector.

Now, concerning wastewater management in the James Bay sector, we observe that the situation is similar to the rest of Québec. Nine Cree communities are connected to a sewer network. Eight of them have a wastewater treatment system. And 92 percent of the population has a municipal sewer network. And it represents an investment of 13 million dollars by the Government of Québec.

Now, the industrial portrait, the primary sector concerning mining industry, they use a large quantity of water for enrichment of ore, keeping work sites dry and draw-down of the water table.

And the main problems related to the mining industry are the acidification of tailing confinement areas and contamination by heavy metals.

And this table indicates that we have 9 active tailing confinement areas and 5 of them are acid generating. And among the inactive tailing confinement areas, we have 18 and 7 of them are acid generating.

The active and inactive tailing confinement areas represent 1,720 hectares that leave major scars on the environment. And we have to mention that the restoration of confinement areas is slow and costly. Now, we have 4 areas out of 18 that have been completely restored.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

If you do agree, we will stop this first explanation about the portrait of the region, because I think that many of the questions you want ask will be related to the information we are getting now. And it will go faster with questions and answers than a too long or formal beginning speech.

So, may we take a ten-minute break? You have coffee there and you be comfortable. And after that, anyone, any person who wants to ask questions, you sit at the table here and you ask the question. And we will make sure that they will give answers to you questions. Thank you.

(SUSPENSION OF THE HEARING)

(CONTINUATION OF THE HEARING)

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

So, I think it is time for you to come and tell us what you want to tell us. Maybe you want to ask a question. We do have resource persons able to answer the question. Maybe you want to tell us your values, your feelings, your fears, your experience about the water and the transformation you live with in the region. So, it's open and we are glad to hear you.

Madam, your name is...?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

My name is Janie Pachano. I work for the Cree nation of Chisasibi. And you'll have to excuse me, I have a very bad cold. So...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

But you are quite far away from me. There is no problem.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

I'll come and shake your hand after.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Oh! You're so friendly.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

I have some concerns after reading some of the documents that we were given or, at least, that were on your table back there. Some very disturbing things came up that I wasn't aware of before as an individual. I don't know if anybody in the community is aware of them.

430

I'd just like to start out by reminding you, in your document «Water management in Québec»...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

435

It's not mine.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

440

Yes, yes. Well, whoever...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

445

I made a consultation on this paper, but it's not the paper of the Commission, okay?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Okay. It says that the government's strategy — okay? — the economic development strategy is designed to satisfy the present needs of the people of Québec without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs.

And that's one concern I have about the hydroelectric development in our area. I don't think that that's the strategy that's being followed here.

It goes on to say about surface water:

«Under the Civil Code of Québec, surface water is considered to be public property, and the owners of property bordering on water may have access to and use it. However, they must return the water used to the watercourse without substantial modification and must also ensure that they do not deprive other riparian owners of the same rights.»

I'm thinking here of Hydro-Québec. We have at least four major dams behind us here on our river. By the time the water gets down to us — we are at the bottom of the water route there — it's full of mercury.

Then I read somewhere in here, in your regional water resources profile, we have something other than mercury to worry about. And that is uranium. It says:

«LG-4, the uranium levels above the established standards are also being encountered more and more frequently in the territory, in particular north of Matagami and in the LG-4 and Brisay sectors.»

Those flow into our river. So, nobody has warned us about this problem. Is uranium heavy like mercury? Does it sink to the bottom? Does it flow?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Can we have an answer?

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

I can try to answer part of your concern. I have to mention that uranium is found mainly in groundwater, not in surface water.

I don't know how it travels along, but what is mentioned in the document were specific wells that were drilled in specific sectors. So, it's not in surface water, it's in groundwater. However, we don't know the source of the uranium, it is thought that it's natural in the grounds.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And do you have any data about the health effects of uranium in drinkable water? No?

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

I would like to ask one precision on uranium. Can it be bioaccumulated as mercury? You don't know? Maybe we can find out?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

The concern I have when you talk about groundwater, when you flood areas, the groundwater becomes part of the surface water. When you flood huge tracks of land, it does become part of our river.

Do we have something to worry about? Have there been any tests done south of Brisay, LG-4? Because there are many, many people here from Chisasibi who spend a lot of time in those areas hunting and fishing. And they should be notified where that uranium is, so they can take precautions.

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

I can try to complete the answer for the surface water. Like I said, it's quite a new problem for us. We're not really aware what's causing the uranium in the water. But for your drinking water source here in Chisasibi, it has been analyzed weekly and annually for that kind of product and the water is of good quality. The results don't show any uranium in the surface water for your drinkable water. So, that's only what I can say for the moment.

I cannot say what's the effects on the health or is it bioaccumulated, I don't know, but I will try to get an answer.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And what about the relation between the surface water and underground water. The lady is telling us that the presence of a reservoir will change the relation between the surface water and the groundwater. Do you agree with that? Do you have an experience in other... You don't know?

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

I don't know.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay.

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

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Because the problem that has been reported to us with uranium is for new sources of drinking water, new wells...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Yes.

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

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... in specific sectors. So, I don't know the relation between the reservoir and those wells. So, I can't...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Okay. We know that the specialists of the Ministry of the Environment on groundwater are not here. Will you make a survey please with these people and ask them if, with the knowledge we have on the groundwater, there is a relation between large dams and reservoirs, if they have an influence on the underground water, okay?

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MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

Okay.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Thanks. We cannot have an answer right now, but we shall have a written answer on the specific question you asked about the relation between surface water and underground water.

MRS. GISÈLE GALLICHAN, BAPE Commissioner

565

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I'd just like to know if Hydro-Québec has information on this.

This is the first time you're hearing about this? Do you have studies on this? Have you heard of it before?

570

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

For me, it's the first time I hear about the presence of uranium in groundwater. The presence of uranium, it's the first time I hear about that.

575

Maybe you could answer if some traces of uranium have been found in surface water, but I think that in the studies that I've read, nowhere they were talking about uranium in surface water. But maybe, Josée, you could answer if you have already heard about traces of uranium in surface water.

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MRS. GISÈLE GALLICHAN, BAPE Commissioner

But does Hydro-Québec intend to look forward and make also studies on this?

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May we have translation please?

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

590

I will ask to those who are in the environmental department in Montreal if they are aware of this situation, that uranium has been found in groundwater and if there could be a possible impact on surface water. And we will give the answer to the Commission.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Thanks.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

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There's another paragraph in here on drinking water. And before the dams, before the hydroelectric projects, our river used to be that color. Now, it's colored. And there's a paragraph in here, it says:

605

«The water of Québec is in many areas naturally colored. The chlorinating of colored water leads to the formation of chlorine byproducts that are known to be carcinogenic in animals and are suspected to be carcinogenic in humans by the World Health Organization and the International Agency for Research on Cancer.»

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The reason I'm bringing this up is because our water is chlorinated and it does seem to be getting more and more colored as the years go by. And they're talking about diverting more rivers which are... to me, anything south of here is all colored water and all the diversions so far have been into our river. Is this going to lead to more problems for us?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

615

Could you explain the relation between the colored water in the treatment with chlorine, which gives THM, trihalomethanes? And do you have an answer about the situation of the presence or not of trihalomethanes in the drinkable water here in the region?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

620

In fact, the link between the color is with the organic matter. And for your specific question, we have to check if we have some results about the trihalomethanes. But we have to do this check, if we have results here.

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MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

You don't have the data now?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

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Now, no. We have to check.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Okay. Are the surveys of the drinkable water -- I think you test the drinkable water here, it is tested regularly, on a regular basis. But are these tests checking the presence of trihalomethanes?

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

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Not regularly, but the trihalomethanes are checked not in Rouyn, it's done by the Direction centrale of the Ministry.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Yes.

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

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So, that's why we don't have any results with us. I don't even know if it's been done in Chisasibi. So, I will have to check. But, yes, it is done, it will be done in the future on an annually basis. So...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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At this time, you didn't have any results on that?

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

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No, no.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

665 Is it your responsibility, the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment or is it related to the federal survey on that?

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

670 I don't know. I know it's a new program, but I don't know where it comes from. The program is supervised by the Centrale.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

675 Okay.

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

So, that's why I don't have any information.

680 **MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner**

Mr. Chairman...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

685 Yes.

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

690 ... I think yesterday there was a question about the survey on the drinking water and I asked for the program. And I think, at that time, it was particular for the bacteriology, but I would like to see the whole program of what is being done, the frequency, which parameters and where the results go, and also which laboratory does it.

695 So, maybe this way we will get a clear picture of what is being done and what we can expect as data.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

700 I have another...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Just a moment. On this question, I want to ask a few more questions.

705

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Okay.

710

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

About the filtration of the water for the municipalities, what kind of treatment do you have? Because we know that in the colored water, with a specific treatment, we are sure that there is no more trihalomethanes in. What kind of filtration do you... you don't know?

715

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

No.

720

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay.

Excuse me, Madam.

725

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Another thing, we're very concerned about our water supply. This spring, we had major problems with the water intake. We've already lost our backup system. And every spring, it gets clogged with ice and silt. The fluctuations in the river flow are really unstable. I mean sometimes they open the gates and we get almost flooding downriver where you have logs floating down the river. And it's very dangerous for transportation. It makes our water very silty, very muddy.

730

And we were without good drinking water for almost a month this spring. We have a spring a few kilometers from here, but we had a fire in that area and that became contaminated this spring as... or this summer as well.

735

Even though the whole system was supposedly flushed out this spring, I recently returned from a meeting down south, I was gone for seven days, I had to flush the toilet six times before I got clear water. I thought maybe our water intake had broken down again. I called my neighbors, I said, «When did the water intake break down again?» They said, «It didn't break down.» And they said, «Every time you go away for a few days, your water is going to be really muddy and dirty. And you have to turn on all your faucets.» And so, I didn't know that. I just assumed that the water intake was broken again.

740

So, I have asked the maintenance people to flush the system out again after the goose break and make sure that the whole system is cleaned out again.

745

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

750 Tell me, your house is connected with the municipal system?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

755 Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Or is it a private well or a private...

760 **MRS. JANIE PACHANO**

No.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

765 No?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

770 All the houses are connected.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

775 They're connected to the city...

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Yes.

780 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Okay. And did you have any answer from the municipality about this? Did you ask a question to the municipality itself?

785 **MRS. JANIE PACHANO**

Yes. I was told that this is a frequent problem whenever you leave your house unattended for a few days...

790 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Yes.

795 **MRS. JANIE PACHANO**

... that when you come back, the water is going to be all muddy.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

800 It seems to be the contamination inside the system itself.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

805 Right. But it was all cleaned out this spring and it's going to be cleaned out again in a few weeks. But it must be a build-up. I mean the whole system was cleaned out a few months ago. So, even though it looks clean when... you know, it must be building up within the system.

810 And we have asked for somebody to come and find another source or clear up the problem once and for all, but it just keeps getting worse and worse. And this is a result of the hydro development.

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

815 The problems you observe, is it in many houses or is it only when you go away for a number of weeks, and then you turn on the taps again, and the water comes out brownish or...

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

820 It's...

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

825 From what I gathered, it was not happening like that at the neighbors because they keep using their system. It's when you stop using your own system. So, maybe it's...

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

830 Well, I'm told it's a common problem in the community. If you leave. It's not a matter of weeks, it's a matter of days. I was gone for one week. Then I'm told that this is a common problem in most houses that are unattended for a while, when you come back and you turn it on.

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

Does it look rusty or...

835

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

No. It's muddy.

840

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

Muddy?

845

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Uh-huh. It's like your...

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

850

Like it's not clear?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

It's like your jacket there.

855

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

Thank you for the nice description. I mean, I don't think I will wear it again.

860

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

I didn't mean that as... I meant the color.

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

865

No more questions.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

870

My questions are very simple. I know that, in the past, there were discussions with Hydro-Québec on that issue, were there discussions as their recognition and responsibility on the part of someone on that issue or you're left alone to deal with that issue?

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

875

In response to Mr. Saganash's question — I hope you got what he said — our system, our water system for the community where it's at, I've always questioned what was the reasoning behind in choosing the site for the intake of the... for our community. It's right where the rapids are. And as you've been told before, there's a fluctuation of water level on the river continuously, year after year, and in wintertime too.

