



Second Session, 38th Parliament

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Klemtu

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Issue No. 27

ROBIN AUSTIN, MLA, CHAIR

ISSN 1718-1054

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE**

Klemtu
Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Chair: * Robin Austin (Skeena NDP)

Deputy Chair: * Ron Cantelon (Nanaimo-Parksville L)

Members: * Al Horning (Kelowna-Lake Country 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: Craig James

Committee Staff: Brant Felker (Committee Research Analyst)

Witnesses: Larry Greba
Les Neasloss
Ross Neasloss
Ian Roberts
Chief Archie Robinson Sr. (Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation)
Ben Robinson
Gary Robinson
Wayne Starr

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MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE



Tuesday, November 14, 2006
11:15 a.m.
Kitasoo-Xai'xais Government House
Kitasoo-Xai'xais Nation, Klemtu, B.C.

Present: Robin Austin, MLA (Chair); Ron Cantelon, MLA (Deputy Chair); Scott Fraser, MLA; Al Horning, MLA; John Yap, MLA

Unavoidably Absent: Daniel Jarvis, MLA; Gary Coons, MLA; Gregor Robertson, MLA; Shane Simpson, MLA; Claire Trevena, MLA

Others Present: Brant Felker, Research Analyst

1. The Chair called the committee to order at 11:15 a.m.
2. Opening statement by the Chair, Robin Austin, MLA
3. Opening remarks by Chief Archie Robinson Sr., Kitasoo-Xai'xais Nation
4. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
 - 1) Larry Greba
 - 2) Chief Archie Robinson Sr.
 - 3) Ben Robinson
 - 4) Ross Neasloss
 - 5) Les Neasloss
 - 6) Gary Robinson
 - 7) Wayne Starr
 - 8) Ian Roberts
5. The Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair at 1:41 p.m.

Robin Austin, MLA
Chair

Craig James
Clerk Assistant and
Clerk of Committees

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2006

The committee met at 11:15 a.m.

[R. Austin in the chair.]

R. Austin (Chair): Good morning. My name is Robin Austin. I'm Chair of the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture. I'm the New Democratic member for Skeena in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone here to this committee's public hearings in Klemtu. It's our pleasure to be in your community and to hear directly from you on the issue that has been referred to this all-party legislative committee.

Today's meeting of the committee is a public meeting which will be recorded and transcribed by Hansard Services. A copy of today's transcripts, along with the minutes of this meeting, will be printed and will be made available on the committee's website at www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/aquaculture. In addition to the meeting transcript, a live audio webcast of this meeting is produced and available on the committee's website to enable interested listeners to hear the proceedings as they occur. If this is not technically feasible, an archived copy of the audio broadcast is still available on the committee's website in the days to come.

Let me also, for the benefit of all witnesses, read out the committee's mandate. The Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture was reissued the following terms of reference by the Legislative Assembly on February 20, 2006: that the committee be empowered to examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to sustainable aquaculture in British Columbia and in particular, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to consider the economic and environmental impacts of the aquaculture industry in B.C.; the economic impact of aquaculture on B.C.'s coastal and isolated communities; sustainable options for aquaculture in B.C. that balance economic goals with environmental imperatives, focusing on the interaction between aquaculture, wild fish and the marine environment; as well as to look into B.C.'s regulatory regime as it compares to other jurisdictions.

The committee is to report to the House no later than May 31, 2007. This committee reports directly to the House and not to the government. The committee is unique in the Commonwealth, as an opposition member holds the Chair while a government private member holds the Deputy Chair position. The majority of members hail from the opposition as well.

Accompanying us today are Wendy Collisson and Doug Baker. They will be recording what's said during this hearing and making sure that it goes on to *Hansard*. Beside me is our Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees, Craig James. At the front of the hall there is Brant Felker, our research assistant, who can answer any questions that people may have.

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

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

A. Horning: I'm Al Horning, MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): I'm Ron Cantelon, Deputy Chair, from Nanaimo-Parksville. I want to say that it's really good to get here after being up in that lovely Goose. It was wonderful to arrive. I've got to tell you that.

