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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Hazelton

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Issue No. 15

ROBIN AUSTIN, MLA, CHAIR

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE**

Hazelton

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

- Chair:* * Robin Austin (Skeena NDP)
- Deputy Chair:* * Ron Cantelon (Nanaimo-Parksville L)
- Members:*
- * Gordon Hogg (Surrey-White Rock L)
 - * Daniel Jarvis (North Vancouver-Seymour L)
 - * John Yap (Richmond-Steveston L)
 - Gary Coons (North Coast NDP)
 - * Scott Fraser (Alberni-Qualicum NDP)
 - * Gregor Robertson (Vancouver-Fairview NDP)
 - * Shane Simpson (Vancouver-Hastings NDP)
 - * Claire Trevena (North Island NDP)

**denotes member present*

Clerk: Kate Ryan-Lloyd

Committee Staff: Brant Felker (Committee Research Analyst)

Witnesses:

- Jim Allen (Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition)
- Barry Bush
- Bob Clay
- Chief Barbara Clifton
- Doug Donaldson (Councillor, Village of Hazelton)
- Vernon Joseph (Hagwilget Village Council)
- Walter Joseph (Office of the Wet'suwet'en)
- Chief Alice Kruta Sr.
- Brian Larson
- Kathy Larson (North Coast Steelhead Coalition; Friends of Wild Salmon)
- Chief Yvonne Lattie
- David Loewen
- Carol Louie
- Allan McNeeley (Northwest Institute)
- Shannon McPhail (Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition)
- Chief Marjorie McRae
- Chief Ralph Michele
- Patrick Mitchell
- Chief Barney Morgan
- Pat Moss (Northwest Institute)
- Chief George Muldoe
- Cristina Soto
- Todd Stockner
- Chief Alvin Weget
- Heidi Westfall
- Chief Art Wilson

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C. Soto	

- 19) David Loewen
- 20) Cristina Soto

5. The Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair at 6:59 p.m.

Robin Austin, MLA
Chair

Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk Assistant and
Committee Clerk

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2006

The committee met at 3:08 p.m.

[R. Austin in the chair.]

R. Austin (Chair): Good afternoon, everybody. I'd like to call this meeting to order. My name is Robin Austin. I'm Chair of the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture. I would like at this time to recognize that we are on traditional Gitksan territory, in the community of Gitanmaax. I'd like to thank them very much for hosting these public hearings here today. I'd also like to acknowledge that this is the tenth anniversary, I believe, of Aboriginal Day. So congratulations to all the first nations people here.

Unfortunately, the committee had to make the decision to come and do these three days of hearings while we were all in this area. I understand that there are many people who are out celebrating Aboriginal Day today, who are not able to attend. I apologize for that. It's very difficult for this committee to organize around all the various events that we have in British Columbia, but we are all celebrating Aboriginal Day with you. We are here to listen to what you have to say.

For your information, today's meeting is a public meeting which will be recorded and transcribed by Hansard Services. A copy of this transcript along with the minutes of this meeting will be printed and will be made available on the committees website at www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/aquaculture.

Today we have a number of people working with us. We have Adam Wang and Wendy Collisson from Hansard Services, on my left. They record what is being said during the hearing and then, as I've mentioned, produce a transcript which is posted on the Internet. We also have the Committee Clerk Kate Ryan-Lloyd from the Office of the Clerk of Committees, on my left, and our researcher Brant Felker at the information table at the front.

I would now like to invite the members of the committee to introduce themselves, starting on my right.

J. Yap: Hello. I'm John Yap, MLA for Richmond-Steveston.

G. Hogg: Gordon Hogg, Surrey-White Rock.

D. Jarvis: Good afternoon. Daniel Jarvis. I'm the MLA for North Vancouver-Seymour.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I'm Ron Cantelon. I'm MLA for Nanaimo-Parksville.

C. Trevena: Claire Trevena, North Island.

S. Simpson: Shane Simpson, Vancouver-Hastings.

G. Robertson: Gregor Robertson, Vancouver-Fairview.

S. Fraser: Scott Fraser, Alberni-Qualicum.

[1510]

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, members. For everybody's information, I would just like to let you know that we have filled up our list of people to make submissions here and actually have taken on an additional three — mostly first nations, hereditary chiefs. After all, we are in their territory. It is only right that we should listen to what they have to say.

That being said, I will try to keep people's comments to within a 20-minute time frame, but there'll be some give-and-take on that. I'd like to start right away by inviting Vernon Joseph from the Hagwilget Village Council to come up to the witness table here to make his presentation.

Presentations

V. Joseph: I'd like to thank the committee for allowing me the time to make the presentation this afternoon. Thank you for recognizing that it is Aboriginal Day. I gave a copy of the presentation from the Hagwilget Village Council to Kate for the committee members. I won't go into a lot of detail. You've got the opportunity to read the document. I will just go through the bullets as they appear, and at the end I have a written petition from the Hagwilget village members opposing fish farms. I want to state that up front.

The introduction is that Hagwilget village is known in Gitksan as "place of the quiet people," and in Wet'suwet'en it's *Tse-kyá*, a "piece of the rock." Why Hagwilget exists today is that in approximately 1820 a large rock fell into the canyon, effectively blocking the returning salmon from reaching Kyah Wiget, which is Moricetown.

Under bullet three, the earliest historical reference to Hagwilget Canyon was made by William Brown in approximately April 1826. Mr. Brown reports that the Babine country to the westward, "several years ago, a huge..." This is quoted directly from his report in the brackets down below there, and I'll get into that in the next little bit. "Several days' journey below...Moricetown, since which time they wrought the salmon at the place where I understand they killed last fall, about sufficient to serve them for the winter..."

This refers to the Simpson River which they referred to in the earliest records of the Bulkley prior to contact. Then we get into other contact, with Simon McGillivray, in 1833, who reports the same as the fellow that preceded him in 1826.

Then we get into bullet four, the creation of the Hagwilget Reserve. Ensuring the Hagwilget access to the fishery was an integral part of the creation of Hagwilget Reserve in 1890. The Hagwilget chiefs told the Indian commissioner the little canyons at Hagwilget fisheries are very valuable to us and the only ones that belong to the village. Commissioner O'Reilly answered: "I don't see anything unreasonable in your asking for the two fisheries. I will go and look at them."

Bullet five. Just a bit of research that we did for the creation of commercial fisheries at the turn of the last century, the 1900s. Cannery lobbied Ottawa to extend the Fisheries Act to native people and to forbid the use of weirs and selling of fish, although fishing for sockeye on the Babine River, which flows into the Skeena was practised for generations using community-owned weirs. Aboriginals suddenly found themselves accused of destroying the resource. Cannery drafted a letter to Fisheries, Louis Prefontaine. Ignoring the request, cannery declared they would no longer support the provincial Liberals.

[1515]

Now I want to get into a little bit more detail on page 3 about the destruction of the rock in Hagwilget Canyon. I've done a number of quotes from some of the early leaders from the Hagwilget histories that we've gone through. The significance of the fishery. The enduring importance of the fishery was revealed in 1912 when the Hagwilget were asked for the right-of-way to cross the canyon for construction of a bridge. The bridge that you went on to, coming down here.... There was another bridge prior to that.

The resolution reads, "Now therefore be it resolved that the absence of any interference or damage to the fishery industry in Hagwilget Canyon that we offer no opposition to the erection of the...bridge and the establishment of the wagon road through the reserve as shown on the attached," and they had a map that went with that.

Then we move on into the 1950s. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans declared that they wanted to remove a large rock that was below the Hagwilget Canyon. Chief Don Grey speaks that on behalf of the Hagwilget people, the canyon which is situated on the Hagwilget Reserve has been and still is the main livelihood for the people for generations.

Now the Department of Fisheries is starting up operations such as blasting the canyon, which is considered by the people to be destructive, as it will be bad for the fishing in the summer, and it is the only means of securing food for the winter since there are no sawmills to work at to make a living. We want arrangements made and an agreement before any further damage to the canyon.

Under bullet seven Hagwilget Village Council took action in 1985. On specific claims, Hagwilget Village Council took the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to federal court. We went to specific claims in the process in the mid-90s. In 2003 we went back to federal court, because it would take 20 years to have a specific claims case heard. In 2004 Hagwilget village amended a statement to include aboriginal right to fisheries. Hagwilget agreed to an abeyance in federal court in November 2005.

Bullets ten through 12. This is not the only threat to our fisheries in the Wet'suwet'en territory — coalbed methane, Blue Pearl, Telkwa, the upper Skeena. There are proposed coalbed mines in the Panorama Lake area.

Another threat to the wild salmon in the Skeena tributary is open-pen fish farms at the mouth of the Skeena. The open-pen farms are a real threat to the salmon fry. When they migrate out of the river system into the open ocean, parasites — sea lice — attach themselves and eat the flesh of the fry. Hagwilget has been seeing the erosion of our fisheries for many years and is still able to get some of the fish but not at the historic levels that we once were.

Just an observation. The government of British Columbia and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans websites conclude that there's nothing wrong with the wild salmon." Stocks are good. Fish farms are great, and they do not harm the environment. Mining will not harm the waters that wild salmon are born in. Jobs are created. Tax revenues are generating investment." It appears that they will only see what they want to.

I just want to quote in my conclusion here: "The rock at our canyon that was blasted was put there by God, and it should have been left alone. We protested from the beginning, and we knew that was going to happen, but the Department of Fisheries went ahead and destroyed our source of livelihood anyways." That was from a Hagwilget elder after the rock was removed.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. You have for your record a copy of our presentation, and I have the petition.

R. Austin (Chair): Okay. Thank you very much, Vernon. Do members have any questions about Vernon's presentation? No, we don't, so thank you very much. We will take that presentation to be brought back with us, and we'll put that on the file. Thank you very much for your time.

I would now like to call Kathy Larson up to the witness table. I hope those aren't your notes.

K. Larson: These are my speaking notes, but I'll try to be brief.

I'd just like to make one short correction. I am a member of the Friends of the Wild Salmon, but the group that I represent is the North Coast Steelhead Alliance, because Friends of Wild Salmon is a coalition of groups all along the Skeena watershed.

I am a rancher-logger living in the Kispiox Valley north of here. For what it's worth, I have been a lifelong Liberal until the aquaculture issue came along.

[1520]

We have a certified organic farm, and we have a woodlot. But times have been very tough in the Hazelton lately. Actually, just this very morning my husband and I put our entire breed herd on a truck to ship because the new provincial meat inspection regulations have basically put us out of business.

One of our major sources of income is looking after steelhead fishermen in the fall. That has enabled us to stay on our farm and to create some jobs for our neighbours.

The fishermen that stay with us tell me that there are basically four angling destinations in the world for

an avid fisherman: Russia, Argentina, New Zealand and the Skeena watershed. People come from all over the world every year to fish here.

It is a major economic driver for the whole area. Everybody knows this. There are well over a hundred steelhead guides on the Skeena River alone. Each one of them is a small business unto himself, creating employment and spending money locally here every year.

I know the committee has been hearing the propaganda put out by Pan Fish and the other offshore multinationals that are exploiting the resources of British Columbians because their own governments will no longer allow it. But the people of British Columbia are not stupid. You don't have to be an ichthyologist or a renowned scientist, like Dr. Gottesfeld, to realize that the science is overwhelming. Wherever salmon farms go in, wild salmon disappear. It's that simple.

The government of Norway understands this, which is why they have fish-farm-free fjords in their country. The government of Ireland understands it. The government of Scotland understands it, which is why they have no fish farms on the east coast of Scotland. The people of British Columbia understand it. It's time that the government understands it as well.

I have submissions here from the Bulkley-Nechako regional district, the Burns Lake city council, the Burns Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Houston city council, the Smithers city council, New Hazelton council, Hazelton council, Terrace city council, Terrace Chamber of Commerce, Terrace Rotary Club. The list goes on. These people are not well-funded environmentalists trying to control the agenda, which Pan Fish and their ilk would have you believe. These are local business people and local governments that understand what's at stake here, and they understand that the science is in.

The rest of this list is declarations and written submissions to the committee, which I'd like to present for the record, from British Columbians, Canadians and people from around the world — all calling for a moratorium on further expansion of fish farms.

If marketing analysts are correct when they say that every written letter is worth the opinions of 1,000 people, then here are the opinions of over a million people, mostly British Columbians, calling for a moratorium on fish farms. I'd like to present these for the record.

Never in my wildest imagination would I have thought that a redneck farmer, logger, steelhead fisherman like me would end up marching down the middle of the street in Prince Rupert alongside Joy Thorkelson, a lady that I have the most respect for. But up until the fish-farm issue she was a very worthy adversary to the sport-fishing sector. Yet, here she was, side by side with me, marching along the street behind hereditary chiefs from every nation on the Skeena watershed. We all had one purpose — to tell this government: no fish farms on the Skeena ever. That's the story. Yet there we were.

I'm a newcomer to this area. I've only lived here 30 years. My sons are fourth generation valley residents, and yet they are also newcomers to this area. Most of

the people in this room have always lived here. The people of the Skeena, the first nations of the Skeena, have made a declaration that the Skeena River is a fish-farm-free zone. This government needs to respect that declaration, because — make no mistake — the rest of us here that are newcomers to this beautiful valley will stand shoulder to shoulder with the people who have always been here, to do whatever is necessary to protect the wild salmon of this river. That's all I have to say.

[1525]

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Kathy. Do members have...?

S. Simpson: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Could you tell me a little bit about the business you're in — about the steelhead business and what it means for this community in terms of what it brings to the community?

K. Larson: Sure. I run a bed-and-breakfast as part of our farm. We do not have rod days. We are just looking after steelhead fishermen. Some of them stay with the guides that are here. The guides have rod days, and the fishermen come and pay extremely good money. The guides will tell you themselves how much they pay.

People come from all over the world to fish here. Any books that you read on steelhead fishermen say that the Skeena River is the world's best. The world's record steelhead was caught about a mile downstream from my house. People know that, and they come to fish here every year. The restaurants and the hotels in Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace are busy because of the fish. If we lose the steelhead, well, we'll be out of business. It's that simple.

S. Simpson: Thank you.

R. Austin (Chair): Great. Thank you very much for your presentation, Kathy.

I'd like to call Shannon McPhail up to the witness table, please.

S. McPhail: I won't take the 20 minutes to speak. I've asked my brother Jim Allen to come take up some more of the time.

My name is Shannon McPhail, and I'm a fourth-generation resident of the Kispiox Valley. This is Grant, and he's a fifth-generation resident. My family settled in this area in the late 1800s. We feel a real strong connection to the land, but in no way are we environmentalists. My dad has been a redneck logger for 40 years, and he's also a rodeo stock contractor. It's about as redneck as you get — the cowboy and the logger.

Finfish farms have devastated wild salmon stocks in many parts of the world, and yet the threat of their existence in the mouth of the Skeena is very imminent. The objective is food. The reward is money. The cost is

absolutely immeasurable. Rather than supply you with all the reasons that finfish farms are an unnecessary risk, as you've heard these reasons throughout your hearings, I would like to offer you some alternative solutions.

If your objective is to feed the world, and the current supply of wild salmon is steadily diminishing, then perhaps the solution is not to introduce an aquaculture practice that interferes with the natural stocks but to protect and conserve the habitat of these wild stocks so they have the opportunity to flourish. If it is money that you would like to gain, then realize that the Skeena watershed is one of the few places on earth that has incredible attributes for a conservation-based economy.

The Skeena wild salmon are currently under siege with a number of industrial developments. Finfish farms are but one of these unreasonable threats that need to stop. Our wild salmon are at great risk in the mouth of the Skeena from the proposed fish farms, while the spawning areas in the upper reaches of these watersheds are now under fire from coalbed methane — CBM — development and coalmining. These developments have already commenced exploration in the sacred headwaters and are steadily moving downstream.