Specially in the wintertime, when it starts freezing up a bit, there's always ice, chunks of ice flowing downriver. And it always move in the riverbed. And that's where we have our intake. And the bottom is always stirred up. And I don't know how much money has been spent on it already.

And the other question that I have, I can't help but wonder... it's not to put anybody down, but I'm sitting here wondering, and one of the members asked the question about chlorine, about being suspected to cause cancer. And we're not able to be given definite answers whether it does or not. And while we're waiting, our people are drinking this water. So, that doesn't look very good.

And I think it's our right that we should be given an answer as soon as possible, because there have been cases in our community where we're told... a community this size, when something happens, usually everybody hears about it. So, there have been case in our community where, especially among the elderly people, they get admitted to the hospital and the next thing we're told, they have cancer. And quite a few cases have happened.

And it had led me personally to wonder what is causing it? Something is causing it, because... I'm not that old, but I remember back when I was young, I didn't hear about cancer in our community. It's just been recently. So, I think it should be looked into, what's causing this. I'm not saying that, you know, I'm not trying to pinpoint anything, but I think, like I said, we deserve an answer to our questions as soon as possible.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Harm?

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

I just want to make a few comments, although normally this is not coming from us, but I feel I should provide some answers to your worries about chlorine.

It's not the chlorine in the water directly that has been found to be cancer-causing. Chlorine of course is being used to kill the bacteria and the pathogens so to avoid infectious disease coming from the water.

What is happening is that when there's a lot of organic material which, in certain cases, can be the cause of the color you find in the water, there can be a reaction between the organic material

920 and the chlorine. And this can produce what is commonly called now THM, which is trihalomethanes. It's a group of compounds.

925 These have been found to be cancer-causing in laboratory animals. And the scientists are, you know, cautious that it also may cause cancer at high levels in humans by drinking water contaminated by trihalomethanes.

930 The drinking water should be tested and there are criteria. The Government of Québec has criteria for the concentrations of THM. Health-Canada also has guidelines. These are not criteria, these are suggestions to the governments, the provincial governments that do the control and had set the criteria, to be observed.

935 Now, unfortunately, we do not have the answer what the concentrations are in the drinking water at this point in your community. We asked the experts to provide us the answers to the questions, but the point is that THM usually occurs in very, very low concentrations. And you must have quite a lot of organic matter residual in your drinking water at the time of chlorination, because most of the water treatment in the filtration plant aims at eliminating a lot of this organic matter.

940 Now, I don't know particularly in your community, and I think this is also what we must find out, what kind of water treatment is in place, what is the filtration process and what do they do to get rid of the color. Is there any oxidation process being applied? I don't want to go further into the technical details but, I think, in most cases the THM are not very high. But in your case, we do not know, but we are going to provide the answer.

MRS. GISELE GALLICHAN, BAPE Commissioner

945 Mrs. Brazeau, how much time do you think you need to get this data? Because Mr. Rupert said something, I think, that is very important, he said, «When we're waiting, our people drink water and we don't know.» So, do you think it could be long before getting this information?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

950 In fact, we try to have the information right now or maybe tomorrow, but we have to make a phone call.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

955 I'm not quite sure, I don't think anyway that the Ministry of the Environment should have the answer tomorrow. It's too much optimistic. Because of the complexity of the question, I'm not sure they have the data. We will ask them, but please don't wait for an answer tomorrow. It would be more realistic not to put a precise agenda on the answer. But we will be very attentive to this
960 answer, okay?

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

Okay. I appreciate that. I was just about ready to hold them to that. But anyways, I have
965 another question which I will say in Cree first.

The other question that I'd like to ask, when they first dammed up the river, we were told, if I recall correctly, that the levels of mercury that will be there will take 50 years to subside or... Now, they're talking about diverting more rivers to the reservoirs, which means more land will be flooded.

970 And we were told that mercury comes from material that has never been in water. So, they're going to flood more land, create mercury again and add on to the 50 years, I guess, that it would have taken to... and all that will be flowing down to our community.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

975 First, if I understand what he told, the prevision was the coming back to the situation in 50 years. In your exposé, Mr. Dufresne, you spoke about 15 years. How are the data now on this question which is the time, the good period of time to the return to the normal?

980 Mr. Sioui, or Mr. Dufresne, or Mr. Fournier, do you have any answer on that?

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

985 At first, nobody knew if it was going to take 10 years or 50 years. 50 years has been put there, but now they know that the process is regressing faster than it was previewed. But personally, I think that for the fishes, especially the fishes who eat fishes...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

990

Predators.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

995

... the predators, it doesn't take 15 years to come back to the normal situation for those fishes. Maybe when the ministère de l'Environnement talks about 15 years, it's for the quality of the water, but it's not certainly about the fishes, because like pikes that eat lots of fishes, there are still high levels of mercury. But for some other fishes, the level of mercury is now about the same as it was before the first dam.

1000

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

So, must we understand that it will be longer for the fishes that are eating other fishes?

1005

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

It will take more than 15 years, yes...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1010

Yes.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

1015

... because now, it's more than 15 years right now and there are still some fishes that are over the norms of the original 25 years before. There are still higher, the level of mercury is still higher than in 1975.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1020

So, it will take more than 15 years for them.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

1025 It has already taken more than 15 years, yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1030 Okay.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

 Just to complete...

1035 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

 Yes.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

1040 Just to complete the answer that Mr. Rupert has referred to, to the question that was asked, he's talking of possibility of additional rivers being...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1045 Yes.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

1050 ... diverted. Are there any information data or studies that confirm that this has a cumulative effect on mercury contamination? Does Hydro-Québec have that information today? «Does it add on to the present problem» is basically the question.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

1055 The mercury is in the soil. If there's a diversion, there's no more mercury in the soil, the mercury that was in the soil, and this mercury comes from somewhere also. Some say that it comes from the thermic generating powerhouses from the States that comes with other heavy metals, from the thermic generating powerhouses alimented by coal, or by fuel, or... it would come from those places.

1060 But something I know is that if there are new diversions of rivers, that's what the President of Hydro-Québec has said to all the Cree Chiefs, it will be done in partnership with the Cree communities and the studies also will be done in partnership with the Cree communities. That's what has been put on the table, that's what I know.

1065

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1070 Partnership is one thing, but the prevision about the mercury presence is another one. If you have new diversions, would you have an increase of the presence of the mercury in the reservoirs? I think that is the question.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

1075 I don't know. But I know that studies about those questions will be made...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1080 Okay.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

... and they will be made jointly with the Cree communities.

1085 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Okay.
Madam?

1090 **MRS. JANIE PACHANO**

In your document here on regional water resources profile... I don't know whose these documents are, I'm just saying «your documents» and...

1095 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Yes, yes.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

1100 It says here there's no quantitative information on the La Grande River which is our river out here in the front.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1105

Yes.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

1110

If there is no quantitative information, data, after 20 years, the only thing I see about qualitative information is it says that the Ministry of Environment of Québec does not have a water quality monitoring system, like the one in southern Québec, in place to provide coverage of the Northern Québec region or any part of it.

1115

Most of the information which follows has been obtained from reports prepared by SEBJ, James Bay Energy Corporation, or prepared for SEBJ by various consulting firms and mainly concerns the watershed of rivers which have been harnessed for hydroelectric purposes.

1120

I don't know if I can trust information that is provided to the Ministry of Environment by one of the proponents of the hydroelectric project.

1125

Already the information that I have seen just in these two documents is very frightening, has never been provided to us before and, yet, when you consider our livelihood depends on the waters, on the rivers, we used to eat a lot of fish.

1130

One of the major problems we have is a tremendous increase in diabetes in all the Cree communities. Because of the mercury in the fish... our people are very dependent on fish. Winter and summer, we ate lots of fish. We've been told not to eat fish from the reservoirs, but since the fish go through the... I know they go through the... whatever you call those rotating things there...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Turbines.

1135

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

1140

... turbines, they get down here too. And so people are eating less fish, but what people don't consider is the exercise that went with fishing. Especially when you set nets in the winter, you have to drill all these holes. And you don't do it with electric drills, you do it with an ice chisel. And there's a tremendous lot of exercise involved in that. And you go check your nets every day. And, you know, the holes freeze over, so you have to do that every day.

1145

But now we don't. We're very sedentary and we developed... I am one of the diabetics, I've had it for 18 years. And, you know, we don't exercise as much as we did, and a lot of is because we've been told not to eat fish from our reservoirs and rivers.

So, there's a tremendous increase in diabetes and I attribute some of it to the hydroelectric projects.

1150 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Thanks. I think there are two very important questions. First, do you have your own monitoring system or are the data here present come from Hydro-Québec or SEBJ?

1155 **MR. DANIEL BERROUARD**

In fact, it's different here in the north, because the pressure from... I would say the pollution is different. The Department has not a monitoring system like in the south.

1160 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Okay.

1165 **MR. DANIEL BERROUARD**

I mean a system river by river.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1170 Yes.

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

1175 But for the result coming from the impact study for example, it's the principle where we ask the «responsibilization» of the proponent. In principle, the proponent is responsible of this result. And he has also the responsibility to give good information.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1180 But can you validate the data from Hydro-Québec?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

No.

1185 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

No. How can you explain the absence of La Grande river in the...

1190

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

In fact, in the document, La Grande river is in the part of the lakes. It's in the part of the lakes. And then in the table of the lakes and reservoirs...

1195

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

1200

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

... we had the LG-2 reservoir, LG-3, LG-4.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1205

But the river does exist, still exist and we don't know...

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

Yes, but now it is different, it is...

1210

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay.

1215

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

But it is completely different. We can say really that's a natural river like the other rivers, that's why it is not included, but it's... okay.

1220

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1225

Madame Laliberté, je pense que je dois vous poser la question en français. Pour ce qui est des données de santé que madame a évoquées, à savoir la modification des habitudes alimentaires, la diminution de la consommation de poisson et l'émergence du diabète, est-ce que vous confirmez ces données? Est-ce que vous avez des données qui confirment ce que madame dit?

1230

Et sur les interprétations, on va aller à la traduction anglaise et, ensuite, on reviendra. Si vous voulez traduire.

MRS. CLAIRE LALIBERTÉ

I speak in French, because my Cree language is very poor and English too.

1235 Vous avez tout à fait raison, Madame. Il y a une enquête menée auprès de tous les Cris de la Baie James qui démontre que le diabète est en hausse dans la région ici et qu'il est à peu près au moins deux fois plus élevé que chez la population québécoise en général.

1240 L'alimentation est un facteur prédominant dans l'apparition du diabète, en particulier chez les adultes. C'est clair que les changements majeurs dans le mode de vie ici ont accéléré l'apparition du diabète.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1245 Est-ce que vous avez terminé?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

1250 Just a minute, Sam forgot one thing. I was just adding something that Sam forget in your answer.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1255 Okay, good.

MME CLAIRE LALIBERTÉ

1260 Ce que je voulais simplement ajouter, c'est que la question du diabète, ce n'est pas une question qui est particulière aux Cris. Dans plusieurs nations autochtones, on se rend compte que le diabète est en augmentation, et c'est vraiment relié avec l'abandon de certaines pratiques traditionnelles, dont l'alimentation en particulier.

1265 Alors, par exemple chez les Inuit, on ne retrouve pas ça encore, mais les gens sont plus tournés vers la nourriture traditionnelle. Par contre, avec l'adoption d'un mode de vie plus sédentaire, manque d'exercice, beaucoup de sucre raffiné et tout ça, c'est les facteurs principaux qui font que le diabète apparaît ici, comme à d'autres endroits.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1270 Est-ce que vous avez des études plus spécifiques sur cette question-là du diabète chez les nations amérindiennes?

MME CLAIRE LALIBERTÉ

1275 Ce que j'ai comme renseignement, c'est qu'il y a une école de pensée qui dirait par exemple qu'il y a une prédisposition génétique à l'apparition du diabète, mais je ne pense pas que ça soit le facteur principal. C'est vraiment une question de lien avec le mode de vie.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1280 Oui. Mais il n'y a pas de...

MME CLAIRE LALIBERTÉ

1285 Les données...

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1290 ... il n'y a pas de publications, il n'y a pas d'études publiées par votre Ministère ou autre qu'on peut déposer dans notre documentation?