S. Fraser: I'm Scott Fraser. I'm the MLA for Alberni-Qualicum, and I enjoyed the ride up here too. Thanks for welcoming us.

R. Austin (Chair): Now I would like to call upon witnesses for this hearing to tell us about their perspective on sustainable aquaculture in British Columbia and what this committee needs to be mindful of when it reports to the House. I would like to begin by inviting the first witness, Archie Robinson Sr., hereditary chief of the Kitsoo. Please, the floor is yours.

Opening Statements

A. Robinson: First, I welcome you here on behalf of the two tribes that amalgamated here in the latter part of the 1700s and the early 1800s. The tribes are the Kitsoo and the Xai'xais, the two tribes that came together. We've been here since we moved here.

On behalf of the two tribes, I welcome you to our territory. I hope that through our deliberations today we come to some resolution — whatever the committee is looking for. I welcome you again on behalf of the Kitsoo/Xai'xais into our territory. You see our territory map over there.... That's our territory map. That's our land use map you see over there.

[1120]

I welcome you again, on behalf of the Kitsoo/Xai'xais. Glad that you have made it in this good weather, and I hope today we can come to some good resolution in order for us to work together to make this a better place to live for our people. That's what we are trying to do here since our arrival — trying to make it a good place for our people to live. We've been working hard at it, trying hard to make it a good place to live.

Again, I welcome you, and I hope your stay here and your deliberations today will be done in harmony. Work together and learn to love one another. That's the key. Learn to work together. If we can't do that, we won't accomplish anything of what we want done.

Again, on behalf of the Kitsoo/Xai'xais chiefs, I welcome you. Thank you for coming.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you.
Larry, are you going to make a presentation?

Interjection.

R. Austin (Chair): I would ask each person that comes to speak today — whoever decides they would like to say something — to please give their name into the record so that Hansard has a record of who is speaking.

The floor is open to you, Larry.

[1125]

Presentations

L. Greba: My name is Larry Greba, and I work for the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people and the Kitasoo Band Council. I was brought in, in 1986. Actually, I came in with DFO at the time — Department of Fisheries and Oceans — and in 1987 I started to work with the band as well.

I'd like to give you guys, because you weren't able to get out to the farmsite, just a bit of the history of the farming operations in the Kitasoo/Xai'xais territory. There are about 15 or 20 slides. I apologize. I made copies the last time around. I will make copies for you all. Normally I'd like to have them in front of you, but somehow I didn't bring them back. I made them for the first trip around. I will get you all copies and can give you a copy of the presentation if you wish.

This is actually the Jackson Pass site, the one that you probably would have stopped at on the way in. If you look across, this is Cone Island, and Klemtu is sitting just on the other end of the island about a kilometre away. So that's what you missed. You actually just flew directly up Finlayson Channel when you were coming up into Klemtu today.

As you can see, the Kitasoo/Xai'xais piece of the world is probably one of the most remote coastal regions in British Columbia. One of the things that makes it unique is that if you look at where we're at — in terms of almost equidistant between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy — that has created a situation here over time where the economic opportunities, especially in the forest industry, have not really developed in this area as much as they have close to Port Hardy and Prince Rupert.

Maybe that's just due to remoteness, the physical distance to get to trees, get to market, etc. It's a very challenging place to do business and to create an economy. One of the things to realize is that it's probably in a lot of ways one of the most remote parts of British Columbia.

I don't have to show you pictures, but this is how Klemtu looks on a nice sunny day. It looked like this yesterday. There were big puffy clouds, and there was snow on the mountaintops. Obviously, you guys had a chance to visit the processing plant, which I think Ben will talk more about a little later.

One of the things that we like to present in this presentation is that the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation is still very reliant on marine resources for their food requirements. It's one of the communities on the coast that still goes out and actually does the hunting and gathering of foods. There are still the seasonal rounds where people collect seaweed in the spring. Then they'll go on to harvesting salmon, particularly sockeye

salmon, which is a lot of what you see here. Then they'll go on to picking clams through the winter months, and catching halibut and groundfish. It's still very much a big part of the community.