There are currently three wells drilled in the Klappan, also known as the sacred headwaters, which is the headwaters for the Stikine, Nass and Skeena watersheds. These are the three, and only three, watersheds of northwestern B.C., and they constitute an area larger than Switzerland.

These three current wells are surrounded by salt from saline water, and the salinated water has proved 100-percent fatal in tests that were studied in Fernie. I've submitted those test results and the testing methodology in my submission. Yet in spite of this science, the Liberal government has approved four more test wells in close proximity to the Skeena River to be drilled in Gitksan territory.

West Hawk Development Corp. is underway with exploration in the upper Skeena near Courier creek, with a 22-test-hole drill program, and they plan to strip-mine the Skeena. Our wild salmon are under pretty great threat.

My family has invested a lot of money because the logging industry has fallen. They invested in a guiding territory. The quotas for the animals that they can harvest have been greatly reduced, so they lost \$350,000 on that deal. Since then, they have bought a fish guiding company, and with wild salmon, that's another \$350,000 that can go down the drain.

[1530]

They also manage a lodge in the upper Kispiox. It is a five-star, 12,000-square-foot timber frame, and it has attracted people from all over the world. That's a \$3 million lodge. So approximately \$4 million that they have invested in the tourism industry of British Columbia is about to diminish because of finfish farms and other development within the Skeena watershed.

While finfish farms, coalbed methane and coal are feeding consumers, they will starve the people of the

Skeena. While finfish farms, coalbed methane and coal will line the pockets of a wealthy few, they will devastate the people of this watershed. While resources, lifestyles, culture and history of the people of the Skeena slowly disappear with these developments, you'll be left with nothing but your mark in history as those that knowingly destroyed the lifeblood of this mighty river and its people, all in the name of greed.

S. Fraser: Thanks, Shannon. My question is to Grant. No.

Obviously, this issue is a passionate one for the north and for the residents of the Skeena. I've probed the issue in government about who gets consulted around tenures and fish-farm licensing. Communities and first nations on the coast do but not upriver. Obviously, that consultation we're doing now. Is that something that you see would be essential for tenure to be let — to be consulted? I'm kind of leading you here, but is that a gap — do you think? — with the way....

S. McPhail: With any development that you're going to do in a watershed, all the people of the watershed should be consulted. Thank you for acknowledging that you're on Gitksan territory. As Kathy Larson said, we do stand shoulder to shoulder with them — first nation and non-first nation. All should be consulted. We all take the risks of what the fish farms are proposing to do, and yet we stand to reap none of the rewards or claim any of the revenue made from these fish farms or other developments.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much for your presentation.

J. Allen: My name is Jim Allen. I'm a guide-outfitter in the Kispiox Valley. I've been guiding there for seven years. I recently bought my own guiding operation four years ago. I employ five guides myself.

The Skeena has just been getting hit with cumulative impacts over and over. Where does it end? You've got the mines up at the headwaters and forestry — fish are recovering from the forestry — and then stuff happening out in the ocean. It's amazing these fish make it up the river as it is. I just don't want to see another major impact knock these fish out.

I don't think anyone here can imagine salmon not swimming back up the river, but it's very possible. There are a lot of streams on the Skeena where the stocks have been diminished because of logging or mining or whatnot, but they're small tributaries that people don't know about. The idea of the Skeena being wiped out or the Kispiox or the Bulkley is unheard of, but it's very possible. I would just hate to see that happen. I think everyone here would.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much.

P. Mitchell: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Patrick Albert Mitchell of the Gitdumden.

I don't know who you guys are, but you're coming on our land, and you're telling us what you're going to do on our territory. This is our territory. You know where the Babine is? You know where the Fulton River is? You know where the Stewart Lake is? You know where the Fraser River is? You know where the Chilco Lake is? You know where the Stellako River is? You know where the Morice Lake is? They're all on our territory.

I'm a Gitdumden of the Wet'suwet'en [Gitksan spoken]. Who are you guys? You're all MLAs. You're strangers. You're coming on our land, and you're going to tell us what to do on our land.

[1535]

You know, that fish is born on our territory. That fish goes down the Skeena River, the Fraser River, the Morice River and the Bulkley River. It goes out into the ocean — the estuary of the Skeena River here. It goes out, I don't know how far, into the ocean. Our coastline is being destroyed by these fish farms. I'm going to warn you. Don't ever put a fish farm on the Skeena River, because I'm going to hold you personally responsible — every one of you — for that.

The same with the Fraser River. You're already destroying that. That archipelago right across Port Hardy — you've got fish farms there. Sea lice are lousy. I fished. I was a commercial fisherman for 45 years, and I caught those goddamn Atlantic salmon in the front door of Port Hardy. They're ugly-looking fish. You feed them all kinds of crap — lots of chemicals. What do you get for that? All you want to do is line your goddamn pockets. That's all you want to do.

Not only that, you're on our territory, and you're taking our timber out of here. All you want is royalties. That's our timber.

The companies here, Canfor.... They're spraying the land. They want to save the trees. Well, they're spraying our food. The moose, the deer and the bear eat all that vegetation — huckleberries, blueberries, strawberries, thimbleberries and soapberries. There's food that we go out there and eat. Wherever the deer go and the moose go, they eat all this vegetation. I go out and hunt a moose, and I get the moose. Wherever that moose travels, my spirit is with them. When I get that moose, I eat it. Wherever they travel, they're travelling in my territory.

You've got the nerve to come here and tell us that you're going to put fish farms on our coast. You've already done damage down south. I'm warning you. You better get rid of all those fish farms on the south coast right now.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you.

As Chair of the committee, I would just like to point out that we are not here to dictate or to come and force anything upon anybody here. We are actually here to listen to what all of you, including that gentleman, have to say and to take that message and make it part of our deliberations as we put recommendations forward to the Legislature. We are certainly not here to impose our thoughts upon you.

I would like to call Todd Stockner to the witness table, please.

T. Stockner: Good afternoon. My name is Todd Stockner. I'm a resident of the Kispiox Valley. As Kathy Larson said, it's about 30 kilometres from here. I've lived here for 13 years, so I'm much more of a newcomer than she is, but I've been coming up here for 24 years. I make my living as an angling guide on these rivers, the last 12 of those years as an independent owner-operator of my own small home-based guiding business.

As such, I've been an active and direct participant in the wild salmon economy. I fully understand the immense value in maintaining and sustaining forever our precious stocks of wild salmon. With healthy runs of wild salmon and steelhead, I can pass on my business to my children, and their children can pass it on again and again in perpetuity.

The wild salmon economy is much more than a commercial fishing fleet and fish processors based at the mouth of the river, as important as those components are. It is the rich and diverse web of people and communities and the activities they undertake related to wild salmon, which span the watershed from the mouth of the river to the headwaters and all the tributaries that make up the entire watershed.

[1540]

It is first nations people on the inland fishery along the river. It is angling guides and lodges. It is sport fishers, motels, campgrounds and bed-and-breakfasts. It is ecotourism operators who view grizzly bears dependent on healthy stocks of wild salmon. It is guides and outfitters who depend on healthy populations of bears, for example, for hunting. And it is the many levels of support and supply businesses — food, equipment, gas and other services — that support this economy.

The wild salmon economy, however, would not exist without wild salmon ecology. You cannot have a healthy economy without healthy ecosystems.

I would suggest that you take a good look around this room and these upriver communities that you are visiting and bear witness to the fact that in large part these people are here primarily because the wild salmon economy sustains them. As residents of the Skeena watershed, we will never stop fighting to protect the irreplaceable resource that is our wild salmon.

It is now well understood that salmon farming fundamentally alters the ecology of wild salmon. It is sheer wilful ignorance, driven by the political dogma of an ideologically bent government, to suggest that the science does not show strong and compelling evidence of the detrimental impact that salmon farms have on wild salmon.

To suggest otherwise is to behave as the tobacco industry did for decades when it claimed there was no evidence that smoking caused lung cancer. Everyone knew then and knows now that there is a clear link between smoking cigarettes and disease, just as the link between salmon farming and its negative impacts on

stocks of wild salmon is now widely known but perpetually denied by the salmon farming industry and its friends in government. The evidence is widespread and easily available in peer-reviewed scientific papers.

We have seen it happen in Norway, Scotland, Ireland and Chile. Why are we repeating the same mistakes that they made? How much evidence do we need? How many runs of wild salmon severely depleted while pushed to the verge of extinction by the effects of salmon farming are enough to make you see that the two simply do not mix? When there is no more wild salmon left, will that be enough evidence for you? Extinction is forever. How can you possibly risk this fate for our irreplaceable wild stocks of salmon and steelhead?

The negative impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon are many. They've already been spoken to at these hearings, but they are worthy of mentioning again. To name a few, they are the concentration of sea lice around the pens that out-migrating salmon smolts must pass through, thereby exposing them to lethal loads of sea lice, which subsequently leads to the deaths of many, if not most, of these juvenile salmon. The raising of an exotic species on our coast, the Atlantic salmon, can only cause problems eventually, due to the escapes and the inevitable colonization of our rivers and streams by this exotic species.

There is now clear and substantiated evidence that escaped farm-raised Atlantic salmon are successfully spawning in some rivers on Vancouver Island. How many other rivers have they found their way into? Who is looking for them in the rivers on the remote coast of B.C.?

Raising salmon in pens and feeding them other fish is a very inefficient means of food production. We deplete valuable fish stocks in countries where the local people can benefit from these fish and then feed them, in the form of concentrated fishmeal, to the farmed salmon at a rate of three pounds of feed to raise one pound of farmed salmon.

These are but three of many of the well-known and documented problems with open-net-pen-raised Atlantic salmon. Many others have spoken to these and other points throughout these hearings, but they bear repeating, as evidently there are some who just don't get it.

Surely the link between salmon farming and its negative impact upon wild salmon is widely understood to be real, or why would this travelling committee be spending time with the upriver towns and communities, consulting with us? Terrace, Kitwanga, Hazelton, Smithers and Houston are a long ways from the coast, so it must be obvious even to you that there will be far-reaching, negative impacts from these proposed salmon farms situated on the approaches and outward-migration routes near the mouth of the Skeena. Or why would you bother sitting here in front of us to hear all this?

This Liberal government seems to be pursuing an ideology of development at any cost. There are many examples of this ideology, especially in the northwest

right now, as we can see in the recent rush to exploit coalbed methane and open-pit coalmines in the headwaters of the Skeena and especially in the expansion of the salmon farming industry on the north coast.

The implication is always the same: putting our wild salmon and steelhead at unnecessary risk. It is very important that those of you on this committee who are bent on development at any cost understand that the risk of losing our wild runs of salmon and steelhead is a cost that no one in the northwest wants to bear.

We will not sell our perpetually sustainable runs of wild salmon and steelhead for anything, let alone a well-proven detriment to the environment and our wild salmon such as salmon farming. We will not stand for development at any cost, only development that first and foremost carefully considers the ecology of the wild salmon and the wild salmon economy that depends on it. Why would we risk that when we have a resource that's sustainable forever if properly managed?

[1545]

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Todd.

Do members have any questions on his presentation?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I think what I have to say is to the presenter as well as to the others. It certainly is a very emotional issue. I'd like to point out that salmon farming has been in place and has created quite a concern among the people over the last 20 years. That's why this government — which happens to be, as you point out, a liberal government — set this panel up to hear people and, as you quite rightly pointed out, to go to places like this that are not anywhere near where fish farms are being done or potentially done but are of concern to people at the watershed.

It's also why this government set up this panel, which is chaired by a member of the opposition. I want to say that the opposition heartily agreed with the re-examining of the whole industry, and that's what this panel is about. We're not here to make any decisions; we're here to listen. In fact, the majority of the panel is the opposition and chaired by the opposition. So we're here to hear your concern and listen, and I reiterate the Chair: we're not bringing any message; we're hearing the message.

S. Simpson: Thank you very much for your presentation. I'm trying to best understand all of the business, both the economic side and the opportunities around the wild salmon. We've heard a lot about it and about how the wild salmon really is the lifeblood of the community in many ways. I'm talking to people like you, who are small business people, and just asking.... Tell me a little bit about the business you're in and what kind of living you can make at it.

T. Stockner: Well, I'm a steelhead guide, very much like Jim Allen, who was speaking just before here. I live across the river from Kathy Larson. In the season,

throughout the summer primarily.... The peak is the end of August to the middle of November. That's the steelhead season, and it tends to be the kind of premier game fish here. People are coming here for angling. It does go along all summer too. There's salmon fishing all summer.

As far as the sport fishing end of it goes, that's kind of the focus. You can make a fairly good living. It's all managed by the provincial government. There are rod-day quotas around that, so depending on your rod-day situation, you can make a pretty good living out of a relatively short season. We employ two people. I have a very small operation, one of the smaller licences in the area, but I still manage to make a pretty decent living out of it, actually.

S. Simpson: It pays the bills?

T. Stockner: Yes.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Todd, for your presentation.

I would now like to call Doug Donaldson up to the witness table, please.

R. Michele: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say something for our hereditary chiefs first. We've been here for 1,000 years. This is our land; the resources are ours. We're going to be here for a few more thousand years or until corporations destroy the earth. I believe it's good manners to call on the hereditary chiefs first and the native people that are here. It's a resource we've always depended on, for thousands of years. This is our home. We didn't just arrive here. I believe it's good manners to call on the chiefs first.

R. Austin (Chair): Certainly. As the Chair, I would heed your advice. I did have some names of, I believe, two or three hereditary chiefs. If that's okay with everybody, I'd be happy to listen to what they have to say. I believe that Yvonne Lattie is here, a hereditary chief from Gwininitxw, if she would like to come up and say whatever she would like to say.

R. Michele: I'll get a list of aboriginal speakers. I'll get that one that we can start using.

[1550]

Y. Lattie: Thank you. [Gitxsan spoken.]

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Suu Dii. I am from the house of Gwininitxw. I am a wing chief.

We've been here for 10,000 years. The main sustenance of our people is salmon. Within our territories in the upper Skeena watershed are spawning beds for the salmon. Within the past few years there has been a steady decline of wild salmon up there.

We have GWWA, our Gitxsan watershed people, working on our territory to monitor the fish. I'm aware of all the work that they're doing. I'm also aware of the sea lice and the parasites that come with farmed salmon.

Our people cannot survive without the wild salmon. It is the main sustenance of our people. With our unemployment rate standing close to 95 percent within the community, we need that salmon, as \$189 for single people on, or even off, reserve is not enough to take care of their needs. We need the salmon. We need the wildlife.

You talk about farmed salmon. You're not only talking about farmed salmon; you're talking about the grizzly bear, the ecosystem and the birds. It's not only the salmon that is involved here; it's a huge ecosystem.

I also operate a small business called Suu Dee's Wild and Free Studio, in which I market the art of over 72 local artisans in my shop. I have people from all over the world come and buy. We talk about the problems within our watershed.

My husband and I took a couple up from Switzerland to the territories. I didn't think to ask them if they ate salmon, but I took smoked wild salmon. We got up to the mountains, we did some hiking, and then we heated the salmon over an open fire. The lady was afraid to taste the salmon, because in her country it's farmed salmon. Her husband tasted it, and he enjoyed the taste. His wife also tried some wild salmon, and between the four or five of us we finished four whole wild salmon.

One of the comments that I've had from people overseas — people who have had fish farms within their countries — is: "Don't let them do it to you. Don't let it happen in B.C. It has destroyed our rivers. It has taken one of the most important things from us. Don't let it happen to you."

As a first nations person, we have a huge house — the house of Gwininitxw. We have over 300 members. We will not allow any fish farming. We will stand with those who are opposed to fish farming.

It's almost like government is slowly destroying the first nations people. It started way back when they tried getting rid of our feasts, putting us in residential schools, taking away our culture and taking away our language. Now they are going to try taking away our salmon. It isn't going to work. We will not allow it.