MME CLAIRE LALIBERTÉ

1295 Je pense que l'enquête Santé-Québec menée chez les Cris, ça ne touche pas seulement le diabète, ça touche tous les problèmes de santé déclarés par la population. Je pense que c'est un document qui pourrait être intéressant à être déposé.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1300 Alors, vous me le déposez, s'il vous plaît?

MME CLAIRE LALIBERTÉ

1305 Santé-Québec va vous faire ça.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

1310 Merci. But one thing a little bit different about the genetic interpretation, this is only one of the interpretations of the presence of the sickness. It's a theory.
May I ask you to end your question?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

I was just going to and...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

... because the point I was trying to make, the first thing I said was under the Civil Code of Québec, okay, the owners of property bordering on water must return the water used to the water course without substantial modification and must also ensure that they do not deprive the other riparian owners of the same right.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

So, all these problems that I was pointing out, you know, I was just trying to make that point.

The last point I wanted to make was that, before the hydroelectric project, we were able to swim in the river. And doctors have told us that if you spend more than a few minutes in the water, you'll get hypothermia and you'll drown. You will never see anybody swimming in our water again. And that's because the water comes from the bottom of the reservoirs where it doesn't warm up, where it's very cold. And by the time it gets down here, it's very, very cold water. So, if you fall in, if there's nobody around to save you within five minutes, that's it.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And before, there was a general practice about swimming in the river?

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Yes. The children used to swim. When we were still on the island, they used to swim in... Well, the other thing is the flow of water has increased...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

1355

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

... so much that only a very strong swimmer in a wetsuit could... We've had divers come up here, because children have fallen in, and they said the current below the surface is so strong that they had trouble trying to hang on to the ice to search for bodies in that. So, that's...

1360

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Thank you.

1365

MRS. JANIE PACHANO

Okay.

1370

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes, sir?

MR. EDOUARD TAPIATIC

1375

I just want to inform the elders here at the back what I just said, my questions on the talk about concerning water, water management, plus the impact it had on our water, plus our consumption of what's in the water, mainly the mammals and it's predators.

1380

We have been in the era of not consuming anything that has been in the reservoirs. Plus, you know, there's predators aside from what's in the water, on land, animals. You know, it's a food chain that's been impacted on: water, animal and human being. And we are the consumers of the predators. Ourselves, we are the main predators ourselves and consuming it at the same time.

1385

So, it's a question that needs to be answered by every entity, even local, CRA levels and the government.

And at this time, when the James Bay hydro project implemented its mercury program over the last two years, since 1975, the revenues in which the monitoring process and helping out the Cree has been like put to a complete halt, specially the mercury agreement. And we are no longer receiving any data or information on what's going on in the reservoirs and on the rivers and lakes.

1390

And that is my question to the environment committee, if there are any like answers that you can give us now concerning the mercury agreement. So, that is my first question.

1395

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

I believe that your question is relevant. I know that the mercury agreement has expired in 1996. The representative from Hydro-Québec answered a similar question yesterday in Oujé Bougoumou, and I'll ask him to provide an answer to your question with that respect as well.

Mr. Sioui?

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

If your question is about...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Mercury agreement.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

... what has happened after 1996 concerning the mercury agreement, what I know is that Hydro-Québec has invited the Cree party to mandate some persons to negotiate a new agreement and they are waiting for an answer from some Cree representatives about if they want to renegotiate a new agreement on mercury or what they want to do with that issue.

I know that, in Montreal, Hydro-Québec is waiting for an answer about this question from the Cree party. That's what I know. But I don't know if the Cree party wants to renegotiate a new agreement on mercury or what is their position on this question. I really don't know.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

Could you tell us to whom the letter was sent with respect to the request that Hydro-Québec has made to the Cree authorities for the appointment of representatives? Do you know to whom the letter was sent?

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

I don't know exactly to whom the letter was sent, but I know that there has been some discussions with Cree representatives, those who negotiate usually those agreements, the same who have negotiated the first mercury agreement.

MR. SAM TAPIATIC, Interpreter

Can I translate what you just said, and also for Romeo, and I will also take my hat off for 2 or 3 minutes and I will explain another thing that has happened of the mercury agreement.

1440

And it's now 1999, no mercury agreement. What I'm trying to explain is that there was also another agreement that was signed concerning mercury agreement in 1992. The agreement was signed between federal, provincial and Hydro-Québec. And in there was a section that right away they would negotiate the new mercury agreement.

1445

But we are now in 1999, and January of this year, it will now be six years that agreement has been signed and still there is no mercury agreement. So, that's the information I wanted to clarify concerning Edouard's question.

1450

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay. Mr. Sioui, yesterday I asked you if you have any new report on mercury since 1996. Do you have?

1455

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

Yes. I have checked and there's a follow-up on mercury that is continued by Hydro after 1996.

1460

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

1465

And there's a report that is supposed to be released -- maybe it's already released, but let's say in a week...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1470

Okay.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

1475

... it's supposed to be released. And it's based on data taken in 1997 and 1998.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1480

Okay. At the time you have it, you'll give me a copy?

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

Sure, yes.

1485 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

As soon as possible.

1490 **MR. VINCENT SIOUI**

Yes, it's okay.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1495 Thanks.

Yes, sir?

MR. EDOUARD TAPIATIC

1500 Romeo wanted me to introduce myself. I already did, I represent the people as a Cree trapper and I'm the local traditional pursuits director. And I look after and administer to the people that are going about their business in their own environment, the Cree people.

1505 I just want to verify something. In our Cree tradition...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

What is your name?

1510 **MR. EDOUARD TAPIATIC**

Edouard.

1515 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Edouard?

MR. EDOUARD TAPIATIC

1520 Edouard, Edouard Tapiatic. And that's my brother over there, Samuel, who just translated.

1525 Well, anyway, in our community, in each community they have their own territories. And Region 10 covers about the whole Cree nation of Québec. For an example, in our Chisasibi territory, we have 40 such territories that are owned by a tallyman. There are 40 tallymen and each tallyman has their own people under them and they are the experts of the land.

1530

Concerning what you call the water regulations in the future, I believe you asked a question on the procedure how to go about getting consultation from the people. In my opinion, I suggest that you go to the people, the Cree people, because they know about their rivers and lakes and that's how they survive. That's how they get their harvesting activities done in their own land.

1535

And to go even further, even in the upcoming projects, like there's mining explorations are being carried out at this point in time and it will affect the people also. And that's a future environmental impact that's going to be done to our rivers and even our lakes. And that's concerning water too and it's a very important question that we are going to be putting on to you... on the Advisory Committee and you to in turn ask what you've done before, questions to the people here that are more in your line of asking and giving answers too.

1540

But you, as the Advisory Committee, should go to the people so that you can understand what our people are doing on the land. And I believe the water regulations in the future are going to be impacted on our people. And that's one of the main suggestions that I'm putting to you now, go to the people, they know about the land, especially our elders.

1545

I believe one of them here, Daniel Bearskin, will be able to give you an expert opinion or even traditional explanation on just water itself, that nobody owns water. It was there given by our Creator for us to use. And now we are abusing it and I'm pretty sure you would hear a lot from one of our elders. And we, as the young generation, are just learning from our elders and we are trying to carry on and protect what is there for us and for the future years.

1550

That's why I'm suggesting to you that you go to the people, understand their needs and their questions, specially on the impacts on wildlife and recreational and tourism projects in the future. That's where your answer is going to be.

1555

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

We'll take a short break for five minutes. As I was explaining in Cree to Edouard, this is only the first stage of the process that's presently in place to deal with the issues on water.

1560

I know that there is a second phase coming up where people, organizations or other experts, be they Cree or not, can submit official briefs to the Commission. And we're obviously expecting that the Crees do be participants to that second phase as well.

1565

As you know, there are two commissions before you right now. We have the BAPE that's sitting with the James Bay Advisory Committee here and we thought it was important to come to this community to listen to you jointly. That's why we are here as two organizations and two commissions.

We'll take a five-minute break?

1570 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Please, five-minute break.

1575 **MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman**

And come back with the next witness.
Meegwetch!

1580 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Thank you.

(SUSPENSION OF THE HEARING)

1585 (CONTINUATION OF THE HEARING)

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

We will try to end at about 18:00 or 18:15 if possible.

1590

About the uranium, our analyst, Mr. Dugas, called Mrs. Michèle Geddings in Ottawa, Health Ottawa, and she faxed us this answer. I don't want to read it all, but about two things.

1595 Is there any effect of the uranium on health? It is not a radioactivity effect, but a toxicity effect. There is effects on humans on the kidneys.

And the second question is, does uranium bio accumulate? The answer is, yes, because uranium is a heavy metal. It is not fat soluble, so it can be accumulated in the organism.

1600 I deposited these answers in the documentation of the Commission.

Yes, sir?

1605 **MR. CHRISTOPHER NAPASH**

Watchia! My name is Christopher Napash and I am a Member of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi community. Welcome and thank you for your presence and your generous thought to hold the public hearings here in our community.

1610 I am here to raise a few concerns that affect my community directly and some matters which relate indirectly. But we Eeyouch, in your words Crees, Native, Aboriginal, Indian, et caetera,

have what we think is and should be considered by other inhabitants, even of this planet, that everything under these skies is all interconnected. That is water, land and air.

1615 We ourselves have realized this very fact and I think that it has only been a little while since others have come to look at the world from your eyes.

1620 As we know, water is today's main topic. To the Eeyouch, water is everything. If there is no water, there are no animals to hunt, no fish to eat, no water to drink. In short, water is what has sustained us throughout the millennia.

1625 We are not properly informed of new developments, about the impacts on the environment, animals, land, and especially water. One good example is that the original inhabitants of Chisasibi territory have been purposely kept in the dark on many of the developments, whether they are developments on hydroelectric projects, forestry, mining exploitations, et caetera.

1630 So, it is no wonder that we cannot trust outsiders when we hear about proposed projects. What do we have to do in order for us to know whether or not these things will not harm us, our livelihood, our culture and our children?

1635 We, Eeyouch, consider ourselves as stewards of this land and everything that grows on it. And this also includes our water resources. But keep in mind, we do not object to things that benefit us in the long run because, you see, this generation and others before us took great care in ensuring our survival and so we must do the same for our children and their children's children. The responsibility on this generation is great and that is why we have to and want to put up a strong fight.

1640 We want to ensure that whatever by what means of legislation, laws, local by-laws we enact and decide on today benefits not only us, but also for the future generations, for this has been the concern of our fathers, but also their forefathers before them.

1645 There are proposals of river diversions, more forestry and mining in our territories, our backyards. The proponents want to divide us through backroom and secret deals. What they and we have to realize is money and other measly compensation packages do not benefit those who will be affected most in the future.

1650 There have to be more critical reviews and environment assessments, and these reports should not be one-sided documents. Those that will rubber-stamp and automatically approve projects do not even consider consent from local people.

1650 If there are to be proper reviews and assessments, effects not only on fresh water are to be considered, but also effects of fresh water on salt water vegetation such as eelgrass for example. We have to understand how certain factors, how they play on the total ecological system of the region.

1655 We have never purposely given up our rights on our land and especially on our water rights, our rights of navigable waters on which our ancestors have travelled throughout the many centuries of our existence. It is not our right, responsibility nor in our nature as Eeyouch to give up these valuable resources, but we do share these resources with our neighbors, that is if they take good care of them.

1660 Where are the references that say we have given up our water rights? If these are not available, then we do have every right, as original inhabitants, to be included and consulted in drafting of environmental and other similar laws, especially those that will affect us as people, our children. I am sure that this will sound all logical to anyone in this room.

1665 As a concerned citizen of this Nation, I plead to you, please do not make any backroom deals, because this will only intensify our opposition towards any negative impacts on our children's rights as a means of survival as a people. How many of you out there will not flinch if your child's food you have put on the table is taken away?

1670 There also has to be a «checks and balances» system where each right hand knows what the left hand is doing. This is what we think is missing even within the government level. Therefore, sufficient funding is needed at all levels to ensure proper methods of ensuring security, safety and good health to our people who will be affected the most. This includes more funding for our organization, the Cree Nation of Chisasibi.

1675 Presently, we receive only approximately \$14,000 for water monitoring. This amount has remained at this level for a number of years. So, therefore, what can this commission recommend we do for increased funding or are they just going to say that typical think and say, «This matter is out of our hands»?