The herring fishery, as well, in the spring is still really big. It's one of the few communities on the coast where that still occurs. It's becoming less and less frequent that you see it in other communities. Again, I think it's due a lot to the remoteness of the community, the fact that they've been quite isolated for a number of years.

Another interesting fact that people don't realize is that Klemtu has a band population of around 500. There are around 400 who live on reserve, which is totally opposite to most other communities where you might have 80 percent of the people living off reserve. In this case you've got 80 percent of the people from this community who actually live on reserve. This is partly due to the remoteness and partly due to the economic opportunities that have been created over time as well and, as we've said in the past, against all odds.

Like many other communities in the north and central coast, the community in terms of modern economy through the '20s, '30s, '40s, '50s, '60s and '70s was built on the commercial salmon industry. I know that when I came here in 1986 for the first time, there were about 14 gill-netters and a seine boat. The docks were full of commercial fishing vessels. Unfortunately, what has happened up and down the coast... This basically shows you a graph through the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s within this area of what's happened to the populations of coho, chum, sockeye.

[1130]

I know if Percy Starr were here today... I spoke with him last night, and that's one of the things he wanted us to stress strongly — the fact that this area probably lost its salmon a lot sooner than other areas. For whatever reason, it was fished very heavily, especially through the '50s, '60s and '70s. It doesn't have a big feeder river like the Skeena or the Fraser, which sort of dominates the commercial fishing industry now.

A lot of these smaller streams — and there are over a hundred of them in the territory — have all been very, very depressed over the last 30 or 40 years to the point where commercial fishing, because they weren't on a major migratory path for major runs of salmon, basically died out about ten to 15 years ago. Now if you look on the dock, there's one gill-netter, but it's not licensed. There are no licences held by individual fishermen in Klemtu anymore. They were all sold in the various buybacks over the last ten or 12 years.

When I first came in 1986, working for the salmon enhancement program and the SEP hatchery that they have up the river here as well, Percy Starr, who was chief councillor at the time and was band manager and has been band manager for 40 years — unfortunately, he's not here today, but I know he wanted to speak — basically approached me back in 1986, knowing that I knew something about salmon and about growing fish, and said: "Look, we would like to get into salmon farming. We heard it's something that's up and coming.

We can see that we're losing our resources within this territory. We can really no longer make a living fishing for salmon."

Back in '86 there was not a lot of controversy around the industry. It was an industry that was showing promise in the south. Ironically, the B.C. Ab Fish Commission commissioned a study in '85 to identify ten first nations communities that had the best opportunities for salmon farming. Kitasoo was selected, and Klemtu was selected as one of those communities.

As a result, they actually put together a business plan on behalf of those ten communities to do a 200-tonne farm. But of course, they plunked this thing onto Percy's desk at the time and said: "It's going to cost \$1.6 million to get it off the ground." For a small remote community, those just weren't dollars that they could handle. So Percy said: "Well, how can we do this so it's a bit less costly? We don't have that sort of money. We want to see whether we can do it."

What was done was that we set it up through.... We had some federal funding through HRDC to hire three trainees, and I brought in a manager who had experience in salmon farming. We actually had the fellows physically build 50-by-50-foot net pens using logs and a sawmill that was actually just down below us where they milled up all that material.

Not having a lot of money, we went out, and we were careful in how we did it. The first year was a training year. Within that year I came back to Percy and said: "Percy, look. People really like this work. This is something that's going to work here." People like being out on the boats. They like working with the nets. They like working with ropes. Those are all the skills that people have had for years and years working in the commercial fishing industry.

We went to a production level in 1989. We put together a business plan. We levered money from a couple of federal agencies. The band at the time was making a lot of money in the herring-spawn-on-kelp industry, so they were able to put \$350,000 into this operation over the first two or three years to basically buy the equipment and get it going. We ended up building this on a 75-tonne-per-year basis.