Again, up in the upper Skeena we're being hit by coalbed methane, by open-pit coalmining, by the Stewart Omineca Resource Road. There are so many proposed developments by the government. Where is the concern for first nations people? Where is the concern for their survival? Is it another method to destroy them?

[1555]

I really get upset when I see these things happening because there is no concern. People from these countries that have destroyed their rivers are now coming to destroy ours. Why? What is the matter with us? Can't we see that...? Those other countries have destroyed their rivers, and we're going to allow them to do the same to ours. Why?

It's simple. Even a child could figure it out. But our government is willing to experiment with our fate, and that's wrong.

I cannot stress to you the importance of the salmon to us, so I'm asking you to take it back and tell them

that the salmon is a main part of our sustenance. It is also the main part of our ecosystem. Without it, there will be lots of destruction. Thank you.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much for your presentation.

As we're still about to coordinate the list of speakers, I would like to call back Doug Donaldson.

D. Donaldson: I hear drumming, so I'll wait until after the chiefs have spoken.

R. Austin (Chair): At this stage we're going to recess for a few minutes while we coordinate the list of speakers. We'll call the meeting back to order in a few minutes.

The committee recessed from 3:57 p.m. to 4:02 p.m.

[R. Austin in the chair.]

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you. I'd like to call this meeting back to order.

We have agreement. We have consulted and accommodated, and it seems we have a plan that will enable everybody to speak and be heard and enable people who have to leave at a certain time to get home. Of course, all of us MLAs also have to try and get home tonight to our families.

I'd like to invite Allan McNeeley and Pat Moss to come up and make a presentation, please.

Interjection.

R. Austin (Chair): No, you are not chiefs, but we understand that Allan has to catch a plane, and the chiefs are happy to have you present now.

P. Moss: Good afternoon. I've met most of you over the last couple of days at the various hearings. My name is Pat Moss, and I'm with the Northwest Institute. The institute is a non-profit group based in the Bulkley Valley.

We do research and public education on resource issues in northwest B.C. We were formed about ten years ago by a number of first nation and environmental activists along with scientists who wanted to do this kind of work and research from an ecological and community sustainability perspective. We've done studies and workshops on a variety of issues, including non-timber forest products, road density, some specific project reviews and community development options. We did a major study on the state of Skeena wild salmon runs.

It's often said that salmon is an icon for British Columbians, and nowhere is this more true than here in the northwest. Certainly, salmon are an integral part of first nations culture and identity, but they're also a very important part of most non-aboriginals' way of life in the northwest. In fact, it's one of the main reasons that people choose to live in this part of world.

[1605]

Residents of the region have a sense that the fishery plays a really important part in our economy, but we've never had any actual numbers to quantify that before. The institute decided to undertake a study to look at the economic value of Skeena wild salmon so that communities would have a tool when evaluating various proposals — like fish farms, coalbed methane pipelines and mining proposals, all of which are being proposed in the vicinity of the Skeena.

We knew this would be controversial, so we decided to approach a very well-respected, credible, mainstream consulting firm. We commissioned IBM Business Consulting Services, which is an international firm with its Canadian headquarters in Toronto, to undertake the study and asked them to do a conservative analysis looking only at direct benefits, not at spinoffs.

We also set up a reference committee which included representatives of the commercial fishing industry, sport fishing industry, a chamber of commerce, provincial government, and John Fraser, the chair of the Pacific Salmon Forum. That reference committee gave input and feedback to consultants all the way along through the study and, basically, served to ground-truth the numbers that were being gathered.

The study found that the economic value of Skeena wild salmon is \$110 million. The provincial government estimates the economic value of forestry in the northwest at \$140 million, so it's very much in the same ballpark. It makes it really clear to all of us that the Skeena fishery is a very significant part of our economy and should be a growing part of the economy as long as nothing happens to undermine the health of wild Skeena stocks.

I'm now going to turn things over to Allan McNeeley, who is the senior consultant overseeing the economic study. Allan is going to elaborate on the methodology and the results of that study.

A. McNeeley: Thank you very much for the opportunity to present today. I'd also like to respectively thank the Gitksan chiefs for permitting me to present next, to get on a plane and get home on time. I sincerely appreciate that honour. Thank you.

We've got a bit of a PowerPoint presentation. You have a copy of a subset of our overall final report. There is a fully detailed report available on the Northwest Institute's website, including all of the calculations; the economic model; all of the values, formulae; all the detailed interviews that we conducted, across the board; details of those interviews: timing, who, when, where, what, and all the rest of it — so very detailed facts around this for your reference at a future date.

I'm going to go through an executive summary of what you have, recognizing that we have limited time. I'm going to walk through some of the executive summary bullet points, some of the key elements of the study. I'm going to walk through a high level of the methodology we used for the creation and develop-

ment of the economic valuation model. We're going to look at a couple of the elements within the detailed findings themselves — again, keeping it to higher level of review.

Back in November 2005 we were approached by the Northwest Institute to conduct this economic valuation. You may ask yourself: how does IBM do work like this? Aren't they the software, hardware computer people? Well, this is simply part of the new IBM. It's a broad base of what we do in the marketplace now. Outside of technologies it is our global focus now as a company moving forward, so this was something that was within our bailiwick and very interesting to us.

One of the things we looked at the front end of this was.... Typically what happens when you build out an economic model of this sort, this kind of environment, is that once the report is released, you end up with a series of economists thrashing away at the economic model, and that becomes the focus of the discussion. Our feedback to Pat and her team was, "We don't necessarily want to play that game," so we talked about a solution. The solution was, as Pat mentioned, the formation of this reference group, which essentially gets the community involved — those individuals, those groups that are significant benefactors of wild salmon within the Skeena rivershed.

That team was formed. Pat gave a high level of who those individuals were. Again, the details of those individuals are available within the broader report.

[1610]

With that, and with that team formed, the objective was that we would bring forward IBM's global knowledge around economic valuation for large economies and that the individual contributors would help to modify it — to shape and form that model as it related specifically to this situation. That's why their input was critical and essential and was part of the ongoing process of developing our final report.

Now, a couple of key elements. This was something that was stressed in the reference group: that we did not want to be duplicating revenues. We didn't want to be double-counting. There was high risk that that could be done, so that was a key focus. These numbers were driven through in detail with a fine comb to make sure there wasn't double-counting, there weren't multipliers being used, and that we weren't coming out with some outrageously overstated number.

These are the things that were not within the scope. We were focused on quantifiable facts, industry-based facts, things that had been measured, data existed and there was a known environment around that data. We didn't include in-migration retention of residence. That would simply be a scenario where lots of people are coming here because there's salmon. Too subjective; we left that out. Species preservation; biodiversity, as it says up there; cultural heritage or feed for wildlife — none of those were included within the scope of the study.

The reference group defined that the area for the study was the Skeena watershed. The primary sub-elements included were the Skeena salmonid migration

areas along the B.C. and Alaska coastlines. You may ask yourselves: why Alaska? It's simply because the salmon, unfortunately, don't recognize borders. They go where they go. Their value is derived from where they are interfacing with people, essentially.

The work that we did.... We executed a fairly exhaustive study of existing data, so this is a secondary research output. It's not based on primary research that we did ourselves. Again, these are known facts. We conducted a number of interviews with 22 subject-matter experts to validate and vet our outcomes, our outputs as we were going through the processing of the creation of the study, and through that process built out a significant series of assumptions. Again, those assumptions around the final value are contained in that detailed final report.

As Pat mentioned, the value that we came up with was approximately \$110 million per year, based on a 2004 valuation base year. The significant variance we saw in that, in degree of confidence, was approximately 20 percent, plus or minus. The model itself and the final number is a conservative value. The high-end valuation would bring a figure of about \$133 million, and the low end approximately \$85 million to \$87 million.

In terms of some of the details, and I don't want to dive too deep into those details, where we looked at the large groupings of activity to derive the values to roll up the numbers, if you will.... We looked at recreational tourism, sports fishing, commercial harvesting, wholesale values, added-value processing, retailing, value to first nations and Alaskan values.

Methodology. I've spoken to a fair bit of this already, so we'll move fairly quickly. This is basically the process that we followed for the creation and management of this final document: detailed plan around it; formation of reference group; creation of the economic model. Then we went through a process of vetting, as I mentioned, back and forth, based on IBM's knowledge and global expertise in these matters, and also input from the reference group.

Detailed findings. We'll cover a few points here quickly. Again, the overall approach was based on secondary data at the provincial level. There was also federal information, which was included within the study. Values were focused on salmonid species, the Skeena watershed and the Skeena migratory paths. The salmonid species included within the overall valuation were sockeye, chum, coho and pink. Steelhead trout were included under the recreational fishing category only. As I mentioned, the base year for valuation was 2004.

Some of the elements that were included within the overall analysis included the subject-matter experts. The subject-matter experts were individuals whose profession it is to look at, understand and know what's going on within the fish industry in general within B.C., within Canada specifically.

[1615]

We also spoke with representatives from the United States, both from Washington and Alaska. We included

regional catch statistics, stock estimates, secondary source surveys, tonne-landed statistics and existing proxies. Proxies essentially are what percentage of total catches could be attributable to any specific geographic area within the province. Those were predefined by the province. We did not create those figures, percentages or values. They were simply brought forward. Again, those values were vetted by the subject-matter experts.

This is just a high-level view of the models framework that we used for the valuation. You'll note, as you move from left to right, the model disaggregates, highest level being on the left. Then we get into the drill-down details, in terms of where we found all of the values.

This is a summary of the level-one value tree where you can see each of those eight high-value rollup areas, freshwater angling, salt water, etc., and what the estimated values were. Again, it comes to approximately \$110 million. Question?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): The Alaska. We had a question on that. What's the Alaska mean?

D. Jarvis: On your value tree, what do you mean by Alaska?

A. McNeeley: That's Alaska catch, tonnage landed only. There was some Alaskan-caught fish also that was processed within B.C. — a clarification.

That concludes my presentation.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much. In fact, we're just questioning amongst ourselves here. I'm not going to ask that question. I'm going to let Dan ask that question.

D. Jarvis: Sorry to interject on your presentation, but how do they estimate that? Is it the Alaskans that are reporting that? Do they diversify as to...?

A. McNeeley: It would be U.S. government-reported data. Again, the drilldown on that is available within the detailed report — where that all came from.

D. Jarvis: Good. Thank you.

S. Fraser: Thank you very much, Pat and Allan. I appreciate the credibility in taking us through the steps to show the objectivity of these numbers.

It has been suggested by others in some of our meetings that the presence of salmon farms at the mouth of the Skeena.... I'm not talking about whether or not there's damage done to wild stock. The presence of them will have an economic impact. Did anything in your study deal with that eventually?

A. McNeeley: No. Our focus was specifically within the wild salmon stock. There was no consideration for any other influencers, either increasing or decreasing, or any impact on wild salmon.

S. Fraser: Okay. Thank you.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): In your study you noted that there is a variance, and you take a conservative approach. You estimated \$109 million. It might well be as high as \$131 million, but it might be lower too. Did you do a sensitivity analysis? I'd be interested to know what would influence that to go higher or cause it to be less.

A. McNeeley: I don't want to get into too much detail here. Since it was secondary data, not all of it was found within the base year 2004. Some of that data had to be extrapolated based on trending. Trending was looked at from the years 1998 through to 2003. Averages were taken. There were also, though, trend factors included in that average.

To give an example, let's say there's a value of \$100 million for X. The trend is that over those five years, it was dropping. We're not simply taking the average, because in 2004 the trend would continue down. The value needs to be reflective of that downward trend. So there was averaging and trending up and down. That's where you get into a loss of degree of confidence, because you're moving away from pure source data.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): A quick follow-up then, and I appreciate that. This might be taken then as an annual variance, too, perhaps, depending on....

A. McNeeley: Very much so.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Okay. Thank you.

[1620]

G. Robertson: Thank you very much, Pat and Allan, for the presentation. After being here for a couple of days, it's starting to sink in that the Skeena River and the Skeena salmon are the greatest in the world. It's a very impressive figure you've arrived at in terms of the economic value that's ascribed to the wild salmon in this river system.

I'm curious if there has been any extrapolation of this on to other rivers — the Nass or the Stikine, in particular — that have robust wild salmon populations and if any of that work is known to you or has played into this study.

P. Moss: No. In fact, John Fraser told us that he wasn't aware of this having been done on any other British Columbia rivers. He was actually quite excited about this whole approach of bringing together all the various studies that have been done and focusing it on one river system. Different times he indicated he'd really like to see that kind of work done for other rivers too, but to his knowledge, nothing like this has been done before. There have been studies looking at one aspect, like the value of commercial fishing for the province or sport fishing in one region, but nobody has ever tried to pull all that information together for one watershed.

G. Robertson: Thank you. In terms of this being a new study, or with examples of this not existing elsewhere, your confidence in the data.... Is your reliance on the data you gathered and the conclusions from it high, or do you feel like...? Do you have a lot to work with?

A. McNeeley: Sure. Thank you for the question. The plus/minus 20 percent is reflective of our degree of confidence. If we had a higher degree of confidence, that number might be 15 percent or 10 percent. Even with primary research, if you're running anywhere from a 2-percent to a 6-percent to an 8-percent degree of confidence, that's really high. That's with primary research. There are so many variables in something like this. You're looking at an entire economy — thus, the reason for the output being a conservative value, from our perspective.

G. Robertson: Thank you.

C. Trevena: Just looking at this slide and going through some of your data, I'm interested in the salmon-related tourism. Does that include ecotourism — kayaking, bear-watching...? What have you got included in the salmon-related tourism?

A. McNeeley: I can look it up for you. Just give me a second.

C. Trevena: Okay.

A. McNeeley: Those things are included. There is an exhaustive list, again, in terms of details.

P. Moss: I think those things are included. It's a matter of how much they've been studied in the past because they weren't doing any original primary research. They were basically using existing studies, almost all of which had been done by either provincial or federal governments. So it really depended on how much information was available.

C. Trevena: Thank you.

S. Simpson: Thank you for the presentation. So the plus/minus 20 percent that you talked about as the rate here, that's reflected in the "somewhere between \$97 million and \$130 million" number?

A. McNeeley: Approximately \$87 million to \$133 million.

S. Simpson: It's \$87 million to \$133 million. That's what that number reflects?

A. McNeeley: Yes.

S. Simpson: Great. When you were doing this work — I don't know whether you did this, and maybe the Northwest Institute has this information — did you

generate a bibliography of any other analysis that's been done that looks at the wild fishery and other kinds of economic or employment impacts around the wild fisheries?

A. McNeeley: Within B.C.?

S. Simpson: Yes.

A. McNeeley: I would safely say I'm probably 95-percent confident that we looked at any data that exists as of March 2006 on this topic.

S. Simpson: Then my second question is: is that list of what you looked at available in the complete study?

A. McNeeley: It is within the detailed report — again, available on the Web — including the individuals and what questions we asked and their answers, etc.

P. Moss: One thing that wasn't looked at was employment factors, and that's something we might be interested in doing in the future. We were really just looking at the overall economic value at this stage.

S. Simpson: That raises one other question. That being the case — I appreciate that that hasn't been looked at yet — are there any formulas where you can roughly look at this kind of economic value, \$110 million, and extrapolate out what that means in terms of potential employment? Or is that not possible to do because of the nature of the businesses?

[1625]

A. McNeeley: You start getting into a value which is.... It would be difficult to state that you have a high degree of confidence in the final number. We're using aggregated secondary data. You could apply a formula. You could come up with a guesstimate. It would probably be how I would conclude looking at that.

You would have to do a deeper dive. You would have to have a more detailed model than we have, which would include a level four. Level four would include elements around employment.

J. Yap: How does the \$110 million compare to other economic sectors for the region? I'm wondering if you did a comparison. I mean, the number is impressive, but I'm wondering, contextually, if it's the leading source of economic activity. How does it compare to other areas?