1685 My people are happy when they go hunting. This is their traditional activity, exercising their Cree right out on the land and this has been ongoing for many, many years. What if one day they came back and were told they can no longer drink the water from this river; unlikely you may think, but how can you be sure if proper monitoring and proper statistics are not made available? And we consequently have been told to boil our water for twenty minutes more than a few times.

1690 There are dams, reservoirs, and other related activities up the river from Chisasibi that citizens of this community are gravely concerned about. If our elders cannot sleep at night without thinking about their people's safety, we have a big problem. This is what we have to face as people, especially of this community. The river most affected by hydroelectric projects and other projects in this territory.

1695 I did not really plan to take up too much time on this session, but I hope this brief will give you an idea about my feelings on our water, land, and our people, this generation but, most of all, generations that will be born after us.

Finally, I will leave you with this thought, but do not take it as a threat, «We have a responsibility and we will not just let things happen without us being first consulted». Thank you.

1700

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Thank you, sir. I think it's more a testimony than a series of questions, but it's very important and I thank you deeply for this.

1705

MR. CHRISTOPHER NAPASH

I did have a few questions, but...

1710

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MR. CHRISTOPHER NAPASH

1715

... I think time is of essence.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1720 Okay. Thanks a lot.
 Yes, sir?

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

1725 It's a comment mostly or a request. In here, the major rivers are written down here and the Chisasibi is not considered as a river anymore, it's a reservoir.

 Any body of water that flows, that's in motion, I think, you call it either a stream, you know, or a brook, but as long as the body of water is moving. And where we are, that body of water is
1730 still moving. So, it's still a river to us and I think it should be looked at as a river, at what all the projects that are planned, how they're going to affect this river, and how it has already been affected. I just wanted to mention that.

 And the other thing that I'd like to ask, if an answer is available, we would greatly appreciate it, concerning the eelgrass. We know, us people here that travel the coastline on James Bay, that eelgrass are not growing, and I think there has been a study that has been done by Hydro, I don't know for how long, and I'm asking if they have any results. Are there any definite answers as to why the eelgrass is not growing which is the main diet for the geese on which we depend on, especially at this time of year. Is there an answer of why or what causes the eelgrass to stop
1740 growing? Or even better, what can be done to reverse.

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

 What is the importance of eelgrass? I did not quite get it?
1745

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

 Eelgrass is what the geese feed on, and geese is what we depend on. They are a major part of our diet.
1750

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

 I don't know the specific word in French for eelgrass. Zostère marine, très bien.

1755 Do you have an answer to the question mister is asking about the loss of productivity of this eelgrass?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

1760 The question of eelgrass was an important question with the LG-2A project and the LG-1 project. And the link was with the bernache cravant — in English, it's brant — with the brant.

 So, in the authorization of the project, we asked a monitoring on this aspect. So, Hydro-Québec has produced some reports and Hydro is supposed to produce a final report, if I remember,
1765 in the next year. So, it would be possible to have some conclusions about that in next year.

 But with the preliminary reports, what we know is that the eelgrass seems to be constant, but we know that we have a very important variability in the results. That's what we can say about that, but the results come from Hydro.
1770

 If the Commission wants to have a report about that, it is probably possible to have the reports from Hydro.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1775 And I already asked it to Mr. Sioui.

 Would you have a look please on these reports, preliminary reports, and give them to the Commission please?

1780 **MR. VINCENT SIOUI**

 Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1785 Okay.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

1790 One last comment...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1795 Yes. As a comment, did you observe on your side a loss of productivity of the eelgrass?

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

1800

Yes, we have. It just doesn't grow. Maybe what grows couldn't really be considered as a growth as such, but I would say... I think it would be reasonable to say that 90 percent of what used to... the eelgrass that used to be along the coast is gone, which could be the effects from the Hydro project. And that's the question we'd like an answer to.

And the last comment that I would like to make is concerning uranium.

1805

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

1810

About the answer we got a few moments ago. I think our friend Mr. Sioui knows of the journey that was made this winter, why it was made. There's been people with kidney dysfunctions.

1815

So, I think the issue about uranium needs to be looked into. Like I said, there's people around who have kidney problems and I think it should be looked into. What can be done to avoid it or... that is my last comment I wanted to make. And I thank you for...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1820

But what we did say before is that uranium seems to be related to the groundwater, not to the surface water. But the intervener asked if there's a relation between the groundwater and the surface water because of the dams.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

1825

Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1830

So, we did ask questions on that which is a quite complicated question. But we shall have an answer, I hope, on this point.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

1835

And one last thing I almost forgot concerning water and how we... my friend was here before me, things are interconnected, the water and the land. I don't know if anybody has ever wondered that the river has flown for thousand of years. And when you go up, when you travel inland, you're not going to see a big great cloud where it rains continuously. The water comes out of

1840

the ground, it comes out of the earth. That's why we say that everything is interconnected. It has to come out of the earth first. And I'd like to leave you with that thought. I thank you.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1845

Thank you, sir.
Hello!

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1850

Hi! My name is William Chiskamish. I'm a member of Chisasibi and I'd like Sam to translate what I'm going to say. I'm going to say it in Cree so the elders can understand that too.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1855

Okay.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

He welcomes everybody here and he wants me to translate so the elders can understand.

1860

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

1865

What he wants to talk about is the past, back in the 1950s, there was a mining activity back then and that's what he wants to talk about, not mining as we know it today, but mostly in surveying, I think, at that time. They were surveyors.

1870

Well, he's saying that the surveying that was done by the Natural Resources in those times was probably related to hydroelectric projects back then.

1875

In the 70s, the hydroelectric project was announced and he's saying that, in the 1950s, it was probably part of the activity that led to this hydroelectric project.

1880

In 1975, the agreement was signed and... sorry, 1998, that's when we started discussing the infrastructure of this town, and water, and sewer facilities.

After that happened, when we got our facilities in place, the infrastructure in place, Vida Pachano, I believe, at that time was the Chief, she was asked to sign a document. The document

she was asked to sign was that the agreement had been fulfilled and it was now time for them to transfer the water infrastructure and all the services to the Crees.

1885 Well, up to this time, he says that we should never sign that document, because he doesn't believe that the obligations have been fulfilled. And he says we are still having a lot of problems with our water system, even today. This is all related to the hydroelectric development in La Grande river.

1890 Now, we find out there are other chemicals in the water that need to be studied and there are no answers to these questions that we still need to answer.

1895 They've already completed a project that was supposed to remedy the problems we had in the past. We have a new pump station, that was ten years ago, and they still haven't perfected the problems we had. So, we're still having the same problems as we did in the first place.

1900 It is all related to the velocity of the river. Somebody else mentioned the ice flow, the brown water that comes out of the river. And it's all related to the La Grande complex, especially with LG-1, when it was built. The river is constantly opened all through the winter, it never freezes. There's ice build-up and, in the summer, there's mud. You can see the pump when it's at very low tide. That's what he's talking about. Somebody else mentioned this before.

1905 Well, he's saying that even... he's talking about the pumps are in there in very shallow water. You can't see them out of the water, but you can still... they're related to the mud, and the ice, and everything mixed together to cause problems with the pump.

1910 Even in the water pump, the natural flow of the river system goes into the pump. That's what he wants to talk about. He's saying that even the natural flow of the water that goes into the pumps went into the ducts and into the system. And in the spring, last spring, the build-up of the sand was visible inside the pump house in one of the tanks. As a result of that, the water in the pipe settles eventually and all you see is the mud and the sand at the bottom.

He's talking about the filters. They don't work the way they're supposed to.

1915 When we bypass the water and, of course, they don't go through the filters, it goes directly to the community, that's why they had to settle the dirt in the system. That's why Janie had the problem when she came back from her seven-day visit down south.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1920 Explain me that more please. I think it's an important point.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1925 Okay. The water is a naturally flow to the intake...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1930 Yes.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1935 ... goes to the well.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1940 Yes.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1945 On the well, there's two pumps.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1950 Okay.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1955 And those two pumps, those are very powerful pumps which can take dirt, any kind of... maybe rock too...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

1960 Yes?

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1965 ... which lifts everything into the system.

1960

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And these pumps are in the wells?

1965

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

Yes.

1970

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

They are not in the river?

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

No.

1975

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And how deep are your wells?

1980

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

I couldn't say exactly, but they could be around maybe over ten feet or less than ten feet.

1985

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

1990

We can't see those pumps, they're under the water anyway.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

1995

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

The thing is we have... the reason why the natural...

2000

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

This brown water we were speaking about.

2005

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

The natural water we receive in there...

2010

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

There's a build-up of sand in the intake. That's how we have the sand in the system...

2015

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay.

2020

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

... because of the flow. If the flow of the...

2025

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

Mr. Chairman...

2030

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

MR. HARM SLOTERDĪJK, JBACE Commissioner

... could I ask a question about the wells?

2035

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Oh yes.

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

2040

Because I believe what he means by the wells is just it is a hole in the bank of the river and this is connected to the river. And the natural flow of the river goes into these wells, if I understand it correctly. Because there is some confusion about whether you mean by a well drawing up groundwater, or is the well receiving the service water off the river and it's just a convenient way of having what in French we would call un puits, a well where the pumps can pump the water from the river, but not directly from the river. It's almost like a holding spot. Am I correct on this?

2045

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

2050

Yes, a holding tank.

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

2055

Yes.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

This is a concrete... it's about twelve by twelve.

2060

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

So, it's communicating with the river, so the level in there is the same as in the river.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

2065

Yes.

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

2070

If the water goes down, in the river it goes down, then the well too.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

Yes. We have two pipes that go out to the river as a natural flow.

2075

MR. HARM SLOTERDIJK, JBACE Commissioner

Okay. I get the picture.

2080

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

You have two systems, okay.

M. HARM SLOTERDIJK, commissaire JBACE

2085

Comme les vases communicants.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

2090

Oui, oui. C'est une technique utilisée au Lac St-Jean.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

2095

He's trying to make you people understand and also the old people, I guess, that the water system or the pumping system that we have been provided here in this community does not work.

Right from the beginning, you all know that the Crees were opposed to damming the river. And as a result of that, we are continuously being hurt by this project.

2100

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Just a minute.

Yes?

2105

MR. JACQUES LEFÈBVRE, CCEBJ Commissioner

I have a question. You were saying that this system was provided. By whom was it provided? Who provided this system?

2110

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

Hydro, because it's in the agreement, eh?

MR. JACQUES LEFÈBVRE, CCEBJ Commissioner

2115

Oh! I see.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC

2120 That's why he mentioned Violet was asked to sign a document releasing Hydro of fulfilling their obligations under that agreement for the water system.

MR. JACQUES LEFÈBVRE, CCEBJ Commissioner

2125 So, it wasn't bought by the community. It was provided by Hydro-Québec. Installed by Hydro-Québec?

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

2130 Yes.

MR. JACQUES LEFÈBVRE, CCEBJ Commissioner

2135 I see.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

2140 In the past, we used to go anywhere we wanted to go. For transportation purposes, we used the water. And now, in the wintertime, we can't even use it for transportation, because it's always opened all the time. He's talking about the river. So, in that way, it is still a very big problem for the Crees in their traditional activities.

2145 That's why he wants to ask that whenever there's a big project, that the Crees be consulted first or the traditional inhabitants of the Northern Québec.

2150 Well, for everybody to hear, he wants to ask a question.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2155 Excuse me. First, I want to ask you a brief question.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

2155 Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2160 Are you responsible of the piping of the water in the river?

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

Yes. I'm the maintenance supervisor of this.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2165

Okay. So, you work for the municipality.

MR. WILLIAM CHISKAMISH

2170

Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay. Thanks.

2175

MRS. GISEÈLE GALLICHAN, BAPE Commissioner

2180

I have also a question for you, sir, here. I would like to know, if you know why... you know, the gentleman who spoke before Mr. Rupert a few minutes ago, he said the people have received advices for boiling water for 20 minutes. Often we have heard in other parts of Québec that boiling water advices were for 5 minutes. But 20 minutes, I think it's a...

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2185

I can answer that question.

MRS. GISEÈLE GALLICHAN, BAPE Commissioner

Okay.

2190

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Would you come to the microphone?