The bottom line is that we started in '88, and we did very well in terms of growth, in terms of survival. The only thing that was working against us in the early '90s was that the price of salmon was starting to plummet — about '90, '91 and '92. Basically, the writing was on the wall. Based on our business plan, we were actually breaking even or making money, but as soon as the price started to drop, we realized there was no way that we were going to be able to keep up with the major players in the industry. Many of them were multi-nationals, and they were already starting to buy up smaller operations in B.C. in the early '90s.

We made a business decision in '93 or '94 — the band did — to close the farm down and look for a partner, because it's something that was working. People enjoyed the work. Of course, we were processing the fish in the band's processing plant over here. So it was pretty much vertically integrated.

We had an opportunity to work with a couple of different companies from about '95 to '98, other than Marine Harvest. We weren't successful, but we negotiated for quite a length of time with these companies. They were very interested in coming into the area. At the end of the day they offered us a deal to do a partnership, but it didn't meet our needs.

[1135]

We ran into Marine Harvest in early '97 or late '96. Basically, after a year and a half we were able to hammer out an agreement that worked for the community and worked for the company as well. The first thing we did was bring in North Island College. We set up a training program for six months because we only had four or five employees in the old farm. When Marine Harvest came in, they had to expand because they obviously couldn't survive on a 75-tonne farm. It had to be a larger scale in order to get the economies of scale for working in such a remote area.

We were able to train a dozen people. You see some of the same faces here today. They're just ten years older than they were in the photographs. People that have worked in the industry.... I'm sure some of them will actually speak today as well.

Just to show you where we've come from with Marine Harvest over the last seven or eight years.... The overall economy right now or employment by sector.... If you look you can see that salmon farming actually is close to 50 percent of the overall economy in Klemtu right now. That's split between about 14 full-time jobs on the farmsite and then the rest of the jobs in the processing plant here.

Right now we're on a schedule of harvesting four days a week, eight months out of the year, which is phenomenal — to have a plant like this operating consistently. Four days a week gives people between 35 and 40 hours per person per week, so it actually provides full-time employment.

Again, you'll probably hear from some of the plant workers, and you saw the plant. You can see that most of them are members of the band. They do an excellent job. We have excellent quality fish that come out of this plant. You can see the remainder of the economy is still quite small but growing in forestry.

The wild fisheries. If you look back in the '70s, it was probably 70 or 80 percent of the economy. Now it's down to around 10 percent. We're hoping to see that grow over time as we do some commercial access strategies.

Clearly, in a lot of the first nations communities now the service sector, which is running the band, running the services in the community, picking up the garbage — mostly government funds — makes up about 70 percent to 80 percent of the jobs. In a healthier economy you should see that service sector being down around 30 percent.

We're quite proud of that. The economic development team has been working on diversification not only into salmon farming but also into forestry and hoping to rebuild some components of the wild fishery over time as well — not just salmon, but looking in the wild sector at other species that are quite abundant in this area.

You saw the processing plant. There are a lot of jobs that are created. The payroll right now between the plant and people working on the farmsites, I would say, is about \$1.2 million a year. About three-quarters of that, maybe 70 percent, is coming through the plant, and the rest of it through the farm jobs.

That was very key to when we developed an agreement with Marine Harvest. We said: "Look, we want to process these fish in Klemtu. That is important." The other two companies we were dealing with weren't that fussy about doing all the processing here, but we've proven that we can make it work.

We've actually got our costs down to where we compete into Vancouver. We can compete now with fish coming out of the Broughton into Port Hardy and into Vancouver. We can compete on a cost basis with processing here. We're quite proud of that as well. We've made a lot of improvements to that plant.

The band has put a lot of money into the plant side to maintain those jobs. I would say — Ben will talk about it — it's at least \$1.5 million to close to \$2 million over the last five years into the plant just to basically bring it to a level where it's very efficient and has modern equipment.