P. Moss: Well, the one we did research on, I think I mentioned initially, was the forest industry in the northwest, because that's generally considered to be the major industry in the region. I worked with a number of ministry officials in the Economic Development Ministry and in the Forest Service. The estimate they came up with was around \$140 million for the region, so it's very much in the same ballpark.

J. Yap: I did recall you saying that.

P. Moss: We didn't look at any other industries because that seemed to be the major one throughout the region and the appropriate one to compare with.

J. Yap: Shane's question sort of led me to think.... In your study you did not look at employment statistics — how many people are employed, the percentage of population employed — in all salmon-related sectors?

A. McNeeley: Not specifically, no.

J. Yap: Okay. Thank you.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much for your presentation, both of you.

P. Mitchell: Mr. Chairman, I want you to put my name down as the last speaker for this evening.

R. Austin (Chair): We'll do the best we can to get through the list.

P. Mitchell: No, no. You put my name down. It's Patrick Albert Mitchell. Put my name down last, and I'll speak last.

R. Austin (Chair): I'll put you down last.

I'd like to call Chief Alice Kruta Sr. to the table, if she wants to speak.

A. Kruta: Good afternoon. My name is [first nations language spoken], and I am from [first nations language spoken].

I've seen these chiefs as I grew up, and I grew up with them. I have seen many elders that are gone, with this fishing. We saw a lot of fish, and then as we grew into teenagers, the fish went down.

[1630]

They said: "Down south is selling the whole fish to Europe." Then after that we hardly got any fish up our way. I don't know about now. I think it is the same.

We feel good if we have our fish — dried fish, half-dried and jarred fish. Fish is very good for us — for everybody.

I think this fish has healed me. I was very sick. I just read in a medical book that fish is very good, so I started eating this fish. Slowly, I started to get better. My doctor down south didn't believe that I was healing. He said: "I can't believe it, but you are healed." I thank God for that. I didn't think fish was good for a long time, but after I grew up, I learned about it. I'm very honoured to tell anyone that it's very good for our health.

I don't know why we are not many in this building today. I didn't know about this one until the two young people just took me: "We're going down to Hazelton." I didn't know anything about this meeting, so I didn't have any paper or what to say.

I thank all the people that are here. What I didn't say, they may let you know too. I am very happy to say that fish is a very good medicine. I thank you all for coming and for trying to help us out. We never had this help before, because we have enough chiefs, wing chiefs and young people working on the fish. We never sold our fish until later on. I don't know how we started selling fish. I kind of didn't like it before, but that's how life goes. I thank you all for listening.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Chief Kruta, for coming and speaking to us.

S. Fraser: Thank you, Chief. We've learned lots here, and we are learning lots. I know there's a Nuuchah-nulth term I learned from an elder in Nuuchah-nulth on the west coast of Vancouver Island. *Hishuk-ish ts'awalk*. All things are connected.

I think you said it very well — the fact that the fish, culture and health are all linked together. We're understanding that more and more.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you for coming and speaking to us. I appreciate it.

I'm now going to call up another hereditary chief, and then alternate a little bit. I'd like to call Chief Barney Morgan, who would like to come and speak to us.

[1635]

B. Morgan: Thank you, Chairman. I have been in Skeena River since.... I'm 73 now, so I've seen the early fishermen, when there were only 18 houses in Skeena River. I'm talking about farmers right from Smithers to Prince Rupert. There was no highway. I was on a sailboat — no motor on a fishing boat. I fished with my dad. That'd be about 68 years ago.

We've come a long way. There are canneries down here, built by the Gitksan people — maybe four or five canneries. Ninety-five percent of our Indian people worked at the canneries. There were eight canneries at that time, and they kept increasing. In the 30-year span we had 500 commercial fishermen that came from Skeena River. Later on, as we were getting bigger — more canneries, more money involved, herring, halibut, crabs and salmon....

Then the Vietnamese came. Not only fish came; other people from outside came in. After the Vietnamese we got Jim Pattison. He bought three canneries. He owns two now. I don't know how many Ford dealerships he owns. He's got the Safeways all over the world. That's the kind of opposition we have in Skeena River.

Later on, just lately, maybe ten years back, the government had this buyback — commercial fishermen. We lost all the 300 gill-netters within 20 years, and there are only about 40 of us left on Skeena River — from 500 fishermen, gill-netters. I'm talking about Skeena River Indians from Babine to Prince Rupert.

The loss we have is the gain for the sport fishermen and the other fishermen that have come into Canada,

B.C. I'm talking about the Vietnamese. When the Vietnamese hit the border of Canada, I heard they each had a grant of \$25,000. There are four of them in one boat. Every time they come in, they buy one boat between the four of them. That's why we see four Vietnamese in one boat. That's what they told me.

I represent the Gitksan because I'm Native Brotherhood, like the union does too. But I represent the Gitksan Native Brotherhood. We had so many problems with the Vietnamese. Sometimes they used three nets at nighttime. That's why they cut off the night fishing — no more night fishing because they had three nets out. Those are the people who come from outside, and we are blamed for it. They used that buyback to get rid of the gill-netters. What happened before that was that there was no problem.

Prices go by negotiation — Japanese, Norwegian, Italian. I was at the table with a Cassiar company. Before herring fishing we sat at a table. There's money on the table, and there are 12 canneries, 12 managers there. I sat at the table too. They've got \$50 million on the table. Which company is going to get this money for startup costs for the herring? The herring was bought before it was even caught by the Japanese. How much do they want off this fishing?

[1640]

Well, not only sport fishermen are intercepting our fish. Alaska, Washington and a 200-mile limit... There are over a hundred mother ships out there taking our fish before they even come back to Skeena River. We often wonder how come our price is so low. They already canned some of our sockeye fish and the herring fish. Now the oolichan is gone. We know where the oolichans went. They're in the boats of the Japanese and Chinese — mother ships, they call them out there. This is the thing that we run into: opposition.

Our loss is a gain for the sport fishermen. I hear how many millions of dollars the gill-netters lost. There are only 40 of us. Out of 500 sockeye... Ninety percent of the Gitksan people lost their jobs. About that many are out of a job now because of that. I own territories, and I'm a chief, and I can't even get a licence to guide the people that walk on my territory unless I get permission from the government. A handout, again.

So many sockeye coming in are intercepted by Alaska fishermen. Seiners are taking that. And I can't even get a licence to guide the people to walk on my territory unless I hire one of the white people to show me how to do it first. That's according to the government.

Last, I want to show you something that is really killing us off on the Skeena River — like 80 percent of our people not working. This is hurting us. I am a Gitksan.

I got a halibut licence. It's \$600,500. That's how much my halibut licence cost. My salmon licence cost me over \$100,000. That's a commercial fisherman. I've got two boats. I've got to have \$200,000 to go and catch one sockeye out there. My start-off cost is \$32,000 to start fishing for this year coming. The government gave me five days to fish this year, to pay all those bills.

Commercial fisherman. Gitksan. A hundred thousand for each licence for the herring licence. I lost that already because of the cutback, and I had to pay my bills to upkeep my boats. I've got two boats. It costs me \$100,000 for two of them. It doesn't just cost me a \$20 licence to go out to guide for sport fishermen. I don't know how much the guide is paid. And I can't even get a licence for that.

That's what's killing us Gitksan people. They walk on our territory. Forty miles up at Kitwancool, there must be a hundred mushroom pickers there every year. I don't get a cent out of that, and I don't have a licence to guide any people that come around.

We have a problem here on the Skeena River. It's nice to hear how many hundred million dollars the people surrounding us are receiving, but not on the reserve. We don't get it here because we're surrounded by those people.

The yachts they have out at Dundas, Kennedy Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands. They allow about two or three spring salmon each, and there are 2,000 of them there. How many thousand is that allowing to be caught every day? That is Skeena River spring salmon and steelhead. That's the report I give you as a commercial fisherman for 60 years.

[1645]

The seiners don't want to be in the mouth of the Skeena River, because they know they're destroying our fish. They wanted out, but the fishery forced them to stay in the Skeena River because they got rid of the sockeye gill-netters. Government is doing that.

The reason why they got the seiners in the Skeena River. Half of the seiners are owned by companies like Jim Pattison, and each company has 40 seiners. They bring that same boat in. What number on sockeye head to the Skeena River... They force the gill-netters out, and they bring in the seiners from the south, Vancouver Island, Haida, everywhere. They bring them in because they are seiners owned by the same company — big billion-dollar outfits. We got pushed out by buybacks and all the stuff like that. That's why we're hungry here.

I'm talking about fish that are coming in the Skeena River. We have to protect it. We have to have a boundary of 200 miles, not just around our village. We have to protect. We don't want any farmed fish in our territory or in the mouth of the Skeena River. That's the place where we catch our fish.

The day we got farmed spring salmon, they cut the price down to \$1 a pound. If we were getting \$3 a pound yesterday and we start catching the farmed fish today, tomorrow the price will be \$1 a pound. Some of the companies don't even buy it. They just get rid of it. If you put a wild sockeye spring salmon in with the wild stock, it'll contaminate the whole wild stock, and they're not going to even buy it.

I'm talking about experience. This is in Kitimat and the Skeena River waters that I'm talking about.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Chief Morgan.

I'd like to call up chiefs George Muldoe and Marjorie McRae, if they'd like to come and speak a few words.

Chief George Muldoe and Marjorie McRae are not in the room at the moment.

Okay. I'm going to then ask Doug Donaldson to come up and make his presentation.

D. Donaldson: Hello. First of all, sorry for having my back to all you guys. I'm not quite used to this format. But that's the way it's set up, so I'll talk to you this way and apologize to have my back to the rest of the crowd.

My name is Doug Donaldson. I'm a councillor for the village of Hazelton, and I'm here on behalf of the village of Hazelton. But there are some other things that are going to impact what I have to say. I'm a father of two young adults, boys of Gitksan ancestry. I'm also a member of the [first nations language spoken] Gisaast Fireweed Clan. That informs what I have to tell you today as well.

First, thanks for coming. Happy Aboriginal Day. I wanted to make note that later on this week it's Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, and from what I understand, parliament won't be sitting in honour and respect of that founding member of the nation. I just want to draw to the attention of the committee and perhaps of the clerks committee that organized this on June 21 that this is a founding nation and that we are on the hereditary territories of the Gitksan. It's a bit disconcerting to me. I'm happy that you're here, but I look forward to the day that June 21 gets the same respect that Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day and Canada Day do and that we wouldn't have public hearings on National Aboriginal Day.

[1650]

As committee members, you might be aware that the village of Hazelton submitted a resolution to the UBCM last fall that had to do with fish farming. It promoted that we have a moratorium on open-net fish farm expansion until the Pacific Salmon Forum, John Fraser's committee, have their final report.

We felt it was important. That report was going to inform us more accurately of the situation of open-net fish farming. We had met with John Fraser around this. That resolution was defeated narrowly at the UBCM. Some of you might have been there. There was a call for a head count because the floor count was so close — just a show of hands. That didn't happen, but we thought it was pretty significant that it came that close in that forum.

It's still the position of the village of Hazelton council to have that moratorium in place until the Pacific Salmon Forum reports. That's for triple bottom-line reasons — for economic reasons, for ecological reasons and for socio-cultural reasons. Economically, you've heard some of the arguments. We're a small village — 350 people in the area. There are about 3,000 people. In the upper Skeena, there are about 6,000 people. There's 60-percent to 90-percent unemployment. Look around the room. Ten percent of the people here have jobs — lots of work, not very many jobs.

We look at the small amount and larger amount in the area of cash infusion that we get from the returning

salmon stocks — through the sport fishery and through the inland commercial fishery, when it was running — as essential to maintaining the economy that we still have functioning in this area.

For the village of Hazelton, the risk is too high. The risk is too high ecologically. You've heard reports already about the returning biomass and how important that is for the rest of the functioning ecosystem. I have training as a biologist. I hear from other professional biologists. I hear from the knowledge of the people who've lived here 10,000 years that the returning salmon are essential for the functioning of a healthy ecosystem in our area.

I lived for ten years in the Columbia River basin, and I've seen on the Columbia River what no salmon does to an ecology of an area. It's not very good, it's not very pretty, and it's not what we need here.

Again, the risk is too high, according to the village of Hazelton council. Socially and culturally, 80 percent of the demographics here are of Gitksan ancestry. Of the remaining 20 percent, there's a high proportion of settler culture. We are people closely connected to the land. We're closely connected to each other. The salmon resource is an important part of that.

We have 90-percent unemployment. Most of the people here are impoverished. It's not a luxury to have the salmon returning. It is essential for some people in order for survival. If we don't have salmon in the jars, in the pantry or in the freezer, people will go hungry.

It's also an intimate part of the culture. I think about the buffalo and what it meant to the people of the plains and that culture. I do not want to be part of a system that says to our grandchildren: "There used to be a salmon culture in the Skeena River, and now there no longer is." Again, the risk is too high.

As a council we're very aware of the impacts of our current economic and industrial system on our neighbouring communities, the communities down on the coast that are suffering like we are for employment. But we take care of the spawning beds up here, and we expect those communities to take care of the downstream effects on our salmon. These are our fish as much as anybody's. It's a shared resource.

Finally, we've been a bit dismayed by the respect that the provincial government has shown this committee. While this committee has been established — and we thought that was an excellent idea — and while you've been working hard, there has been an endorsement by the provincial government of another licence on the midcoast. We as a council just don't think that is right. We think it's disrespectful of your work.

[1655]

In fact, last night we had a council meeting, and we're going to introduce another resolution to the UBCM around fish farming. It is to say that the moratorium has to be introduced and remain in place on any further open-net fish farming until this committee has done its final report.

If the provincial government will not accede to that resolution, then we think that the committee should resign. We just think it's going to be a waste of people's

time coming to these sessions if the provincial government does not give this committee the respect it deserves.

On behalf of the village of Hazelton council, thanks for giving me an opportunity to present.

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks, Doug.

S. Simpson: I just wanted to point out.... I appreciate your comments. You should know that this committee yesterday adopted a resolution that said exactly that. The committee, through the Chair, will be informing the government and the minister that we believe — and it is the government's choice, not our choice — that there should be no further approvals until we have reported out our final report next May. The committee has taken that position. We took that position yesterday in Terrace, and we'll be putting that forward to the government in the next day or so.

D. Donaldson: That's good.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much for your presentation, Doug.

I would now like to call upon Chief George Muldoe and Chief Marjorie McRae. If Marjorie is here, would she like to come...? If both of them would like to come up and speak.

M. McRae: [Gitxsan spoken.] First, on behalf of Gitanmaax community and the band council, I'd like to welcome each and every one of you to our community.

I'm the band-elected Chief for Gitanmaax and have been for the last couple of terms. I understand that yesterday Clarence Nyce had presented some key information to the panel and had provided documentation.

Over a year ago we commissioned Allen Gottesfeld to do an impact study and an analysis on the fish farms. The results were extremely dismal. One of the concerns that we have and that so many have already voiced is the impacts that are going to occur as a result of the implementing of fish farms.

Doug already mentioned the poor economy that we have here. For many, many years our people have relied on the wild stock for food fishing and for their winter supply.

I'm not going to go into all of the scientific components, because you have been provided with tons of information from various biologists and various environmentalists that clearly shows without a doubt the negative impacts that it's going to have on our wild stock, on the watersheds and on the people.

As has already been mentioned, we have been here for hundreds and thousands of years. We've relied on the watersheds. The hereditary chiefs, the hereditary system — they have ownership and jurisdiction over those watersheds, and they should be consulted. Community members, as well, should be consulted. True information should be made available on why the government has chosen to go down this road.

Earlier I heard from the previous speakers that it's largely attributed to money. For us, money is secondary. Our primary concern is the protection of the traditional territories and the protection of the watersheds.

[1700]

In my mind, if you wanted to do the communities within this area justice, you would be putting money towards fish hatcheries, ocean ranching. You should be examining various options that won't destroy the environment.