2195

MRS. GISEÈLE GALLICHAN, BAPE Commissioner

Why 20? Because the filters are not working? Why?

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2200

First of all, I work for Chisasibi Cree Nation. I work in public health, I also work with the local environment administrator.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2205

Okay.

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2210

We work together.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2215

Would you tell your name please?

MRS. VIOLET BATES

Violet Bates.

2220

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Thanks.

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2225

I've worked in the health field for the past 20 years at the grass roots level and at the political level. And this past year especially, like Janie said and also William said, we've had a lot of problems with our water, water intake.

2230

Unexpectedly, our water would be shut off for the day. Not only us, but also the hospital. You know, the hospital has to deal with dialysis machines. So, that was a big worry for us, because they constantly need clean water for their dialysis machines, special water for their dialysis machines for people with dialysis.

2235

So, we do our water sampling monitoring once a week at our office. We have a special system called the Colilert system. It's been used for the past three years where we water our... and test our water at the office. It's done daily. And also another sample is sent to the Ministry in Rouyn to do a sampling so there's no, you know, contamination in the water, proper monitoring of chemicals and, you know, that there's no fecal matter and coliform in the water.

2240

And if there's a contamination, we are notified right away within 24 hours either from the Ministry or we know ourselves, because we do our own. We wait for 24 hours for the samples.

2245 So, this year especially there was a lot of bacterial contamination in the water. We were lucky there was no coliform in the water. So, because of the water runoff in the spring from the land, we have to be especially careful, to tell the people to boil the water while they are in the bush also because, you know, there is sediments from the air on the land. So, this year, we did that a lot because of the problem with our water system.

2250 And also once a year, we send a sample to the Québec ministry level so they can monitor the chemicals in the water, all the different chemicals or minerals in the water. If there is any changes, they tell us.

2255 And also in the water system, we also have a monitor where we monitor our chlorine and also the chemicals we put in the water. Like they said before, we can't directly drink from the water anymore, because it's contaminated water now. It's not like long ago where we could drink our water right from the river. It's not like that anymore. We have no choice but to use that system due to the projects they have built. We have LG-1 very close to us.

2260 And also the open water, there's open water all year-round, especially in the spring where there's water runoff and erosion of the land. There has to be a device system where... you know, there has to be another system put in.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2265 Yes.

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2270 Just for your information, I'd like to tell you, a colleague gave me this information, LG-2, they don't have a system like ours. They get their drinking water directly from the reservoir. So, they don't put any chemicals in their water. That's especially worrisome for us also as health workers, you know, to put these chemicals in the water because, like Janie said, you know, we don't know that the World Health Organization... you know, that these things that you put in the water can be cancerous, you know. These are questions we have to think about.

2275

Can I go on? And also I wanted to mention our... we were relocated in our community 20 years ago. And with these mega-projects you've built, Hydro-Québec, came along big mega-problems also: our health problems, social problems. These are observations I've made in my field of work, as a worker, as a person.

2280

Diabetes, I didn't even think diabetes, the word «diabetes» existed in the 1970s. Remember, I told you I've worked for the Health Board. I work directly with the people. We didn't

2285 know what diabetes was. Till we moved here, that's when our lifestyle changed, our way of life, our food. Everything was affected, you know, our hunting, the way we live everyday. Our housing is very different from the way we lived in Fort George. Fort George was a beautiful island where we moved from.

2290 And that's also a toxic dump I'm telling you. That's something that people should look into. You people should look into that. When they moved our community from Fort George, they moved us very fast. They gave us two years, I think. They built the infrastructure of this community and they destroyed all the things that were there like gas... you know, gas for holding tanks, they destroyed that and they buried them underground.

2295 And also there was a hydro... where we got our electricity, generating station there...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes?

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2305 ... that's another thing that, I think, should be investigated there. And there's two creeks that run in that place and they're all polluted, you know, stagnant water, very polluted. And they run into the rivers, both these creeks running, you know, the north side of the river and also, I think, the east side of the river. And these were both very polluted.

2310 And these are issues that we should investigate, that, you know, the Federal Government and the Provincial Government have a responsibility for us to investigate these situations that we face as people. You know, our lifestyle is changing, within 20 years, very fast and we had to cope with it mentally, physically. Socioeconomic structure of the Crees have changed. Their way of life was changed very drastically.

2315 And these are very worrisome for us. That can also change... you know, the water system, these things that haven't been looked into when they did the move on the community. You know, pollutants can be... where the water can be affected there, and the river, and the people.

2320 There is still people living on the island. We still use that place. We still go back at a place where we can reminisce every year. We've been doing that for the past 11 years where we go back and we connect with ourselves. And, you know, every year it's a rich... it's called a gathering every year.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2325 Yes.

MRS. VIOLET BATES

2330 And still we go back and have games and hold games. And there's still people living in that
area, there's still families living there. And the information I got from those families was that the
river... they noticed the river has changed. Like there's green slimy stuff growing in the river and it's
affecting their traditional way of life like fishing. And also in the winter, they used to be able to set
their lines in the river and all they get is that big green slimy stuff that comes out from their hooks.
2335 And it's green and they were really surprised, you know, in the middle of the winter. This stuff is
really long and green, green stuff. Usually, stuff doesn't grow in the winter, you know?

And this is what I thought I'd say, you know, for you guys. Really I said too much.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2340 Thank you, Madam.
Yes, sir.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

2345 The question earlier he wanted to ask was, I think we've all heard of the... I don't know what
they call it now, but they call it the Grand Canal project.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2350 Yes.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

2355 Is it going to go ahead or what is the situation?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2360 Do you have any information on that?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2365 I will give you the same information that I gave you before. In fact, the Department of the Environment has never received any demand about this project. So, that's what we can say about that.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2370 I must tell you, we did have a long discussion on that topic in Montreal in a special day of work and a specialist from the University of Québec in Montreal spoke about that. The notes of that meeting are in French, we don't have it in English. It is available in the documentation of the Commission. But there is a long discussion on that.

2375 The main opinion now is that this kind of project is no more possible, because we understand better the impacts on the environment and mostly on the Great Lakes of such a project, we don't think this kind of project so large is anymore possible.

2380 But we must be aware because, as someone told us, other projects did arrive before that we must be very careful about that.

Also, The International Joint Commission, which is a regulatory body between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States, made a report about the exportation of water. And they speak about this project and, in their point of view, there is not something possible now. This report is available in the documentation also.

2385

MR. JACQUES LEFÈBVRE, CCEBJ Commissioner

2390 I have a question. I don't know to who, what person might be able to answer this question. I heard a lot of people here today talking about the changes in the river, physical, chemical, all sorts of changes and affecting the drinking water, affecting the way of life of the people of Chisasibi. I would like if somebody can answer this.

2395 And I heard also people saying that there's no permanent monitoring of these changes on that segment of river. That's what I understood, that there was no monitoring or permanent monitoring either by Hydro-Québec or the ministère de l'Environnement. And the reason is because we're up north and there was no real necessity of doing this, because the pollution wasn't there. But as I can see, there is a form of pollution involved with this segment of river.

2400 I would like to know if there is a plan or some projects somewhere, between the Ministry of Environment and Hydro-Québec, to do a detailed survey or a monitoring of this segment to see how these problems could be solved.

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2405 In fact, we did not the monitoring, but we asked monitoring when we have authorized the project that we have authorized, I mean LG-2A, LG-1, Brisay, LA-2. And we have some conditions about the monitoring and we have some issues to consider.

2410 What we can do maybe, we can deposit to the Commission our certificate of authorization for those projects and it will be possible for you to see what are the main issues that we have considered in the authorization of the project and in the monitoring.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2415 It's not necessary to have the authorization. But could you tell us if there is reports on the monitoring about these questions, about the changing of the quality of the water and so on?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2420 The reports come from the proponent, from Hydro.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2425 And they do this?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

Yes.

2430 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

And they transmit the reports to you, to the Ministry of the Environment?

2435 **MR. DANIEL BERROUARD**

Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2440 And do you have any cross-checking of some data about these reports?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2445 What do you mean by cross-checking?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Do you validate the data? Do you have une opinion de spécialiste? Do you have a critical view...

2450

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

Yes.

2455

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

... on that?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2460

Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2465

And can you tell us the procedures you use, les démarches disciplinaires, les méthodologies? Est-ce que vous validez les méthodologies qui sont utilisées? Au fond, est-ce que vous faites un rapport, un regard scientifique, critique sur les informations transmises par Hydro-Québec?

2470

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

Practically speaking, when we receive the reports from Hydro, usually we transmit the report for comments or for analysis to the Review Committee and...

2475

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And this Review Committee is a...

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2480

Is what we call the COMEX.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2485

Okay.

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

It's for analysis.

2490

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

2495

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

And if we have to comment, we comment and...

2500

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

And your commentaries are public ones?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2505

In fact, the COMEX don't produce, release a report. He can make a recommendation. And, for example, for the project that I talked before, LG-2A, LG-1, the COMEX received a preliminary report and he will receive a final report probably next year. So, he will have to wrap up all this information.

2510

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Is the preliminary report public?

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

2515

Those reports come from Hydro. I suppose that, in fact, Hydro... Mr. Sioui mentioned that Hydro was available to give the information. So, I suppose that the Commission can obtain these reports from Hydro.

2520

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

I don't ask for the Commission, I ask for the public in general, are these kind of reports made public by themselves. Are they available to the population if they want to know?

2525

MR. DANIEL BERROUARD

I can't answer for Hydro.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2530

Okay. I ask Hydro-Québec.

Yes, Mr. Sioui?

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

2535

I can't say if all the reports on environmental monitoring are public. I can't say if a report produced under a certificate of authorization given by the ministère de l'Environnement, is owned after that by the ministère de l'Environnement. I could ask the question to somebody and I could...

2540

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes, please.

MR. VINCENT SIOUI

2545

... answer to you after the...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2550

Please ask it, because the question we are facing now is a very important one. We have here people telling us that there is changes, deep changes in the drinking water, in the color of the water. And they do have long way experience. They tell us it is related to the implementation of a dam and of a reservoir.

2555

Do you have any scientific data on this conclusion? Is that a dream or is that a real effect of a dam? If it is, it is. If it is not, it is not. But do you have any data on that?

2560

And if you are obliged to make a monitoring, where are we in this monitoring and does exist from that a report? If there is a report, is the report public? It's the only thing we want to know. Because the testimony of the community is quite important, I think.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC

2565

Excuse me, may I add? In the James Bay Agreement, there was an entity created which is a company I work for, James Bay Eeyouch Company, and in there it says monitoring of the environmental impacts are supposed to be given to that entity. And we have not seen any of those reports and we keep asking for them to Hydro-Québec.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2570

Okay.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC

2575

And they say they exist, but they don't give them to us for us to analyze, like you say, or have a critical evaluation of that. So, that's my own experience.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2580

Maybe they are what we call preliminary reports and only the final report will be given. But it's legitimate to ask this question, we shall see with the answer later on.

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC

2585

Okay.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2590

Okay, sir?

MR. SAMUEL TAPIATIC (for Mr. William Chiskamish)

He says, «That's it for me and I thank you very much».

2595

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Merci, thank you.

Yes, sir?

2600

MR. ABRAHAM BEARSKIN

My name is Abraham Bearskin, I'm from Chisasibi.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2605

Yes.

MR. ABRAHAM BEARSKIN

2610 First, I want to make a comment first. Like for over 20 years, maybe 25 years now, the Crees of Chisasibi, and not just here but the other nine communities, have voiced their concerns on the issue of the effects of the Hydro-Québec...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2615 Yes.

MR. ABRAHAM BEARSKIN

2620 ... the water especially. If I recall, during the court cases, the witnesses that's took before the courts or at the meetings that were held, the elders were the ones... or the trappers have voiced their concerns.

2625 I don't believe anyone can say that they weren't aware of these issues. Now, it's a concern after 25 years. It affects the mind, the body of a person, and the spirit of a person, the water specially.

And I don't know how many times this has been talked about. Like I listened to the responses of the questions. There's no answers, just comments.

2630 And that leads me to believe that the perception from Québec or from Canada wasn't really concern of the Crees in Northern Québec, mainly Chisasibi as a nation. These are very vital, importance of survival.