I have a grandson, and what really concerns me — and Doug mentioned this earlier — is that it's going to be past stories that we share with our grandchildren and their children about the way things used to be, how things used to be, how we used to be able to smoke and jar fish, how we used to do our food gathering.

These fish farms aren't going to just impact the watersheds. They're going to impact everything. It's going to impact our way of life. It's going to impact the community. It's going to impact the hereditary system as we know it today, because as I mentioned earlier, the hereditary chiefs have jurisdiction over those watersheds, and they, in my mind, have been disregarded.

There are several court rulings. There are several legal analyses that have been put forward to the Attorney General that clearly state that consultation and accommodation are mandatory. I haven't see that happen within the Gitxsan traditional territories, where the hereditary chiefs have been properly consulted, where all of the house groups have been properly consulted. If I'm mistaken, I can stand corrected on that matter. I think there are big gaps in what's happening right now.

I also heard some disturbing news today which really disheartened me, because I was under the impression that this panel was coming with an open heart and an open mind to hear the legitimate concerns of the grassroots people. You can correct me on this as well, if I'm incorrect with my information, but I was informed that there was a vote on the committee with respect to the moratorium and that four individuals voted against that. That's extremely disheartening, because the four of you who voted against that moratorium are telling me that I am wasting my words today.

Generally, when you have discussions with people you come with an open heart and an open mind. But you've already set your minds, voting against the moratorium which would protect and give time for people to really analyze the situation. Then you would not have voted that way. You can correct me on that as well, if I'm incorrect with this information that I received this morning.

When these panels or committees are established, it's my understanding that they are to come with an unbiased perspective, and they're to research, analyze and critique information so that the best decision possible can be made. For those four individuals, I don't feel that, and that's very, very unfortunate.

Doug Donaldson alluded to the fact that we are in an absolutely depressed economy here within the Ha-

zeltons. I believe that if the government, in all of their wisdom, really wanted to do right by both the native and non-native people, you would be doing things to enhance and to support and to help us out — not to destroy.

The scientific report that I was privileged to read from Allen Gottesfeld absolutely proved without a doubt the damage that would be created by the fish farms. The economic return, the financial return and the jobs are so dismal that it's not even worth talking about. Once those fish farms are established, you can have them operated with a minimum of four to five people. So that does nothing for our economy, and it doesn't do anything for putting food in the bellies of our people.

[1705]

I'm hopeful that all of the information and research documents that you're receiving, in particular the information that you received from Prince Rupert and Terrace, are really seriously taken to heart and examined thoroughly, because those fish farms will be the downfall of our people. Thank you for listening.

G. Muldoe: I just want to reiterate Chief Barney Morgan — he said a lot of things I wanted to say — and also Marj McRae and Doug Donaldson.

We had another meeting this morning, and our number-one concern here is the river and the water. We already have traces of mercury in the Skeena and the Nass. We're really afraid of that. We already went through logging and destroyed.... When I first came back from one of the residential schools every creek was alive with fish in the '50s. Now, just locally in the Hazelton area I think we have 36 dead streams — no more fish, period.

I'm also questioning your recommendation to the government, because the government seems to be doing whatever they want, anytime they want, regardless of who makes recommendations to them. I don't know if it's democracy, but in some cases, watching them, it doesn't look like democracy.

If we find mercury, or if we contaminate the Skeena River, we're talking about 20, 25, 30 tributaries. One really critical area is the Nass River, where the divide is. If the Skeena gets contaminated, the Kispiox gets contaminated and the Sweetin River gets contaminated. The divide by Fred Wright Lake is going to filter into the Nass River system, because by the trapline cabins, at the front of the cabin, the current is heading south. Behind the cabin the current is heading north. We're right on the divide there, and they join. Even if it's a trickle, it'll get in there. I'm really concerned.

I don't know what good these forums will do. We don't want fish farms — period. That's the bottom line. People are destroying our rivers already, and I guess fish farms will be the final blow, so to speak. We're fighting mining everywhere.

In conclusion, I guess, our house group from the house of Delgamuukw.... Review that court case — the Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa court case. A lot of your answers are in there. Most of these forums are needless,

because the resources are ours. The land is ours. We have to be consulted, and consultation isn't done by phone or by letters. It's face to face with the hereditary chiefs that own those territories.

Each one of the chiefs spends thousands of dollars on their territories — thousands, never mind hundreds. That's their responsibility. Some of our feasts go to \$70,000 or \$80,000 in one night, depending who hosts it and how big the Chief is. It's expensive for us to be chiefs. It's really expensive, especially if you're one of the top guns in our society. You could be spending \$15,000 or \$20,000 a year just in feasts, and then you spend a lot more than that on the territories.

We're trying to protect it, and water is number one to us. Thank you.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Chief Muldoe and Chief McRae, for your presentations.

[1710]

M. McRae: I just wanted to make one closing comment. Today is Aboriginal Day, and many of our communities are celebrating. That's why you see low numbers here. It's unfortunate that this couldn't have taken place on a different day.

Also, there will be a band council resolution coming forward from the Gitanmaax band with respect to fish farming, because we agree with George. We are not supporting the implementation of fish farms.

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks again to both of you.

I think Scott would like to make a comment or ask a question.

S. Fraser: Thank you very much. You asked a question of us about whether or not Gitxsan was consulted. I did probe that earlier. Right now the requirements do not include upriver consultation with Gitxsan, with the Shuswap on the Thompson. That's the way it stands, so you were correct in that assumption. I'm not saying that's good. I'm just saying you were right.

M. McRae: Okay, thanks.

R. Austin (Chair): I would like to call up Chief Art Wilson to the witness table, if Chief Art Wilson is present.

A. Wilson: I realize there are a lot of speakers who'd like to speak, so I'll try to be brief and be to the point as much as I can. I would like to thank you. I'd also like to thank the local chiefs for allowing us to be here today, the Gitanmaax chiefs.

I'd like to just briefly introduce one of the other chiefs on our table, [first nations language spoken], at the end there, and my niece Carol. I'd like to briefly introduce myself. My name is Wii Muk'willixw, and my other name is Art Wilson. You're saying that you're prepared to take a stance of no further fish farms, and I would like just to reiterate and support what the other chiefs have said before me.

Our position, if we were to influence, was no fish farms — period. Just as one of the chiefs said to you earlier, I too used to be a commercial fisherman — the North Pacific Cannery. I started fishing on my own when I was 16, and I fished for Canadian Fish. At that time the fish were very healthy. The runs were very healthy, just as I've seen in the rivers around Kispiox, but I think the whole legacy of fish management hasn't been good from what I've seen in my lifetime.

You will remember that area four used to be designated for commercial fish only, just the small guys like us. Then in the management's wisdom they sent the seine boats into that area, and that was the beginning of the end as far as giving adequate escapement to the tributaries where the fish go.

[1715]

It was very interesting to me that we were not included in the consultation, because the fish are born in our watersheds up here, and we have every concern with the returns of these wild stocks. It's very interesting that the system thought of us that way.

As far as the Atlantic salmon, I understand this to be a foreign species introduced to the system. I think that it is downright dangerous. I can just imagine the sea lions out there. They're probably licking their chops going by the fish farm, and if they try to get in there and cause damage, those same fish are going to end up in our river systems here. It is very dangerous.

I'm just hoping that this exercise is not just a formality. I hope that in good conscience you can see across the board to whoever sent you here to do the right thing. I think the legacy of bad management has to stop somewhere, and not only that. When I see some of us who live up here who rely on the salmon — a lot of us live on \$185 a month — I feel for them. I'm one of the lucky ones who gets work here and there. I just like to think of all my brothers and sisters as we talk to you, and hope that you would do the right thing. So far, the majority of people I've heard today are against fish farms, and for good reason.

I'd like to just thank you again. That's about it for me.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much, Chief Wilson. I appreciate you coming here and speaking your mind.

C. Louie: I'd like to say something. I want to share an experience that I had about a month ago.

My husband froze two fish. He never told me what kind of fish he was freezing. He took these two fish out, and we put them in the sink to defrost them. He left, and I was not notified where that fish came from. What happened was, when I started to prepare that fish — I was starting to cut up and prepare that fish — I didn't know where it came from.

The way that fish looked.... It was mushy and slimy. While I was cutting it I just couldn't.... Where did this fish come from? I literally had to go into the bathroom and get sick, because this fish didn't look real to me. My husband came in the door, and he said: "Did

you start preparing the fish for the barbecue?" I said: "No. Where did you get the fish from?" "A friend of mine gave it to me. It came from the fish farm."

What I had to do with that fish, which went against my culture, was throw it out. We respect our fish. When I had to do that, I thought that the dogs would eat it, at least. The dogs wouldn't even touch it. My husband said: "What are we going to do with it? I can't throw it in the river, because you don't know what this fish is carrying."

[1720]

What he did was, he did a prayer, he dug a hole, and he put the two fish in there. All I have to say is that we have a lot of respect for the animals around us, for the fish. We give prayer, and we thank the Creator for everything that is given to us.

I've been going to school. I've been getting educated, and I've learned a lot of things with the politics. I'm really thankful for you guys to come all the way here to hear us. I sure hope in my heart, and I ask the Creator, for you to open your hearts to hear us, because we are survivors. We always did survive, and we're getting stronger.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Carol. Can you perhaps tell me your full name for the purposes of Hansard Services so they can record it on the transcript?

C. Louie: Carol Louie.

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks again for your presentation.

I would like to now call upon Heidi Westfall to come up to the witness table and make her presentation.

H. Westfall: My name is Heidi Westfall. I live in Smithers, British Columbia, which is technically not on the Skeena by name but is the headwaters and the upper watershed. To be quite honest, I didn't know that the Skeena ended at Hazelton. That's kind of an eye-opener for me, when you said that you didn't actually consult the headwater entities.

Smithers is a community of 5,000 proper and about a 20,000 service area. Then there are the other communities such as Houston, which actually houses the Morice River and the little Bulkley, which is the headwaters of the Skeena watershed as well as other tributaries such as the Kispiox and the Babine and all those that flow into it.

I didn't realize this was going to be such a nuts-and-bolts crowd. I realize now that you are all from the lower mainland and all from coastal areas, which is great because you do have an intimate knowledge of what you live on and what you are involved in. The unfortunate problem is that it's easy to stand on the shores of an ocean and say that everything is just great because everything that flows into that ocean comes from our rivers.

The other thing that I'm sure you're aware of, after listening to the speakers today, is that even though

there are nuts and bolts — financial, economic and ecological impacts — when it comes to the fish farm issue, there's also a very personal issue. You cannot separate them. That's like saying the ocean is the ocean and the rivers are the rivers, and that's that.

They are always interconnected. All of the salmon that are in the oceans come from the rivers. Everything that is in the rivers flows to the ocean. You cannot separate them. Politics likes to do that. We're going to have a body and we're going to have a head, but we may not talk to each other. But it'll be okay; it'll work itself out.

It is important to realize that they are not separable; they are interconnected, and they are interconnected on various levels — financial, economical, employment, ecological and all the rest of that. I appreciate the fact that all of you as MLAs live, for the most part — which I took a quick read of — on major rivers that flow out of the interior. You may not touch them every day. You may only drive over them, but you are still connected to them.

[1725]

I believe that it's not only a privilege but it should be a right to be able to have respect for and enjoy the bounty that comes from those rivers. I don't expect that most everyone here gets to go out and touch their rivers and that their children get to fish in them and that you get to walk your dogs, but up here we do.

I had a mind to pull out of my freezer a chunk of white spring salmon, which was caught by my son last year and weighed just over 40 pounds. Not many children get to experience that. We teach our children that there is a huge respect and appreciation that goes with that. We are a family of four, and we can survive off six salmon a year. In our household we choose to use only wild meat. That is a personal choice that we make. It's because we truly believe in and respect where we live and what resources are provided to us.

On a professional level I own and operate a 225-seat restaurant and bar. We have gross sales of \$2 million a year. Over a quarter of our revenue is generated by sport fishing. That sport fishing season lasts eight weeks. Do the math: one-quarter of our revenue is generated by 1/6 of the year. The other comes from our backbone: the locals, travellers and tourists.

When I say sport fishing, I do not mean catch-and-keep. This is not saltwater sport fishing. This is a regulated, controlled fishery of catch and release. The number-one species that the sport fishers are coming for is steelhead, which is sea-run trout. They do spawn in the rivers, but they do not spawn in the fall such as other salmon do. They spawn in the spring in our rivers. They do make the trip many times; they don't necessarily perish after spawning. And they are the most coveted sport fish in the world.

The Skeena watershed is one of the top five fly-fishing destinations in the world. Flyfishers tend to be composed of the top 2 percent of the economic echelon in the world. We have eyes on us from everywhere: the United States, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Europe, Russia. There are people who travel here just to see the fish,

whether it's for sport fishing, for catch and keep or just simply to see the fish.

There is a huge European contingency of what's called rubber-tire traffic — whether it be bus tours, self-directed tours, train tours — who come here to experience the natural beauty. That natural beauty feeds into and is completely generated by the ecosystem that contributes to and is part of our rivers. To say that they're not connected is a hard thing to do. They are very connected. They are personally connected, and they are financially connected.

Fish farming has failed everywhere else in the world — open-pen fish farming. It is failing in other parts of the world, and it will fail here. Personally, on the upper stretches of the Morice River, which is a major tributary of the Bulkley into the Skeena, we have caught Atlantic salmon.

My question to the government is: if you allow fish farms, what are you going to do when they fail? What plans do you have to implement to make sure that when they do fail, there is no massive fallout?

We have an incredibly healthy and stable fishery which, under proper management and advancing that management, can be maintained for lifetimes so that my children will not remember fishing but will continue to be able to fish as they grow up. If they fail and they decimate the ecosystem of the ocean and up the rivers, what will the government do? What does it have as far as plans go? We all know that governments are term operations. They are not communities; they are not cultures. It is a term.

[1730]

We are here right now, right here, and what are we going to do? That's a great way to look at building a building. That's not a great way to look at operating and managing a natural resource that, once gone, is non-renewable.

What would happen if we logged and didn't plant trees? What would happen if we mined and didn't do backfill? What will happen when the fish farms fail? Will Atlantic stocks be released into our rivers? Will they sustain the animals and the people along those rivers? Will they sustain the wildlife and ecological systems in the ocean, or will they just absolutely wipe out everything?

There's no good answer, but there are a lot of nuts and bolts and a lot of scientific evidence that will point us in the direction to say that we have to look long and hard at this issue. Respect and understanding of what we have and what we know has to go farther and far deeper than what might be and what we don't know.

I appreciate all of you coming up here. I realize for most of you this is probably one of your first trips to the north. It's a great place to live. It's a great place to raise a family. It's a great place to realize that our province is abundant with natural resources. But we have to respect them, and we have to take the time to do our research before we make hasty political decisions.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Really a simple question, Heidi. Where are you from? You're right at the

head of the watershed, but I didn't quite get the location.

H. Westfall: In Smithers. I have been in this valley for ten years. I grew up in the Arctic watershed, so when I moved to Smithers, salmon, steelhead.... All this was completely new to me. Now I realize how terribly important it is to us.

S. Fraser: Thanks, Heidi, and thanks for your presentation. It is magnificent. It's my first time up here, and it ain't my last.

Question: you said Atlantics caught way.... Like up in the headwaters?

H. Westfall: You bet.

S. Fraser: Can you tell me how they were caught? Were they biting?

H. Westfall: They were biting. They were caught on a fly. When we took them to the DFO, we said: "What do we do with this?" He said: "Burn it."

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): When was that caught?

H. Westfall: That fish was caught three years ago by my husband. There are more. They're there. They're already prevalent, and there are no fish farms on the Skeena yet. We would expect that these stocks that have escaped are coming from the midcoast or lower coast.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much. I would now like to call Chief Alvin Weget to the witness table.

A. Weget: I'd just like to say thank you.

[First nations language spoken.]

My name is Alvin Weget from Kispiox, born and raised as a Gitksan. A commercial fisherman by trade; back in 1945, fished for B.C. Packers.

I'm going to come right to the point here. Why do you people want to introduce farm fish here? That's my question. I'd like to know what to expect a few years down the road. I've been away from commercial fishing for 21 years. I'd like to ask this question to your people. There are a lot of other questions I want to ask after I hear this. If the panel can answer me here....

You guys look pretty damn good in this picture here. You guys have got no neckties on or anything, and I hardly recognize....

[1735]

R. Austin (Chair): We're informal here.

G. Hogg: The pictures were taken 20 years ago.

[Laughter.]

A. Weget: We were talking to the wrong people, then.

Who's going to answer me, in my question?

R. Austin (Chair): We're not actually here to answer that question. What we are here for is to listen to what you have to say about aquaculture, and then we will have deliberations among ourselves and then present some recommendations back to the Legislature.

We're not here to speak on behalf of the government as to what decisions are being made right now. We are a committee coming to listen to what people have to say. Then we will take those ideas back and make them part of our recommendations. None of us here can speak on behalf of government or on what decisions are being made right now.

A. Weget: The reason I'm saying that, Chairman, is the amount of money people have spent toward this movement. That's my point here. It has already started. That's the reason I'm asking this question. You're already in the spending mood here.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I'd just like to again echo the Chairman's comments that we're not here to propose anything, but these concerns have been raised. They're concerns of all the people of British Columbia. That's why we have representatives from other areas. We're here to listen, to hear your concerns and to take them back.

Yes, there is some money being spent on the committee, and that's, I think, a reflection of the concerns of the citizens of British Columbia to learn more about the people here on the Skeena that maybe affect them. How do you feel about the issue?

We're the messengers.

A. Weget: The hard point about this panel is: why do you people pick first nations people to do this on your behalf? Like the people from the Kitkatla district there. I commercial-fished there, and I know the area. From what I hear — maybe the reports I hear are just rumours — there's a whole lot of farmed fish in that particular area, which will affect the Skeena River. This is my point here.

Why do you pick first nations people to do this on your behalf? That's my point here.

R. Austin (Chair): Okay. I'd just like to explain. Nobody here has picked any first nations person. That's a private contract between a company called Pan Fish and the band leadership within Kitkatla. It's got nothing to do with anything that any of us have been part of, but we have discussed that, and there have been concerns to us over the last three days. We will take those concerns back. But none of us here are responsible for the relationship between Pan Fish and the Kitkatla band leadership.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Again, if I may, we didn't pick who wanted to come to our meetings. Who-

ever wants to present to us may present to us. We are visiting all the areas — in some cases, of course, to look at where the farms are, to see face to face, firsthand, what the operations look like. That's our job.

A. Weget: The reason I'm saying this.... Those people in Kitkatla there are my good friends. I can just see that they're.... If there's money involved here, if there's work involved here.... It's going to hurt the Skeena here badly, according to some of the reports you have here.

One of the speakers was simply saying that one of our main diets was gone last spring — the oolichans — and I wonder what the heck ever happened with it. I'm pretty sure each one of your panel here.... It might have crossed your path, what happened to the oolichans — the millions, the tonnes, in the Nass River. We only had about 20,000 oolichans there this year. The Skeena River — nothing.

[1740]

Some salmon are disappearing already, like the big prediction in the Skeena River for the last few years, and there's really nothing. I really pity the gill-netters at the mouth of the Skeena. The amount of money they spent to go fishing, and they don't even wet their nets.

I don't know whether I'm in-line with what this is all about. It bothered me why the Kitkatla area was picked to experiment with this farm fish here.

Like, you hear one of the speakers here was supposed to eat the salmon and found out it was farmed fish. Do you listen to the TV and all those big, high restaurants? "We don't want any farmed fish here." That is what those cooks are saying.

Who is going to eat this salmon? This is my point here. Where are you going to ship them to? That's what I really want to know. This is about the 20th time I've attended a meeting, and I keep saying that farmed fish is poison.

Still, today we met with you fine people from the government. You're not just ordinary people from the street here. You were elected to act on our behalf. I respect you, panel. I'm not here to condemn any of you. I know what it's like to do a job, and I'd like to say thank you.

With this, I might find another word or two after, but I believe some of my friends here want to say something. I'd like to say thank you, again, to you fine people.

R. Austin (Chair): Can you please introduce yourself? There's a microphone right in front of you.

B. Clifton: Good afternoon. I'm Barbara Clifton from the lower Skeena watershed. I have a couple of comments to make. The Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Watershed Authority has done a number of presentations to you or to the government or to the many levels that are dealing with this issue.

My comment to you, the panel, is that we are not in agreement with the location of those proposed fish farms at the mouth of the Skeena. You have our scientific data. It's a pretty big ocean out there. If we must

have fish farms — and I do not endorse fish farms — they could be located somewhere else. It's dangerous — those particular sites that have been picked. We don't want to be looking at this down the road and know the mistakes that we have made. I respectfully wish to draw to your attention that the proposed locations should not be approved.

The other issue I would like to raise is the multinational funding. I had an opportunity to be interviewed by a major Norwegian paper. They came to my house in Gitsegukla and interviewed a number of us.

[1745]

What they said to us was that there were no more wild species in Norway, and they came over here to talk to us and get our views of what it would be like to live without wild salmon. So this multinational corporation, or the people funding some of the fish farms here in British Columbia....

Lastly, the other point I want to make is the importance of the wild stock to the Gitksan. You cannot smoke or dry fish farm salmon. Looking at the experience that the Norwegians had, for us to say or endorse fish farming.... We cannot do that. We would like to preserve our wild fish stocks. I think that if we collectively voice the conservation of these fish stocks, we would be in a much better position.

I know that you, as a panel, indicate there is an economic component to that. Granted, there is. But if the wild salmon disappear, I think whatever economic gains we are going to realize from the farm fishing will not benefit us as Gitksan. I would like to really stress that. We need to protect the wild stock and not be overzealous in granting licences.

I have looked at and studied the data that the Gitksan have gathered for 20 years. In relation to my watershed, the return of the salmon is dismal, and it isn't through overfishing. It's a lot of different things that impact the wild stock. A good part of it is logging. You heard already how many dead streams we have.

We did a survey of 16 streams in our area last summer, and the return is dismal. The return to the Kitwanga Lake is very, very dismal. Part of the reason is that they're not maintained also. We have to look at, actually, how much the federal government pays attention to maintaining these streams for the return of the wild salmon. So we have a lot of problems, let alone only the fish farms.

Thank you for listening.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Chief Clifton. Now, Chief Ralph Michele.

R. Michele: Thank you, panel. I'd like to thank everyone who is here today to say no to the fish farms that are being proposed or that have been introduced to our mouth of the Skeena. I'm from the upper Skeena watershed. All of the chiefs in that watershed say no to salmon farms. You've heard a lot of speakers today. They've said no.

I'm worried that we're here talking to you for nothing. I'm really concerned that we are.

[1750]

I want to advise you that I'm going to put a lot of energy into gathering all the first nations in northwest British Columbia to prepare for a court action against the Liberal government. We will get ready to go to court. There's nothing that's going to infuriate all the native people in northwest B.C. more than to be abused by a Liberal government. If we say no, that's what we mean. For the government to proceed with their economic development plans would be an act of contempt against all first nations in the northwest.

The destruction of our wild salmon stocks is just another act of cultural genocide. You have no respect for the northwest, for aboriginal people. Yet all of our resources keep the lights on in Vancouver and Victoria. And when you're done with us.... We're a desolate community — no resources to sustain ourselves. It is poor management and irresponsible management of a government when it's going to do that.

All I can say is that I'll put a lot of energy into gathering all the first nations in northwest British Columbia and be ready for what kind of recommendations you make to your government. We'll watch. That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much. One second. Before you leave, Dan has a comment or a question.

D. Jarvis: Yes. I just wanted to respond to you, Chief Weget. I think you were concerned, in one of your statements, as to why we went to Kitkatla and talked to them about fish farming and all the rest of it. I just want to clarify. We did not talk him into anything. He told us — Chief Clifford White — on Monday morning that he was concerned about his band, the people. There was about 85-percent unemployment. He had to do something to try to get jobs and revenue for them.

Specifically, I don't have the right answer here or the specifics of it, but he looked at the situation that was going on further south below him. He went down there and talked to the band chiefs down there. Either Pan Fish contacted him or he contacted Pan Fish. It had nothing to do with the government putting the two of them together. It was the Chief's idea to put in the fish farm in the mouth of the Skeena — not us. We had nothing to do with it.

I just want to clarify that for you.

A. Weget: Who is Clifford White?

R. Austin (Chair): He's the chief councillor for the Kitkatla band.

D. Jarvis: I don't know if he's a hereditary chief or....

R. Austin (Chair): No, he's a political, elected chief councillor of the Kitkatla nation.

Shane has a question or a comment.

S. Simpson: Thank you very much, and I appreciated all of your comments. It follows up a little bit on the previous comment. I want to ask your advice on a question. We've heard, over the last three days, from many, many chiefs from nations in the north, and positions have been very strong and very passionate. We have heard time and time again: no to fish farms. There's no question about that from first nations across the territories.

[1755]

The one exception to that has been the elected leadership of the Kitkatla. What the elected leadership of the Kitkatla told us.... They said: "Look. This is our traditional territory. We are having a discussion with Pan Fish around ten farms on our territory. We support this. They have two that they're looking at, but they have ten that they're looking at ultimately."

What they told us was: "This is our traditional territory, and the choices we make on our traditional territory are our right to make." We have heard from other first nations who've said: "The challenge here is that the salmon that come to our territories will swim through those estuaries, and they will swim past those farms."

The question that I have for you, and I know that all first nations expect — and rightly so — to have their territories respected, is: how would you advise us? How do we begin to deal with this discussion around them asserting their right over what is clearly their territory, versus the very great concerns of many other first nations about the effects of what they may do?

A. Weget: What would Kitkatla do to the Gitksan nation if there's no salmon up here? Will they supply us the salmon? That's my point here. If they destroy the salmon, will they produce for us something to eat here? My diet — that's my point. I want to protect the way it was back in time, in years to come. That's what I'm trying to say here.

I fully respect.... That's why I say Kitkatla people are my friends. I was there when I was a little guy, picking seaweed there in the spring. I know the area. That's why I really feel bad that this had to happen in that particular area. We are first nations people. Salmon is their diet also. I'm kind of glad to listen to some of the sport fishermen here and the thousands and thousands of dollars that they're losing. I didn't even know there was that much money around the district here.

The only thing we do here is put up a feast to protect our territory. You never make any money out of it. The only thing I'm looking for is a pot of salmon to eat, which we call [first nations language spoken.] That's the only thing I'm looking at. As time goes on, we're just going to talk about it. My grandchildren, I wish they had a taste of that. This might be the word they're going to use.

Is there anything more you want to...?

S. Simpson: I guess I want to thank you. I'm very appreciative of your comments. Your comments have

been those same words, or very similar words, that have been repeated to us time and time again over the last couple of days in communities by chiefs who are speaking for their people. They're saying very much the same thing you're saying.

The challenge is: what do you say to a first nation who has chosen — at least, their elected leadership appear to have chosen — a different path? They are saying: "This is our choice to make." I'm just trying to understand it, because it's a question they put. I'm just trying to get my head around it, as to how to understand it, so I'm seeking advice from people who are wiser than me on some of these things.

A. Weget: If I may ask you something, my friend. This wild stock we're talking about here — do you think that farmed fish is going to pollute the wild stock?

S. Simpson: That's what we're trying to figure out.
[1800]

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much for your presentations, all three of you.

I would now like to call Walter Joseph, if Walter Joseph is here, to the witness table. Is he here?

Okay, is Bob Clay here?

B. Clay: My name is Bob Clay. I live in the Kispiox Valley. I'm a bamboo rod-builder and a fishing guide, and I make my living from the sports-fishing resource.

I'd like to acknowledge the chiefs of the territory and the opportunity to speak today here. I'd also like to thank the panel for coming to what I would call a forgotten part of British Columbia.

Things are not good here. Unemployment is high. Government services have been removed. Industry has left town, and businesses have closed down. We hear that things in B.C. have never been better. Not here.

In Hazelton our school system is substandard. We have a four-day week. We have subjects that you can only get every other year. We have subjects, such as band, that are not available at all. The standard of education that we have in Hazelton would not be tolerated in the lower mainland.

Things are not great in Hazelton, but as bad as things are in our area, it's a beautiful, abundant place to live. The land is good to us here, but now with this new threat, fish farms, we see the possibility of it all disappearing. There has been no place on this earth where fish farms and wild stocks of salmon and steelhead have coexisted.

I had the good luck and fortune to be able to travel to Scotland last year. I was able to fish the River Dee for wild Atlantic salmon. This river, internationally known, is held in the same high regard as our steelhead rivers here. Its salmon runs are very healthy, and anglers from all over the world come to fish here. Because its estuary is unprotected from the North Sea, no fish farms are present.

Over on the west coast of Scotland there are many inlets and fjords and lots of fish farms, and wherever

there is a fish farm and a river in the same inlet, there are virtually no wild salmon and sea trout left. Everybody knows why: disease from the fish farms kills the young wild fish. So you would think: just remove the fish farms and that would be the end of the problem. But removing fish farms is not easy.

Multinational big business does not move easily. They have friends and money; they have power. Once they get a toehold, they are very hard to remove. That's why we say no to fish farms in the north. The Skeena River and its tributaries — the Kispiox, Bulkley, Babine, Sustut, Morice and Copper, to name a few — are held in the same high regard among sport fishermen as the Atlantic salmon streams of Scotland.

If we are talking economics, the loss of the steelhead and Pacific salmon sport fisheries is huge. It is a big part of our seasonal economy. As much as the loss of the sport fishery for steelhead is important to me and my family, my needs are of little importance when compared to the needs of first nations and the natural world.

Without salmon returning, none of us can survive here. The risks are too great. I implore you, members of the panel, to make the right decision and not allow fish farms to ruin our way of life.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Bob, for your remarks.

Do any members have any questions? No.

I would now like to call Walter Joseph. Is Walter Joseph present here?

B. Larson: Can I speak in Walter's place — instead of Walter? Is that all right with you guys?

R. Austin (Chair): Well, we have time, and we have no more speakers, so yeah. Can you tell me who you are representing and what your name is?

[1805]

B. Larson: Yeah, okay. My name's Brian Larson. I'm a white native of the area here. I don't like fishing. I was reading on that paper there that all you guys are from the lower mainland — right?

R. Austin (Chair): No, I'm not. I live here in Terrace.

B. Larson: Where are you from?

S. Fraser: Alberni-Qualicum on central Vancouver Island.

B. Larson: Okay. The Island.

C. Trevena: I'm North Island.

B. Larson: And you're on the Island. Where are you from?

R. Austin (Chair): I'm from Terrace.

B. Larson: Terrace. Oh good. But the rest of you guys are from the lower mainland — right?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): No, I'm from the Island.

B. Larson: Okay. You're down there, anyway.

I'm old enough now that I've seen a fair bit of things come into this country here. We get all kinds of directives from Victoria. We get blanketed with the same kinds of things up here that don't fit because the decisions are made in Victoria and Vancouver.

Up here what we have are mountains and forests, and we've got fish and rivers. We don't have much of a forest left because we've had quite a few companies come in from different places and set up shop and provide jobs. But it's all been quite short term.

It looks to me, from what I can understand with this fish farm business, that this is an employment opportunity. But it looks to be really shortsighted as well, so I just don't think it's a good idea. I haven't been able to find any really good reasons for it other than jobs.

As far as your other thing about what to say to the people at Kitkatla, what would you say to somebody in...?

Where are you from? Are you from Vancouver?