2635 You know, there's this technical stuff that you talk about, the studies done, the hidden agendas, you know reports that are not public, you know. And we know, you know, some hidden vital information is not public when you cannot justify certain things that you do when you develop, any impacts on the land, because it affects the land and it affects also the air that you breath and the water, all that.

2640 And it's like a cancer. You know, anybody can tell you that. And that just spreads over the land. I think that's something, you know, by common sense. You see it.

2645 And I think you've touched what I was going to ask. You know, the exportation, what is the purpose exactly? You know, water is one issue also. You know, it goes beyond the intake of the water in Chisasibi. When you address water, you look at the water within the James Bay area, like the presentation here. What is it behind that?

2650 We know that in other parts of the country, they're in need of water. You know, the study, where does it lead to? You know, that's something that's very... you know, only you come here and

you make that presentation, it's just like a shell. You don't go deep. You don't go to the root or the purpose of that issue. I think that's very important.

2655 Well, I believe, you know, if once is going to fool around with the water, you're going to have a big fight with us. We have a stand to make. That's our last resort, because everything else you touch is affected, but whatever... the word you use, cancer, and it affects a whole being, a whole nation, you know.

2660 Then you look at the animals. They're affected. That's not just the humans that are affected. But yet, I see, when I read your titles, Environment, Québec-Environment, James Bay Advisory Committee on Environment, you know, to me, you know, to be honest, I acknowledge you, but it doesn't really mean anything to me. I don't trust you guys, because it's just talk. As more reports, more reports. There has to be action now.

2665 I think that's time that we really look at what we're fooling around. I don't think Hydro-Québec, or Québec, or Canada really knew what they were getting... I mean what they were fooling around with. To me, you fool around with somebody's mind. You're fooling around with somebody's body, specially the spirit of that person.

2670 And there you develop... you bring in other kind of sicknesses, different kinds of sicknesses, cancer, leukemia, you name it, diabetes. All these things, they're visible in the territory now. There's something in the air that's not right. I think that's something that one has to really look at, who protects the land.

2675 When a Cree or an aboriginal speaks for the land, he doesn't just speak for the people. He speaks for the birds. He speaks for the animals. He speaks for the fish. He speaks for the river. He speaks for the heavens.

2680 I think you guys need to be educated by us. We have a story to tell you. You know, I think the truth has to come out.

2685 Now, the changes. The changes, your answers, the answers that we seem to get from the developers, or Québec, or Canada, that we have to change our lifestyle because of someone's doing and then you affect the social being of a human. And every time that's overlooked. You haven't done your assessment well or your reports.

2690 And if you go beyond to what the Crees have gone through since the last 20, 25 years, even their own ancestors are under that water. And here you are, we are, speaking about the impacts of the water. And those bodies are under water. That's a defect itself. You have to look at the whole picture, not just one aspect of an impact.

Speaking about monitoring, I think that's something else that really needs to be defined. What is that exactly? What do you mean by monitoring the intake or the flow of water, the flexibility

of the level of water in the rivers, in the lakes or in the reservoirs? What is that? What is it exactly?
What does it involve?

Again, I think that's something we, as Crees, need to know. I think we're just talking like... the words you use is «surface water». I think each time when we come here, it's just the surface of an issue that we talk about. We don't go deep.

In this case, water, everybody knows, is really precious. And the water that is taken from this river, as you have heard before, that's been said over and over again, and I think it's time now that someone really has to address that. I think that the answers will come from the grass roots level with the elderly.

I'm looking at my time here. And there's some questions in there that I've mentioned, but I don't know if one can answer. Thanks. Thank you so much.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Thank you very much, sir.

MR. ERIC HOUSE

The name is Eric House again from the Chisasibi Band Council. What I've seen here is a lot of information, no information, studies not available.

I also wanted to bring up letters from Matthew Coon-Come in April to Honorable Paul Bégin. The object was the Québec water management policy consultation. And the information that was in there, relating to any decision from the Quebec Government regarding water resources in native territory, which are made without Cree consent, such consent necessarily presumes adequate information and, as a minimum, affect Cree participation in all issues affecting our water rights.

These letters were sent. And also one recently to Premier Lucien Bouchard concerning a partnership development achievement document that was in April 1998 which was rejected by the Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations in Québec in May 1998.

This policy was produced without the input or cooperation of the First Nations in Québec. He imposes certain reference points that are highly prejudicial to the First Nations and had been rejected by the Crees and other First Nations in the past. In our view, the sovereignty of the National Assembly, the territorial integrity of Québec, legislative and regulatory effectivity, in our view they're designated to advance Québec sovereignty agenda at the expense of the federal status and rights of the First Nations in Québec.

2735 All agreements with First Nations had a clause called «Conditions for withdrawal clause» which Québec could jump out of any agreement that was written with any First Nations, with leaving the First Nations up in the air.

2740 The right of the Quebec Government to withdraw from signed agreements means that the aboriginal people in Québec are being subjected to different standard that is lower than any other people in Canada. We will have no legal recourse to the courts to enforce these agreements, except when Québec chooses not to exercise its right of withdraw.

2745 This is yet another form of discrimination and is thus a violation of our basic human rights. This goes on... I don't know if you got these...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2750 You understand that I have absolutely no jurisdiction on these topics you're speaking about.

MR. ERIC HOUSE

2755 Okay. I just wanted to bring up the five regulation... I mean remedies to the situation. A continued imposition of 1985 resolution on aboriginal rights, Québec's new policy declares that it is based at least in part...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2760 Yes, but I don't have any mandate to discuss about these questions here.

MR. ERIC HOUSE

2765 I mean these should be brought up with what's going on here now relating to our rights recognizing that we are part and it is...

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2770 Yes, but it's not directly related to the water management policy, you see. I understand your point of view, I don't want to discuss about that. But it's not my mandate to make a general...

MR. ERIC HOUSE

But what I'm saying is if Québec does not recognize First Nation people as people...

2775 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Yes.

MR. ERIC HOUSE

2780

... what are you here for?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2785

I'm here to consult all the population about the water policy. And my mandate is only on water policy. And because you're important, I made an arrangement to come here and to hear, and we spoke very deeply about very important issues on the water management. Understand that I'm not here to discuss the political framework from Canada or Québec.

2790

MR. ERIC HOUSE

You're not here as a Québec representative?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2795

I'm not a representative on these topics here and you understand quite well, eh?

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

2800

I understand your concerns about respect for Cree rights, I clearly understand that. I just want to repeat briefly what I said in Cree so that others can understand here.

2805

One of the reasons why we wanted to come to Chisasibi was that we knew that you people here had quite a unique experience with the question of water. We are not alone here. The James Bay Advisory Committee is not alone here. The Bureau d'audiences publiques, you see their sign back there, they're here with us.

2810

And the reason why we wanted to bring everybody here is that we wanted them to hear you guys out, to hear everybody here. And I've been...

MR. ERIC HOUSE

But you're going to leave soon, right?

2815 **MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman**

Yes. And we've been sitting here for more than four hours now, close to five hours now.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2820

Five.

MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman

2825

And I hear the people say, «We used to eat a lot of fish in this community. Now, we don't.» I heard people say, «We used to swim in that river. Now, we cannot swim.» We hear people say, «We used to drink directly from that river. Now, we cannot drink anymore from that river directly.»

2830

Now, these are the kinds of things that you expect to hear down south, in the southern communities where industrial development has taken place. But the irony of all of this is that here we are, way in the far north, and people talking about the quality of the water that is no good anymore in this community. That's amazing to me already.

2835

A lot of that, and that's what I seem to understand from this community, a lot of that comes from hydroelectric development. And I can see some of the impacts, direct impacts from that development. I can understand them. I've looked at them a lot.

2840

But in addition to that, and this is where you come in, it's the whole question of Cree rights and respect for those Cree rights. And I think that's your main point. What I would ask is that given the time limit that we have and given that our main subject is water, I would... I see that there are other people that want to take the floor. I know that one elder, Daniel wants to speak as well before we close this session.

2845

What I would ask is perhaps you could table those letters, the two letters...

MR. ERIC HOUSE

Yes.

2850 **MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman**

... that you referred to and so that we can have them on record and proceed with our main issue which is water.

2855 **MR. ERIC HOUSE**

Yes, that's right.

2860 **MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT**

Romeo, I want to make a request to the Commission, if I might, before we close. I have a couple of elders that I would like to present, so they can speak to the Commission.

2865 **MR. ROMEO SAGANASH, JBACE Chairman**

Okay.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

2870 And if it would be all right for... this is after everybody else speak.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2875 These two people want to speak, I'll hear them. And, after that, we hear the elders and then we close the meeting.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

2880 Yes.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Is that right?

2885 **MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT**

Yes.

2890 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

Okay.

MR. CHRIS MERRIMAN

2895 Good evening to you all. My name is Chris Merriman. I'm the local environment administrator from Eastmain. Eastmain is a small community of 600 people, 30-minute flight south of Chisasibi, 20 minutes probably if you're a Canada goose.

2900 At the beginning of the meeting, it was pointed out that the Chisasibi River isn't on the map. Also missing is Eastmain River.

2905 Twenty years ago, it was a fast flowing freshwater river where people drank from, swam in. And the river running into Eastmain was blocked and I understand the level of flow was dropped by about 85 to 90 percent. This was replaced by salt water from James Bay which had tides go in for a 15-mile.

 So, being salt water, it has caused quite a few problems with fishing. And also it seems to be affecting our water treatment plant, because we are getting high conductivity or salt water.

2910 Over the past 40 years, which I've lived on James Bay, we've used rainwater, snow water, river water and ice water for drinking and rarely, very rarely, treated water. But now, it's impossible really to find a suitable spot where you can get good fresh water from close to the community.

2915 In my job as environment administrator, one of my jobs is to check the community water for bacteria, which have been pointed out we do weekly. And I were to give the community, within 24 hours, notice to boil if the water is contaminated, which before on sending... we had to send water to the laboratory in Val D'Or which took several days before we could get a reply. So, things have changed up the coast as well as here.

2920 As far as the river goes, at Eastmain, we are looking into different sources of water for water treatment. We're looking to surface water and we're looking to ground water. And this, of course, would... if the river had not been blocked off, we would have been able to have fresh water and to bring water in from the river into our treatment plant.

2925 Anyway, my question is, each of the communities has an administrative agreement with the Department of the Environment for the monitoring of drinking water which, as we say, is done weekly. And also about \$14,000 is allocated within this agreement on an annual basis.

2930 Now, the nine local environment administrators have been complaining during their quarterly meetings that this amount is insufficient for monitoring and also for training. This amount has been the same for a number of years and never adjusted to the real needs.

2935

As a very important part of monitoring the drinking water, we would like to know when the Department intends to increase the funding and by how much. And what measures the regional office has taken to assist them getting this situation resolved.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

2940

Someone asked the same question yesterday night, you're not so surprised -- yesterday afternoon, excuse me. And the answer the Ministry of the Environment gave us is these people here are not responsible. They have referred this question to Québec. And I think it is on study. They don't have any official answer at this moment. I will check back, maybe they have new information since yesterday.

2945

How is the situation now about the funding? They do have \$14,000 per community. Do we have the same amount? Do we have an increase and how much?

MRS. JOSÉE BRAZEAU

2950

There's been no increasing of the amount since a couple of years. I've been there only for two years and I know that demands have been submitted but, no, the amount has not been changed.

2955

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Do you think that they are looking for a... did they receive what they're asking for, the new amounts for... Excuse me, I'm getting tired and I'm losing my English.

2960

Est-ce que vous avez reçu des demandes d'augmentation de fonds?

MME JOSÉE BRAZEAU

2965

Pas depuis deux ans. Verbalement, pas officiellement. C'est fait verbalement.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

Est-ce que la hausse des subventions est envisagée?

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MME JOSÉE BRAZEAU

Pas présentement.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

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Pas présentement.

She told me that they didn't receive any require about the augmentation of the funding. And at this moment, they are not looking for getting more than \$14,000. So, if you have a request, you make the request there.

2980

MR. CHRIS MERRIMAN

Okay.

2985

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Okay?

2990

MR. CHRIS MERRIMAN

Thank you very much for your time.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Thanks. Thanks a lot, sir, for coming.

Yes, Madam? You will be the last one to ask a question because, after that, two elders want to speak to the Commission and I must close not too late, because we want to have a supper tonight and it closes at eight o'clock. So, Madam, welcome here.