S. Simpson: Vancouver.

B. Larson: Like, right downtown Vancouver or Surrey or...?

S. Simpson: In the city.

B. Larson: Yeah, so say somebody out in Burnaby is going to set up something that's going to be raining all kinds of acid rain on your part of town, but it's their right to set it up there. They say it's their right because they own that — you know? They might have a right to have something there, but not if it's going to screw up everybody else upstream from them.

You guys are the elected leaders, so you've got to show a little leadership there, I guess, and figure that one out. But I think something needs to be said.

Anyway, thanks for listening, and thanks for coming out here. Do you guys already have your minds made up on this?

R. Austin (Chair): No. We are here. We're still going to carry on. We're going to be doing more community meetings in the fall. After that we will sit down and have deliberations, and then we'll bring forward some recommendations. What you've said and what everybody else has said will be part of those deliberations.

B. Larson: Okay. Well, thanks for listening, and I hope you make the right decision.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much.

Now I'd like to call Walter Joseph, who has returned to the hall. Good evening.

[1810]

W. Joseph: Good evening, my name is Walter Joseph. I'm the fisheries manager for the Office of the Wet'suwet'en.

The Wet'suwet'en chiefs have taken a strong position against fish farms. I guess the main reason for it is that Dr. Allen Gottesfeld from the Skeena Fisheries Commission did a study in the past few years. He's captured sockeye smolts around Prince Rupert. Last year he caught 100 smolts around Kaien Island. Out of the 100, about seven of them were from the Morice Lake system. These smolts are right in the area where the fish farms are intended to be placed, so there is direct evidence that there are smolts from the Wet'suwet'en system going right through the fish farm sites.

The reason that we are really concerned about this is that the sockeye that go into the Morice system, that go up the Morice — the ones that the Wet'suwet'en really depend on — are less than 10 percent of the carrying capacity of the lake. The DFO estimated that the capacity of the lake is 120,000 sockeye. In the past six or seven years it has been around 10,000, so that stock is really severely depressed.

Part of the problem, too, is that the sockeye that are in Morice Lake, there.... The Morice Lake system is really nutrient-poor. The smolts that come out of there are really quite a bit smaller than other smolts, especially compared to Babine. Now, if those fish are much smaller than other sockeye, and they're going through the fish pen sites, they will be very vulnerable to sea lice.

There is a good chance that the sites in the Skeena estuary will really have a big impact on the smolts going through that site. When you combine that with the poor returns that we've had, you might wipe out the stock. I know that the sockeye are quite different genetically than the sockeye from all the other systems. There are perhaps two different stocks in the Wet'suwet'en area. One is a river spawner. It's quite a small stock in itself, probably only a few thousand. The other stock, the main stock that goes into Morice Lake, spawn mostly in the Nanika River and perhaps in the Atna River.

Like I say, the carrying capacity of Morice Lake is approximately 120,000. Right now there are only 10,000. Combine that with those smolts going through net pens, and they are already small and vulnerable, and it's really going to have a dramatic impact. I think the impact will be so large that there has to be some accommodation for Wet'suwet'en interests. They are so vulnerable that I can't see how you could put a fish farm right in the path of that stock and yet accommodate Wet'suwet'en interests.

[1815]

I guess the other problem that the Wet'suwet'en are concerned about is the chinook. There is a fairly good return of chinook going up the Morice system.

Now, I believe that there's an intention to put some of the fish farms to raise chinook too. The problem that the Wet'suwet'en see with this is that there's a good chance of crossbreeding between the wild chinook and the farm chinook. I think studies have shown that the offspring of wild and farm chinook don't breed as well. They're a weaker stock, so you're potentially damaging the chinook stock there too.

That's also a really major fish for the Wet'suwet'en. Like I say, in the past few years Wet'suwet'en have had to depend quite heavily on chinook and coho because of the sockeye problem. Fish farms are potentially impacting that stock now too.

That comes into another accommodation problem. Legally, I'm not sure how far you'd have to go through consultation in order to meet the legal obligations to consult with the Wet'suwet'en, but I do know there are really high standards for accommodation in such an important food source for the Wet'suwet'en.

I think those are the main points. We also have the concerns of the other presenters, too, but these ones tie directly to Wet'suwet'en. We have evidence of our smolts right in the pen-site areas. Like I say, you have to accommodate our interests.

R. Austin (Chair): Okay. Thank you very much for coming here and speaking on behalf of the Wet'suwet'en.

I would just like to recognize that there are a number of people who would like to speak this evening, but we are under some time constraints. I will try to get through as many people as I can before we have to catch a plane.

I'd like to call Barry Bush up, if he would like to come to the table.

B. Bush: Good evening. My question here is about the agreement with the Kitkatla. You guys are talking about an elected person who supposedly signed some sort of agreement on behalf of the Kitkatla people. But some of the word that I've heard — and it's been generated down amongst the Kitkatla people — is that that's highly untrue. There's 85 percent of the people down there that totally disagree with fish farming. My question is: why are you going on the word of one person?

As far as elected goes, he's the elected Chief of the band, which is the reserve. Do you have a membership sign-up that can back and support this guy's agreement, or are you going to go by just one person? I know that by our self-governing system within the Gitksan here, we do not have one elected person speaking on behalf of everybody. We have house groups, and our head chiefs are the elected people to speak on behalf of all our house members.

You know, as far as that elected consultation goes, I could see it going nowhere. Do you have any comment on that?

[1820]

R. Austin (Chair): I can comment on behalf of the committee, just to tell you that we don't know what

goes on within the internal politics of any particular band. That's not really part of our mandate.

What I can tell you, though, is that when we were in Kitkatla and Prince Rupert, we heard some concerns expressed very similar to the concerns that you're bringing up here. There was a sense of division within the Kitkatla band, and those concerns have also been heard by all of us here. Those also become part of our deliberations when we sit down and decide what recommendations we want to bring forward. We have heard those concerns, and they've been noted by all members of the panel here. You're not bringing anything particularly new to us. We did hear them the other day.

B. Bush: I notice that the provincial government doesn't recognize anybody else's concerns. They seem to have a policy just to ignore those concerns and go with the elective mandate that you have.

R. Austin (Chair): What I can tell you is this. We are a committee that has to report back to the Legislature, and we will make all of our observations throughout our community deliberations part of our recommendations. Then the government will decide what they want to do. But the things that you are bringing to the table are things that we have been witness to in the past three days.

My co-Chair would also like to add a comment.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): We're not trying to cut you off, like someone else is trying to cut you off there. That's for sure.

I don't think it's proper for us as a committee to talk about what agreements the elected chief may have entered into there and all the details of that. You should talk to him. We've heard your concerns and other members of the band, and we'll represent all those positions.

I don't think it's our place here to comment on the validity of agreements and so forth between a band. I think you could approach the elected chief there, and he can tell you, if he wishes, how to do that. I can tell you that we've heard both sides of the argument here. We're listening to all of those concerns, and we intend to take them all forward as part of our report.

B. Bush: Well, those agreements are going to affect everybody up here on the Skeena River and beyond. I do feel that we should have some sort of answer. This is the answer I usually get from provincial government: "It's not our concern, and you're going to have to bring it up with the other guy." Well, he's not up here, and I don't think he's going to make himself too available to come up here and discuss this. So we'd like to hear your opinion on this.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I'm just saying we're not party to that agreement, and we don't feel we can disclose terms of that agreement. That would be my feeling.

R. Austin (Chair): We are certainly mindful of all the things we've heard in the last three days. We can't make excuses for or speak on behalf of Clifford White, who is the elected band chief. I just want you to know that we have heard what you are saying to us, told by many other people. That will become part of our deliberations when we come back with recommendations. I hope that satisfies you.

B. Bush: So when is this deliberation going to happen?

R. Austin (Chair): We will have to have an interim report, probably in the fall, and then we will have to have our final report before the House by May 2007.

B. Bush: And who is all included in the consultation?

R. Austin (Chair): All ten members of the committee will make a joint report.

B. Bush: I mean, like consultation for the northern people?

R. Austin (Chair): We have gone to many communities — Campbell River, Tofino.... We have been to Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitwanga and here today. We're coming back to do more community meetings in the fall, and we'll be going to another whole bunch of communities, including the north coast. We've heard from a lot of people, and we will continue to hear from a lot more people before we make our final report.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): People can submit written submissions if they can't attend, and I think we've received over 140 written submissions. That will all form part of our discussions.

[1825]

R. Austin (Chair): I would now like to call David Loewen.

A Voice: I just want to make a suggestion to throw back your political process. How do you think about us to have a vote and overthrow this, as an aboriginal — the bands get together and have a vote to overthrow these fish farms? Is that a consideration? Would you consider that?

R. Austin (Chair): Sorry. I'm not quite following what your question is.

A Voice: There are a number of bands that are against the fish farms, and from my study in the political way, the way you guys make your decisions is that 50 plus one will overthrow that decision. For us to do that would be a good idea, because we are a nation, and we do need to speak and cover ourselves, protect ourselves. I'm bringing up that idea of a vote — of throwing this out.

R. Austin (Chair): I'll leave it up to you to decide what to do once we have made our presentation to the government. What we are responsible for doing is to gather as much information as we can and to then sit down and talk about it and discuss all the things we've heard during our time — both written submissions and people coming and speaking to us.

We will present that to the House, and then the government of the day will make a decision. Once the government of the day makes the decision, it's entirely up to individuals and those who are organized as first nations or whatever to decide what their next step will be. But let's wait and see what happens.

A Voice: Okay. Thank you.

R. Austin (Chair): You're most welcome. Is David Loewen present?

D. Loewen: Good evening, chiefs, elders, ladies of high esteem, panel members, ladies and gentlemen. My name is David Loewen. Currently I live between Smithers and Telkwa in the Wet'suwet'en territories. I was born in the Haisla territories in Kitimat and raised in the Haida territories on Haida Gwaii.

I apologize for not having this completely organized. I was quite surprised to see the call for submissions and this panel come out. I've sat in front of a few panels, even in my young years here, and unfortunately, I'm rather skeptical and cynical of them, to say the least. I must say that in reading the *Hansard* comments of your early meetings today, I became even more skeptical and cynical of these sorts of panels. As you've heard earlier this evening, it's a very emotional issue. These sorts of things, when you're dealing with the coastal community and with watersheds, are very emotional issues. I'll try and keep my emotions in check and my cynicism as well.

Part of that cynicism comes from a few years ago. I sat in front of the Garry Wouters panel. I'm sure some of you may have remembered that — when he was looking at forest policy, and the NDP was in charge, and forest policy was going to be amended in B.C. Garry Wouters sat there on his panel and listened up front. I appreciate you rolling your eyes, because that's exactly what I did when I sat at the panel as well.

I gave an impassioned speech. I was in my early 20s at the time. Mr. Wouters came up to me afterwards, and he says: "I really appreciate what you had to say. That's very important, what you had to say." I'd spent weeks preparing a presentation. He says: "I'll really make sure this gets back to Victoria to the government." I thought: "Wow, I've had enough impact. This is flattering."

Well, what happened to the Garry Wouters panel? Can any of you guys tell me? Nothing. It died. I'm listening here this evening, and I hear again: "We're here to listen, and we'll take it back." But I just have some quick questions I want to get in — I am sensitive to time as well — just in points of order.

The last panel I sat in front of was the offshore oil and gas panel. Actually, my cynicism dropped a little

because the bias on the panel was rather surprising. We had a National Energy Board member who was the chair of that, and the previous mayor of Prince Rupert was one of the panel members, as well, who had very clearly spoken out in favour of offshore oil and gas. The third panel member was a partner in a law firm that represented oil and gas clients. They said they weren't biased. But in the end, they said that 75 percent of people in B.C. do not support lifting the moratorium on offshore oil and gas.

[1830]

I wonder why this panel didn't look at that — Shane, you were asking for recommendations — and go out and survey what people actually have to say, yes or no, rather than looking at this, commenting on the regulatory regime as it compares to other jurisdictions. Where do I find that information? I couldn't even find your call for proposals. I found it in a Google search, but it was third or fourth or fifth down, I think on the second page. How am I supposed to comment on that?

Then I ask, as well: where are the social and cultural aspects of your terms of reference, which I'm looking at right here? You're hearing that quite clearly. I sit here listening to very impassioned speeches from elders and chiefs and very respected people in first nations communities, and I wonder: where is the social and cultural...? When you sit down and deliberate, what weight's going to be given to those impassioned speeches? What weight's going to be given to my emotional appeal to say that I want no fish farms because I love salmon swimming up the river just because they're salmon in the river?

I don't want Atlantic salmon swimming up the rivers, because I live on the Pacific coast, not the Atlantic. If I wanted Atlantic salmon in my rivers, I'd go live on the Miramichi. Where is the weight going to be delivered in there? Why would I come and spend emotional — and I already get emotional and infuriated about this — energy along with these other people when there is nothing in here that says what weight you're going to give to any of these? Are you going to give more weight if I said I'm a PhD from Harvard? Or are you going to give more weight to an elder that has lived here forever and carries the stories of their people for thousands and thousands of years and takes that as a very heavy and very important responsibility? Where does the weight lie? Can any of you answer that for me? Do you give more weight to a PhD, or do you give more weight to a 30-year-old who sits here in front of you?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I'll take a run at that.

None of us are PhDs. We're citizens elected to represent our local constituencies, and we represent a cross-section of B.C. in doing this. We're here to hear all stories, and I think all opinions are important to us. What weight we give in the end will depend on the deliberations, but it's going to be a challenge to balance all those factors and come up with something that we feel recommends what we've heard from all sides.

D. Loewen: My next question is: why was the social and cultural left out of your terms of reference?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): We didn't make the terms of reference. We agreed to work by them.

D. Loewen: And you've been having some troubles with those, haven't you? According to the *Hansard* comments, it's been quite a challenge to get the government agencies to sit and give you....

R. Austin (Chair): That's all been sorted out now. Since that time the government agencies have been very respectful and have come. In fact, the last time we met in Vancouver, where we'd requested five officials from the provincial level to come, they brought 11. So things have been going very well since then.

D. Loewen: Do you understand who manages what in the aquaculture industry in B.C.?

R. Austin (Chair): Yes, we do now.

D. Loewen: You do. Of all branches and who is responsible for what inspections and those sort of things?

R. Austin (Chair): We even have a paper breakdown of all the responsibilities.

D. Loewen: How long did it take for you to gather that understanding as a panel?

R. Austin (Chair): You're sort of delving into stuff that we should be deliberating about. This isn't really an opportunity for you to be questioning us; it's for us to actually come and listen to you. We'd like to hear your opinions. You can hear ours when we write them down in May, 2007.

D. Loewen: Okay.

A Voice: How about an answer?

R. Austin (Chair): That was my answer.

A Voice: How about a real answer?

R. Austin (Chair): That was my real answer.

D. Loewen: Great. Okay. So you can see, then, my challenge if I wanted to give you proper.... I understand this is a witness, but if I was to testify in front of you.... You would hope if I was to give you recommendations in terms of reference number four, B.C.'s regulatory regime.... If you guys had a hard time trying to understand what the regulatory regime is in B.C., then I would have a real challenge as Joe Public sitting in Smithers on a telephone connection on my Internet trying to understand that.

It's a bit of a challenge in the north here. I'm still, again, curious what sort of weight is given to that and whether it's a UBC researcher at the aquaculture school there or whether it's going to be people here. But I guess my question has been answered.

Switching gears a little bit. Again, I'm trying to be respectful of time and going to Shane asking for suggestions, actually. I'm going to tell you a quick story, and I'm going to try and tie it together. I worked for environmental groups for quite some time in my early 20s, and I got very frustrated. I worked doing stream restoration for many years on Haida Gwaii, and there was a great time when the watershed restoration program was around. Millions and millions of dollars went in, and then the HR set up a program through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and all this money was pumped in.

[1835]

It was on a five-year time span. You guys probably know from all the experts you've seen that a salmon life cycle is anywhere from three to six years — maybe eight years. I got really frustrated with the environmental approach to things, and I got really frustrated with the government approach to things. There was no long-term vision at all in it, as you've probably heard as well.