3000

MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

My name is Michèle Robert. I was mandated to come here to represent Robert Kanatewat who is the President of Wiihiichiituun Development Corporation. He had some concerns that he wanted to bring to the Commission, but he was unable to attend himself due to other duties.

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I'll be brief. There's three subjects that I would like to touch. The first one is the legislation, the upcoming legislation on bottling water for exportation...

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MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Yes.

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MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

... and the whole legislation. I would like to know if the government will take into consideration the different needs of the various regions. What I mean by that is the region here, it's very difficult to create employment. We have obviously to rely on natural resources.

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Now, will the legislation take this fact into account while they do their law?

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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That's a good question. Nobody can answer this question now. But it's the kind of question on which we are invited to think and maybe in our report there will be a recommendation in that sense. So, it will be interesting for you to present a brief to the Commission later on.

MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

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We will do so.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

3035

Okay. Are you speaking about bottle water?

MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

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We're talking about spring water.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Spring water, okay.

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MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

Whether used for consumption or for the pharmacy industry.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

3050

Okay, yes.

MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

3055 My second comment would concern the control of the water level in the reservoirs, specially LG-3 and LG-4. There has been a huge increase in the fluctuation in the water level in the past years. And this year, the water is very high.

3060 That has an impact on the nature naturally and on the fish. And since the fishing is one of the traditional activities, it impacts also on all the Crees that do that activity all along those reservoirs in their territories.

3065 Mr. Kanatewat would like to know if it would be possible for Hydro-Québec to consider consulting with the Cree authorities if they have difficulty controlling the water levels, so that it affects as little as possible the Crees and the Cree way of life.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

3070 I will ask Hydro-Québec not tonight, but you will send me an answer on this question please, okay? You take note and you'll give me an answer about the position of Hydro-Québec on this question.

Yes, Madam?

3075 **MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT**

One of the concerns with the water levels is also naturally the spawning areas for the fish, the protection of such areas, okay?

3080 My last concern would be the level of water going into Chisasibi, being what happens if the dam breaks or if they have to open those doors? We'd like to know if there is an emergency plan, a real one, and if such plan exists, if it could be communicated to the Crees.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

3085 I think that this question is related to the ministère des Ressources naturelles with the security on the... no? And also to Hydro-Québec? And is the Environment also involved in this question?

3090 **MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT**

It should be.

M. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, président BAPE

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Non, c'est la sécurité.

So, Hydro-Québec, you will answer this question please. Not today, but you'll send me an answer to that important question.

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I'll make a survey on that, okay?

MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

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Okay.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Thanks.

MRS. MICHÈLE ROBERT

Thank you for your time.

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MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Thank you, Madam.

So, there is an elder in the...

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MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

One of my counselors could introduce our elders.

MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

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Yes.

MR. ABRAHAM RUPERT

3130

And I cannot resist this, I have to say it. The Environment said they aren't involved if the dam breaks. If a dam breaks and all the water comes down, think of all the trees and the animals that are going to be washed out. So, the Environment has to... people have to be involved with what's going to happen if a dam should break. I couldn't resist that.

3135 **MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman**

It's not so surprising.

Madam?

3140 **MRS. EMILY RONDEAU**

I'm Emily Rondeau, a Band Counselor for the Cree nation of Chisasibi. I just want to do a short comment.

3145 For us, five or six hours is never long enough to talk about the water, because we're island people, river people. And our elders here could give you a true history of the river, of the water in this region before and after. They are the true experts of the water, of everything in this region.

3150 This is why we thought it would be very important to hear two. One is Daniel Bearskin and the other is Robbie Matthew who will speak to us a bit about the water.

And if you come back in October again to talk about the water, you've come to the right place. Like I said, we're water people well before we were moved, okay?

3155 I want to just add that, to us, water is not just what comes out of the tap, it is a way of life.

MR. ROBBIE MATTHEW

3160 My name is Robbie Matthew, I come from Chisasibi. I grew up in Chisasibi and I'm still — how do you call? — a hunter, a trapper. I still hunt on the land.

3165 And I want to first thank you for your kindness, that you have given us the opportunity, a chance that we have never been able to express our concerns about life. And I thank you very much for you gentlemen and you ladies for giving us the opportunity that we would share something, I guess, through the experience and the knowledge that was given to us, to our elders.

3170 Recently, I came from Europe a few months ago and there was almost the same conference, world conference of science. I attended that, I was there. I was all alone. No elder to help me, but I did my part. And I felt so small, you know, all the educational people that attended that, educated people that know about science. To me, I feel so small since I don't have that kind of experience that these other people went through, but the knowledge that I got from traditional knowledge.

3175 And this sometimes, it has been noted and misunderstood sometimes. And people sometimes don't even want to listen to that.

As I listened to conversations here, it hurts me a lot, because these people who had mentioned their views, they're not talking about tomorrow. They're talking into the future, about our future generation still to come.

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We want them to have the same environment, what you call environment. To me I understand environment means creation of all things, life. Water is life. And that's how I understand when you mention about the environment. And also without water, nobody would survive, not even the animals that we depend every day wouldn't survive if there was no water.

3185

And I say, you look around the tables, I see the water is so clear. I still remember when we used to play along the shore of George River, Chisasibi. The water was that color before it has been touched by somebody. I remember that. And no wonder why these young people are crying out. They want your attention, to be heard with the high level of governments.

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And when you want to do your job, you have to do it in a way that you will respect everyone. To show that respect, you must listen.

I don't even have something in front of me or a book. I have it in my memory. The things that I saw and the water that I had experienced through life, from childhood, this water that we... the river was like that color.

3195

And we cannot change what was made for us. Everything was perfect, even the water was perfect for us to survive with. No matter how many times they talk about technology. That water and the river was perfect to drink before anybody came to and polluted the water, and talk about progress, progress of Québec Hydro and provincial of Québec. That's what you call progress today, ruining other people's life.

3200

And that's why to us, as elders, we cannot hold back the tears that has cost a nation. Even though I don't know how many researches done amongst the people in our area, none is accurate. All is waste, the money is wasted.

3205

You don't come to us. To us, to our people, we call our elders. We call them consultants. In every way we can use them, they will have the answer for us. We don't have to go by books. We don't have to look it up in a book to find a definition of their understanding in traditional knowledge. It has been with us for all these years.

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Now, I might mention also, I don't know how many years we've been educated by other source of people. Now, let us, give us a chance also to try to educate you and try to understand the knowledge that we had doesn't come from anyone, it comes only from one source, from the Creator. It doesn't come out from books that we used. It was passed down from one generation to the other.

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3220 And we don't have anything that was given to us. The land is also our teaching experience.
And if we don't have nothing to say or if the government does not hear us, then all we're asking, let
us try to, you know, put the traditional knowledge together with the knowledge that you have. And
we will try to work things together and work towards our future of our young generation.

3225 If it doesn't happen, our generation will suffer, because we have not listened to them. It
was always the government that told us, «You do that, you do this, and this is the only way that you
can survive.» Now, the government has to listen.

3230 We have to preserve that land. All the lakes, freshwater lakes that are out there, we have
to do something now or we lose everything for our future generation.

Not only that, you people, your generation would lose the benefit of coming up to the north
for sport fishing, caribou hunting. We're looking to that. We're not just looking for the use of
tomorrow. We're looking beyond that, that our children and their children will also have the same
benefits that we had when we were young, not to destroy, but to provide and preserve all the
3235 creation that was made for us. Everything was made perfect.

And this is why we have to urge and let the governments hear us out. Why are we so
stubborn sometimes to listen to the government? Now, I think it's time that the governments start to
listen to us. It's over 500 years we've been listening to governments. We were almost completely
3240 wiped out, but we remained to survive through hardships, and we will still survive another 1,000
years when we have our own culture.

I wish you people the best of luck and a safe journey home. We are not different from
anybody else. We are created in the same way as anybody else. No one is above the other one.
3245 And the government seems to think that he is that supreme. No, we don't look at that way, our
people. And we're not educated in that kind of manner. We were educated that everybody had the
same opportunity.

And so I try to express myself, I guess. I'm not doing this for myself. Always remember
3250 that when we talk, we're not only looking for ourselves. There are future generations, if they want to
enjoy the kind of life we have experienced here. Even if you call it «the North», I always had the
same experience and also had the same teaching than anybody else. The teaching comes from the
same person.

3255 Therefore, no one is above the other one. No matter how you are, how you educated
yourself and how many degrees you have, it doesn't matter. We're all the same. We're all the
same children of God. Degrees doesn't matter.

And that's why the governments don't want to hear us, Native people, because we don't
3260 have the degrees that these governments have.

3265

I would like to see more of this kind of information that I see here, because I've been travelling all over the world. I've been in bigger conferences as this one where I had to use my own language, my first language, I must not be ashamed because the Creator gave me that kind of language.

3270

And I hope in the near future that we may have a chance to sit down again and really address these issues coming from our own, from our side, because we don't hide anything when we speak. We don't have anything. I don't have a written document in front of me. I speak the truth. I can't hide anything.

3275

We have been treated like that for so many years. Now, let us be open-hearted, open up. We cannot go like that because our children are listening. Your children might be hearing this conference and our children. Now, let's work side by side.

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Wherever I go internationally, I'm always treated like... they treat me like their brother. I have noticed that. But in Canada, it's different. You can't go near parliaments and hear them speak in there, but elsewhere it's different, you can listen and hear the whole conversation. But in Canada, it's different, I don't know why. I guess we don't understand each other yet. Over 500 years, we cannot still trust each other.

3285

We didn't have anything against you people when you came across. We let you in. We accept you as brothers and sisters. And that's why we have a strong... I guess, strong words that I have to use: the land is not for sale. The land belongs to our future generation, because we don't own that land. It has been provided for us to share. Whoever wants to come and share that prosperity of that land, but not to govern. These are the things that have governed us so many years and let us now be friends or brothers and sisters from now on.

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I want to thank you for listening to me. May the Great Spirit guide you safely home. Thank you.

I don't want to translate this into Cree, because there are people there out there that are listening to me. Why we want to defend this land so much, they're listening. And I thank you again.

3295 **MR. ABRAHAM BEARSKIN (for Mr. Daniel Bearskin)**

That's my dad. When an elder speaks, it's not just words that you translate, it's the teachings.

3300 My name is Daniel. I sit with the local Trappers Committee. They considered me as an elder. I'm one that's with the land. I've been always with the land. I was born on the land. The land provided for me, even today. That's where my life is.

3305 What I want to share, when an elder shares, he's giving you those teachings. So, in this manner, he speaks the truth. He says: I'm one with the land. I grew up with the land. The land provides for me. It has provided for me since I was born, my dad, my parents. And the land is harsh. It can be good at times. The land is a teacher. The land, if you're one with it, will direct you and give you direction.

3310 My dad also felt those teachings. Sometimes, he can't... you have to work to take from the land physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally. And you become one, the mind, the body and the spirit.

3315 At the time when I roamed the land to survive, for survival, I blent with the land. At that time, I had no worries that one day my «tieness» or oneness with the earth will be disrupted and damaged, therefore me feeling pain and hurt.

3320 The land also provides the emotion aspect of you. My time I worked to get, to survive. My dad worked hard to raise us and sometimes I would cry. Sometimes, he would come back to our home and brought nothing for us to eat.

3325 I could speak to you a lot, but to be honest, you won't understand me, because you don't understand me. But I share my own experience of my earth walk, my life walk. The land that ties with me as one, it is hard for you to understand me as one with the land.

It hurts me because I feel the pain, but I keep my best. And I'm with the local trappers, I sit with them as they need that guidance. They teach me a lot, because teaching school go both ways. I could tell you so much, but I don't think you would understand me as a Native person.

3330 Where my grandfathers, my ancestors roamed, where their spirits roam, you look at it and it's flooded. That's where you see the water. And underneath that water, it provided for me, for my grandparents, my ancestors. They provided for us to survive. And yet, someone came and took that, and drowned it. And yet, you sit before us and I sit before you to tell us and searching for answers. Just by that, it has a dramatic effect, the pain and the hurt I carry for the land, because I am
3335 one with the land.