I got sick and tired of confrontation. I got sick and tired of getting angry at panels. I got tired of hearing government officials saying, "I'm here to listen," and then watching them get voted out. I've seen enough Liberals do that. They got voted out, and now what?

I was sick of the confrontation and decided I wanted to have some conversations with people about salmon. I feel very strongly about salmon. I caught my first salmon when I was three years old in the Tlell River on Haida Gwaii, and I still fish now. I got on my bike, and I figured out where the range of Pacific salmon is in North America. I started in Inuvik and I rode to Los Angeles. It ended up being 10,000 kilometres. I just wanted to find out how people felt about salmon: pro, con — any of those sorts of things.

It was really clear to me that people just love salmon because they're salmon. There are cultural reasons; there are spiritual reasons; there are economic reasons. People just want salmon because they're there. They've always been there, and they should always be there, and they probably will be. They've been around for two million years. They'll be around for two million more. Nothing's going to kill them off. They seem to be rather hardy.

One of the things that taught me was that it was about relationships. Again, going to the suggestions. I sit here, and I look at a polarized panel. We've got the NDP on this side; we've got the Liberals on this side. So I'm sitting here saying: "Well, this is a rather interesting process." You guys are bickering and arguing with each other in your in-camera sessions, which I can't read on the *Hansard* comments, and I really wonder.... The government.... When you put the recommendations in your report at the end of this, they don't actually have to listen to it, do they?

R. Austin (Chair): Sorry?

D. Loewen: When you do your report, when you're finished with all of these impassioned speeches that you're hearing up and down the coast, you could say, "This is what we recommend," and they could say: "No, we're just going to approve ten fish farms in the mouth of the Skeena."

R. Austin (Chair): We're going to make our recommendations and bring them back to the Legislature. It will then be for the government of the day to decide which recommendations to put into practice. Obviously, it's our fervent hope — I mean, we are all working hard at this, and we don't want our work to be for nought — and our expectation that whatever recommendations we bring forward, the government will take notice of those.

D. Loewen: I appreciate that, and I can see it tonight as well. I'll try and back off a little bit rather than being so in-your-face.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Let me just try a bit of that again, on a couple of points. We don't expect everybody to comment on every aspect of the terms of reference — and that's for sure — but there are people who have a specific interest in the technical details, and we take that information.

Here it's more an issue of: "We don't want the fish farms here." We're hearing that loud and clear from everyone, and therefore, that will play an important role, I'm sure, in our final report. But you'll also note that the panel is balanced — biased, if you want — anyway towards the opposition. I think the government was trying to send a signal that we want this to be as open as we can. They wouldn't have sent us out here, and I don't think we'd have agreed to go, if we thought this was all going to be a waste of time.

But not everyone agrees. Some people will say: "You didn't listen." Well, we did listen. We just didn't happen to agree with both sides of the argument at the same time. It will put some tough choices to the government, and it won't please everybody, I'm sure, no matter what we do.

D. Loewen: But your government, which you're part of, could still say, "Thanks but no thanks" — right? That is a possibility.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Well, they'll say, "Thanks, but no thanks," to some people, I'm sure, because we can't please both sides of the argument.

D. Loewen: I mean your report in general. They could say: "Thank you for your wonderful work, panel members, and for the time that you put in." But they could say: "No, thank you."

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I doubt that that's it. They wouldn't have bothered doing this. This isn't a PR exercise. We're here to listen and report.

D. Loewen: I don't doubt that, but you haven't answered the question. They could say, "No, thanks" — right?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Certainly. Yeah, sure.

D. Loewen: Okay. Great.

One of the things that has become quite clear in the terms of reference and from looking over some of the *Hansard* comments, as well, is that the discussion is not yes or no. The discussion is about the regulatory framework that guides aquaculture. There is no yes-or-no discussion going on here, is there?

No comment.

D. Jarvis: You should look at the more positive things, like we are. We're here to do our job, find out what the people want, how they're doing it, and we'll act accordingly.

D. Loewen: But yes or no is not part of the discussion, is it?

D. Jarvis: How could it be a yes-or-no discussion? You'd get nowhere there, would you?

D. Loewen: Well, many of the people that were here tonight said no — clearly. And many people in Prince Rupert, and I'm sure many in Kitwanga....

R. Austin (Chair): David, can I make a comment here?

D. Loewen: Yes.

[1840]

R. Austin (Chair): We could sit here all night with you and get into a yes-and-no discussion. The other people who would like to speak and present their point of view will not be heard then. Maybe you could just give us your point of view, and then that will become part of our deliberations. That will show your respect to the other people who want to speak.

D. Loewen: I understand that. I guess that answers my question then. From reading the *Hansard* comments as well, yes or no is not part of the discussion here. That's unfortunate, because many people have clearly said no.

Going back to what I was saying, when I was in the Yukon I sat briefly on the Canadian portion of the Yukon River panel, which is part of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. I sat as an adviser there. On the Yukon River there are only 300,000 fish that return up. Eighty percent of them spawn in the Yukon, and 90 percent of them are caught in the U.S. Somehow or another, there are over 92 first nations that live on that river. They have an agreement that works. They've got an investment from the U.S., and they've figured it out.

Why don't you go to those areas and figure out how to sit down, rather than saying that you're going

to listen when in actual fact there is a very distinct possibility that nothing might come out of this panel? Try and come up with a more collaborative process. I can see that you guys are bickering amongst yourselves in your own meetings about who should have been presenting what, and what was miscommunicated to who and what the minister was supposed to.... Then you were going to summon people. Look at a more collaborative process where you sit down with all of the first nations.

The other part of the problem I have is that you say you're not having private meetings. Yet you're going on tours of fish farms, but you won't meet with a first nation privately along the way. That is a real problem. Your process alone is flawed. So it's really hard to sit down and feel like my comments are actually going to go somewhere. There's a lot of information out there about collaborative processes with many, many polarized arguments such as this, where they've sat down, figured out agreements and have actually gone somewhere with it, rather than saying, "Yeah, we'll take your comment," and then sweeping it under the rug.

A couple of comments to finish on. Where does the \$600 million that aquaculture produces in B.C...? Where does that number come from? I can't remember who it was, but one of you four corrected somebody — I think it was in Tofino — to say: "She said \$6 million; it's \$600 million." Where does that number come from?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Agriculture Canada stats.

D. Loewen: Okay. There was also a quote in there that said that fish-farmed fish are the number one agricultural export in B.C. Is that right?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): That's what they tell us.

D. Loewen: Well, I'd actually correct that and say that marijuana is by far.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Well, I would only say recorded exports.

D. Loewen: It actually is about a \$7 billion part of the GDP. So if employment was the real concern here, then why don't we take a look at something like that rather than touting the numbers of employment in aquaculture?

One of the arguments that keeps coming up is: why don't we farm fish, because it takes pressure off of wild stocks? Well, not the case. I don't buy it, because there are too many people who depend on the wild stocks. Maybe I'll meet you in Smithers if you come to discuss some more of that — some of the scientific proof.

What is more valuable on this panel? Is it a commercial fisherman's job, or is it an aquaculture job, and which one holds more value? I think you're going to have a really tough time in trying to determine which holds more value. Apparently we're going to take the

pressure off the wild stocks, and everybody's going to work in aquaculture. These are some of the arguments that are being put forward by some of the proponents on the other side. I don't quite buy it.

One last thing. You heard a comment earlier this evening about Atlantic salmon being caught up the Morice. There's more than that one story; there are several more. When I was riding across the Peel River, which is a tributary to the Mackenzie River up north, there was an 80-year-old woman, an elder, who had her net set. I asked her, "Have you caught salmon here?" because the stories were just coming out that climate change was forcing salmon further and further to the northeast and around that area. She said: "Well, I've been catching them for 90 years. No one's ever asked me."

I just wonder how many streams there actually are. Atlantic salmon are already reproducing rather well. Yet we're still bickering about the regulatory regime when we've already got Atlantic salmon reproducing in our rivers.

To finish, the economic reasons don't matter to me. I just say no to the fish farms because of the cultural and spiritual power that they have and how important they are to people. When I lie in bed at night, I have comfort that somewhere between Inuvik and L.A. — it doesn't matter what month, and it doesn't matter what day — there's a salmon swimming upstream to spawn, and it's wild. That gives me comfort. I just hope that I don't have to think there's Atlantic salmon swimming up the river that I live on.

Thank you for your time. I apologize to the speakers behind me that I've taken up so much of their time.

[1845]

R. Austin (Chair): I'd like to call Cristina Soto to the witness table.

C. Soto: Hello. I know it's very late in the day. I want to make one fairly simple point, and it echoes what Barbara Clifton had to say earlier. There are a number of places where aquaculture could be done. To put it in the mouth of a river like this goes against something called the precautionary principle. A milder version of that is called the precautionary approach, and that's that you don't do things — you don't meddle out there — if it's of high risk.

I have a PhD. It's not from Harvard. It's from Simon Fraser University in resource and environmental management, for what it's worth, because I don't think it's any bigger a deal than anyone else.

R. Austin (Chair): We don't trust people with PhDs.

C. Soto: Yeah, exactly.

Nonetheless, I did do aquaculture research for about ten years. I now work for Allen Gottesfeld at the Skeena Fisheries Commission, but in my past life I've done aquaculture research. I am not anti-fish farming. I find it quite black and white. When I moved to B.C.... I

now understand much better why one can be anti-Atlantic salmon farming on the coast of British Columbia. Just to give you some context. Sometimes it's helpful, because these things get so polarized, and people think, well, you're just an environmentalist, and you're this and you're that. It's sad to see that perhaps there's some of that happening on the panel.

You know, even the bare minimum.... Like, why there? That's all I want to say. If you're going to do it, do it somewhere else, for heaven's sake. And you've heard enough from the folks here today about why.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you, Cristina.

The last witness for this evening is Patrick Allen Mitchell, if you'd like to come up.

Interjection.

R. Austin (Chair): Sorry. Patrick Albert Mitchell. My apologies.

P. Mitchell: Good evening. I wish to thank the Gitksan chiefs and the Wet'suwet'en chiefs that are here in the Gitksan feast hall. We are in the Gitksan feast hall, and you know why it's a feast hall. This is where the Gitksan do their business. I welcome you on this territory.

Now, I'm listening to Scott Fraser. He said that what we say up here in the upper reaches of the Skeena River, the marsh river, the Bulkley River, the Fulton River doesn't mean a damn thing to what's going on, on the coast.

Now, let me tell you something else. I was at a Crown Spencer commission, a royal commission, and they spent \$27 million on it. I don't even know what the commission was all about. That's how significant it was. But I got up there, and I said my piece, because I was the only native, I think, in the hall at the time.

I want to ask you: how much is this commission costing the public of British Columbia?

R. Austin (Chair): It's public knowledge, but this commission has a budget of about \$350,000. That includes a contract, which we just agreed to yesterday, to have an outside company do an economic study of the aquaculture industry. It will certainly come in far less than \$400,000 in total.

[1850]

P. Mitchell: Okay, and you're all getting paid for it, and every time you go to a community....

R. Austin (Chair): No, we are all on salaries. Whether we work eight hours a day or 16 hours a day, we get paid exactly the same.

P. Mitchell: Okay. Well, what I want to say is that royal commission, that Spencer commission.... You've heard about the Spencer commission — \$27 million. What did that accomplish? Not a damn thing.

Now, a lot of you are MLAs of that fictional corporation called British Columbia. At my back here are the hereditary chiefs of this land — the Gitksan land, Wet'suwet'en, Dakelh and Sekani land — where I come from. You're not listening to them. That's what I'm trying to say.

I want to tell the chiefs here that the Heiltsuk Nation last year took the Supreme Court of Canada to court over the fish farm at Ocean Falls. They lost. They lost on their territory. I knew they were going to lose, and I think what's going to happen with this commission here isn't going to amount to a hill of beans.

I heard a gentleman, a hereditary chief, mention that we are going to take you to court. We're going to take Canada to court. Well, let me tell you something, chiefs. I hate to spill the beans, but you're going to lose because you're fighting a fictional corporation, and they won't listen to you.

Where's the DFO here? I don't see one DFO here, but if I was to go fishing on the river, sure, there's a DFO hiding behind every tree. Where in the hell are they here?

You know, I think what this gentleman Scott Fraser said.... You don't listen to the people up in the headwaters of the Skeena and the Bulkley, the Nechako, the Fulton, the Fraser River, the Stewart River, Nadina River, Stellako River or the Chilco River. You're not listening to us up here. I mentioned before that the moose and the deer.... When they travel in our territory to find food, that's our spirit. If I go to kill a moose, I'm eating its spirit. My spirit is with them.

It's the same with the salmon. It's raised in our territory up here in Babine Lake, Fulton Lake, Stewart Lake, Morice Lake, Nadina Lake on the Nechako River that it's down. They go out to sea. Wherever they travel, they go out to sea. The humpbacks come back every two years. The sockeye come back every four years. The chum salmon come back every five or six years, and the spring salmon come back in four- or five- or six-year cycles.

They always come back, and they come back to the rivers where they were born. When they come back to our shores, if I catch them at the mouth of the river, I'm eating that fish. I'm eating their spirit, wherever they've travelled. That's part of me that's already out there. How are you going to protect that? I want to see some protection on that.

I want you to understand that we are not here just shooting our mouths off because we've got nothing else to do. We are here to try and educate you to listen to what we have to say. I've heard some speakers come up here, and they were very, very good in what they were saying. I know a lot of my native friends, most of them, fish on the Skeena River. I did for 45 years. I grew up on the Skeena.

[1855]

There are ten of you on the panel. Maybe you asked the chiefs here one or two questions, but other people that came up here.... Each one of you asked them the same question ten times. I don't want you to ask me any questions.

I want to say to my people: this panel here, as far as I'm concerned, is a farce. You're not listening to us. We

can take you to court, and we'll lose. Your court, your common-law system, is called the execution of law. If I try to beat it, you'll execute me. That's your law. That's not my law or my people's law. My people's law — we live by the rule of law. What we say, what comes out of our breath, is the gospel truth.

Remember, you're in our feast hall here. Thank you very much.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): To be perfectly correct on the record, I have to correct.... Other MLAs only collect their regular MLA salary, whatever that is. However, the Chair and the vice-Chair do receive extra remuneration. I receive an extra \$3,000 a year to be vice-Chair, and Robin....

R. Austin (Chair): I receive an extra \$6,000.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Right. So let's just be clear about that.

R. Austin (Chair): It's also on the public record.

S. Fraser: I just want to clarify. I did not endorse the fact that nations upriver are not being consulted. I visited with the Shuswap Nation's leadership — five different nations in the Shuswap area — and they told me they were not being consulted on the Thompson. I went and inquired in estimates and found out that was true. I was just passing that information on, because it was asked of me.

R. Austin (Chair): I would like to just let people know for a matter of information that we had lots of concerns that our deadline for submissions to the committee was coming up, and people did not have time at this time of year to present or write their submissions to send them in. Our original deadline was July 1. The committee has decided to extend that deadline to October 31 of this year to enable people who are too busy at this time of the year to be able to put pen to paper or to be on their computer and send their submissions. That gives plenty more time for people to be able to send their written submissions to the committee.

At this point I would like to thank all of you for coming here and attending today. I would like to thank Gitanmaax for allowing us to be here in their feast hall. I would like to thank those who have taken the time and trouble to come and make presentations today, as well as all of you who have come to listen.

I hope that when our final report does come out, we will somehow reduce some of the cynicism that has been presented to us by the last couple of people here, and that all of you will feel it has been a worthwhile process. Those of us on the committee certainly do feel that we are fulfilling a very worthwhile job, and we hope to do it to the best of our ability.

I'd now like a motion to adjourn.

Thank you very much. These hearings are now closed.

The committee adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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