Where you see the waters, you look, as an example, on the reservoirs, that's where it was plentiful one time. That's where it provided for us. That was more like the core of what we survived on. And it affected the game that was in it. And we know now that it will never be the same. We know we will never be able to use that part of land.

Where it is affected now, where the reservoirs are, the water and everything that's around it or future developments, you add on to that effect, you add on to the hardships of our own being one with the land. And it's obvious common sense that we will never be able to use that land in the same way. And we will sit like this looking at alternatives, this time from you people.

You see the effects of the development, not just around the reservoirs, but spreading down the river, along the coast of James Bay. Everything in it has been affected. The flow and the fluctuation of rivers have been affected. And when you look at that, you know, just think of the effect of the damages of a human being that is with oneness of the land.

I will share with you one way how we used the water. One knows how precious water is. There was a time, even at one of the ceremonies, specially a new birth, how the water was used, and the cleansing and also in the touch of a baby and a mother. They would rely on a mother -- on the river as a healer. They would go down and they would know that water would be good to drink. You didn't have to do anything with that water. That helped the women to heal right in the wound and the baby from the breasts of the mother.

The rivers along James Bay, they were similar before they were affected. Native people used it good, in a right way. They didn't abuse it, they didn't mistreat it. They used it when they needed to use it for their body, the mind and the spirit in a good way. And this is how we used the rivers, the water. We didn't exploit it or polluted it.

Native elder knows, even if he doesn't speak the language, when one makes a presentation and speaks specially to elders, those elders, they know when things are hidden, when things are not told, when the truth is not told. Only what's preliminary is told. We know those things.

One only has to look at you, the way you sit, the way you react and the way you respond. And that elder or those people know you haven't told the truth, the real truth. When you work for people, one of the gifts one has to look at is the truth. Why would one hide something when you address to another human being?

In this case, if you look at the development, the impact, if you work for people or an organization, then that communication is very important. The understanding between you and the one that you work for has to be good in all truth. And you, as a person that might be asked to go over there, your obligation is to tell the truth to those people.

I will share another thing, another issue with you. I've roamed the land many a time. I've walked on it. I know many rivers. I've travelled those rivers from where they start and where they flow out in land.

And one of the teachings of those rivers and the land, even back then, before there was no disturbance, there was certain waters you couldn't drink. We knew those waters, those lakes. Those lakes and those waters are not for a human to consume or drink, because they were dangerous. Some of those lakes were like oil, black.

But once you dam a river and flood the land, those lakes also add to the contamination to that water. And it flows downstream of those rivers.

Yes, I've travelled many rivers, these rivers that flow into James Bay, to this river, Chisasibi, The Grande River. And those lakes were of different colors, different temperatures, different vegetations. There were some lakes where the fish weren't really good to consume because of what was in those lakes.

The lakes that were that type, once those lands were flooded, it also added to the... it must have also added to the mercury level of the fish, because there were fish that couldn't be eaten.

There were other things that also affected the waters. The human, the camps that were along the river, their waste were to the rivers. And other things, other developers that were along this river, their sewage -- at one time or another at the beginning, all their sewage leaded to those water, to the river. So, it was already affected that way.

So, now, the way I see it, it is also part of why the mercury is so high. That's an overlook of people that studied that environment, that you had disturbed something that you weren't supposed to disturb in those lakes.

For me, that's what I've told you, to tell you the truth. We should have never fooled around with the land. The water was perfect. The land was perfect. And we could have told you that a long time ago. To me, no one has the right to disturb something how it was set and how it was used, given to people to use it in the right way and not to abuse it, by the Creator.

We should have come together and spoke as brothers and sisters looking at the impacts, the damages that it would have caused not only on the land, but as humans, and also what is in the land, the animals, everything on the land, because right now we are suffering from someone's doing, human. And this is why we sit like this now trying to resolve or find a solution of what damage that really affects our lives.

This is what I wanted to share with you. Now, let's us brothers, specially the Crees in the nine communities, hear me, let's protect the land, let's preserve the land. Let's look at alternatives so that no further damage can be done to how it is now today.

Let's remember that the land use, the rivers used, the lakes, those were handed down by our own people, our ancestors. I speak to you in this manner, because that is the truth, to protect the land and protect what's in it. You speak of that spirit and those that used that land. You use it in a proper manner, not in a way where you abuse something that you really treasure, that people abused many, many generations before.

I've listened to people that have spoken earlier, that have shared. And we hear comments around the table here that, yes, we cannot live the way we used to live before and we cannot use the land the way we used to use it, the rivers, and also the lifestyle and the changing eating habits.

In some way, it's true, but yet, if you look at it carefully of the changes, there's danger in there. As an example, I asked a doctor one time about the eating habits or how the eating habits affect one. And I use an example that now the store bought the dry goods that are canned and we buy from the stores. That food is altered. It's not the same when you take it from the land. It's not the same, how the Creator provided you when you take that animal or that bird naturally. That bird or that animal, you know it will help you physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually when you take it. But once you take that food that's altered, your system will react to it. And sometimes that system will be affected.

Speaking about eating habits, you also look beyond the human. You also look at the animals, the birds or the swimmers, the fish. You know, once you alter, once we alter the way the creation was set, it's going to affect the system. It will affect our system. We alter what was there, what was put on the land, on the earth. And we come up with our own through maybe plantation.

The development along the roads and where there has been gravel pits as an example, you plant grass, crops. You know, they're not the same. It doesn't taste the same. The animals eat that. Therefore, it affects them, because it's been altered by humans. It doesn't taste the same. This is how far it goes.

These are the things I wanted to bring out. Us, Natives, I learned different, I was taught different. One of my teachers was my grandfather. He's been gone for 60 years and I still carry those teachings. What I know as a Native person, or as an aboriginal, or our First Nation people, there is a difference for you how you know me, how you think you know me. You don't, because you don't understand me.

There are elders that taught us and those elders are gone from this lifetime. They held so much in respect the things we're talking about today, the environment, anything that's in it. They knew those things. And some of them, most of them are gone and we carry those teachings. But my personal feeling, something could have been done. We could somehow have recorded that, maybe at least try to put some of those teachings in writing, because it is still helping us today.

To reflect back, I understand that we didn't really understand one another, how damage or the effect would be on the land, the aftermath. Once the land is disturbed, there's always an aftermath. There was a big oversight on that issue, what was to happen in the future.

If only at that time, if we had come like this and spoke to one another, as brother and sister, we could have given you a lot. The outcome, the aftermath that affects us Crees in the north, and all that's in the north, and all that dwells within the north, within James Bay.

From here on, as it is today, you will hear from the Cree, because their lives are affected severely, not only in the way they lived, but with the changes in the lifestyles. The ones that are small and the ones... the little ones, the babies, even as we sit here, even long before they were born they were already affected. Somehow now we have to look at that and provide for them to provide a good way to let us generations forthcoming. One has to understand that, one has to know that, specially the one that have disrupted the land, he will always hear from the Cree requesting assistance as we now do.

To re-stress again what I just shared, you will always hear from us Cree, and we re-stress that again, because what happened within the land that we have used for many, many years, many, many generations, the land that provided for us everything that we needed, and we looked after it good in a way that wasn't abusive.

There is always going to be things or issues from us to assist us or to help us in adjusting to the way of the change. I've hunted with a friend, he was a traditional hunter also and he's gone from this lifetime. And when you think of those people that you've hunted it, you have affected me deeply because of that land.

And one time we spoke, me and him, it was the last year that I've hunted with him before his time came. And we shared a lot when we looked at the land, the damages that were done. And we shared, we said, «We need to sit, maybe somehow put something down on paper for our grandchildren and the children that are not yet born, how we could assist them so that they would live and come into this world maybe in a proper way, in a proper manner.» And this is something that means so much for a hunter, a trapper and a fisherman.

I want to share another... just an experience I had since on this first time LG-1, when this summer I crossed that dam. Just on the other side, I saw this rope, you know, from the mainland up to that... a certain part of the dam. As I was wondering what it was is when I got closer, you know, a swamp that have raised and it was tied, tied to the land and part of it to the dam.

Just on the other side also, there's another road that goes beyond the... beyond the dam, there's a dike on the other side or there's a scenic place there where you stop. Around that area, he says there was another one just off the shore. The same thing, there was a rope leading to that swamp and it was just like tied. So, it doesn't, I guess, flow away somewhere or just flows around.

You know, this by that, it tells me something. You know, it's common sense. If you want it off the reservoir, why not just take it off to the mainland, just bring it in? It's just like tying it, it's just like tying the earth to the earth. You know, that's something that, you know, I pondered, you know, the purpose of that. That's what I wanted to share.

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The other point, the other aspect I wanted to share is about my time or how I lived. I've lived on the land. That's my daddy, he's 82 years old. He still goes in the bush and he still walks with snowshoes. He goes every year.

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He says: I've roamed that land, I've been everywhere on that land. And where I used to walk, it's water. Now, you can't move around that much, because it has changed the landscape, the vegetation. What was there before, it's not there.

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We were the last ones that used to leave from here, to go in the bush and move from camp to camp with our snowshoes and pulling our sleds, moving camp all the time, always on the land. Now, that style has changed. You've altered that in a way where these young generations, they know, they can't really go back like that, mainly because of the disturbance of that land and also what was there before, the effect of the wealth in its own. It's different now.

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Did is what I want to share, I don't expect people to really ponder on it. I don't know if you're listening, you know, or worry about it but it's something that I wanted to share, that means so much to me.

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In the future, what's needed is communication, I mean honesty, being honest with one another when we sit like this. I have a lot to give and you probably have a lot to give us. So, in the future, when we sit like this and we, at times, need answers also from you, and this is how it's supposed to be, if we really are concerned and care, lives or issues that affect not just the land but other humans or other animals, we need to really be honest and sit like this, and talk, and share.

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As a young man when I used to be given teachings or being told of something, you know, the first time, I couldn't understand. There is times I didn't understand what was behind the teaching, or the talk, or what was being said to me. So, right there, it gave me the initiative, the basis for further education, to understand this elder or this person that was giving those teachings to me. And I had to understand those. And I used to wonder sometimes. I would ponder on that, think about it once in a while. Then, gradually I started to see. Gradually I started to understand. Gradually, I started to see the picture, what was behind that.

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And in this manner, that's how us Native people are, like me. That is traditional. This is the manner how I was taught. This is in that manner that things should go. When we don't understand certain teachings, we have to not just let them go, we have to go and understand those. In this manner, it's good. In this manner, you don't judge.

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The last point I wanted to bring out is this. Indoho Eeyou, for me how I understand that person is person that is oneness with the land, your way will be trapping, hunting and fisherman.

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Indoho Eeyou is someone that has ties with all connections, that understands the creation, that knows the creation, that knows that the land also knows of him and all that's in it.

He says: right now when we speak around this table, when we speak, we ignore Indoho Eeyou. We speak not with them, but to them. Now on we need to look at them. We need to talk with them as they're the ones in a way that provided everything for us, even now with your hydro dams and everything that's in it, the water, the land, because he, Indoho Eeyou, was the keeper of the land. He was the protector of the land, everything, even under water, the fish.

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So, in that manner, when we speak about the trappers, the hunters and the fishermen, remember those people that we call Indoho Eeyou in that manner.

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I'll just share a little bit of what he said, because he's addressing to the young youth here.

I speak to you with no resentments. What I shared, I shared. And it's in this manner that I was taught. When we speak, we speak in a manner to share. One thing that's dangerous to youth is anger because we won't really go anywhere with that. So, in that manner, this is how I speak with you. I shared with you. I honor you, I respect you individually that you've listened with me. Thank you so much.

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MR. ANDRÉ BEAUCHAMP, BAPE Chairman

Thank you very much to the two elders who gave us the confidence of their own life and their experience.

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It will be the end of the meeting tonight. I think it was important for us to come here and to understand what you're living, what is your suffering experience, what is your hope, what is your expectation about the future.

I'm also a senior citizen and I am surprised about your experience and about the reference to the past time, in the sense that we cannot go back in the past time and that what we must share together is the way we will be able to face together for the future.

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In that sense, the work I am doing all around Québec with the Commission is to understand how, what are the principles, the values, the priorities, the way we must speak, and share, and work to make the future a human future integrated to the nature, and giving everyone and every people the chance to be respected and to be happy in the relation to the earth and the relation altogether.

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