Like I said, the band is very reliant on natural and wild resources. One of the things that originally brought me here was salmon enhancement and the salmon enhancement program. It's still very active in Klemtu today. The hatchery is just up the river that you would have crossed walking from the plane or driving over. If you were here a month ago, you would have seen 10,000 or 15,000 salmon jumping around in the bay, heading up the stream.

That's been very successful in terms of awareness in the community about salmon enhancement. It's created commercial fisheries in certain years — not this year, but out in front here we've had catches up to 25,000 chums from that hatchery. So we've had a fair bit of success. The band has had fish culture in its background even before we started salmon farming.

[1140]

Kitasoo has had a history, as well, of being very integrated into doing resource management. This is a copy of the recent land use plan, which some of you are going to be familiar with, with some of the network of protected areas.

Kitasoo had an unprecedented amount of 50 percent of its territory protected, so again, there is really a conservation ethic in this community. It's not like, well, let's just go put salmon farms in every bay, with all the negative publicity, or knock down all the forests. There is a very strong conservation ethic in the community. They want to preserve opportunities for the future — not only for future generations but also just to maintain those wild resources that people depend upon. We're also working on a companion marine use plan, which should be out very shortly.

One of the things that I think is very key to the community being somewhat successful is that the leaders of the community play a fairly open role. They try to maintain a very open role and a line of communication with the public, so there are very frequent public meetings on issues.

Salmon farming was no different. Back in '97-98, when we were going and talking to Marine Harvest, that's the same time when all the negative publicity was hitting the streets. There was net loss; there was containing disaster. DSF and a lot of the environmental groups were putting out these doom-and-gloom papers on salmon farming.

In Kitasoo, basically, we took that to the community, and we provided them with all that information and all that feedback. But the community only had to look at its own operations, which it had run for quite a number of years, to see that this is something that we feel could be compatible with what we're doing here in terms of trying to create jobs but also trying to maintain some environmental needs of the area.

Again, it was very much a community decision to go with Marine Harvest. It wasn't two or three people. It went to a public vote. I actually remember that meeting. There were probably 50 or 60 people, at least, in that meeting, and basically, everybody agreed to move forward. It was unanimous to move forward with Marine Harvest, even with all... We presented all the negative information around escapes, disease — at that time sea lice wasn't as big an issue as it is now, but there were a lot of other issues — and contamination of the bottom. But people believed in what they had worked with for years and felt that it was very doable.

The other thing that we do, in terms of what we call an ecosystem-based management approach to siting, is that the community is actually very involved in the siting of the farms. We tell Marine Harvest which areas they can go to. That really provides, I think, a whole history of traditional ecological knowledge of the area. They know which areas are not rich, not biodiverse. If it's a rich area, they're going to harvest food there, and they're not going to want to put a salmon farm there because they don't want to potentially risk that area.

What the community does is steer the farms into areas where it feels that it's going to be more benign so that if there are going to be impacts, and people recognise there are going to be at least local impacts, those impacts are bearable to the community. It's not going to, say, hurt an important herring spawn area or an important clam bed or what have you. Community involvement, I think, is really important in terms of bringing in the history of knowledge of the territory in terms of siting.

I've just got a handful of slides left. I'm not too sure how we're doing for time. I don't want to take up too much of the opportunity, although the wind looks like it's settling down again. It's brightening up.

I wanted to give you some background. One of the other things that I do here is direct the Kitasoo fisheries program, which was started in '91. We have a team of individuals in the community who do fisheries management work, and I've got to say that we have an excellent group of people here.

What we've done is a lot of inventory work over 15 years. It's basically going through that territory, which you see in the marine areas, and diving and inventorying geoducks, sea cucumbers, urchins, abalone. You name it; our divers have gone down there and enu-

merated it. We have a better inventory in this area than probably anywhere else in the province in terms of marine resources. From that, we've developed a very crack dive team.

[1145]

We've got professional biologists that we use, that we bring in. What I've asked them to do as part of their work in the fisheries management program.... The funding we get is actually through the AFS program, the aboriginal fisheries strategy. A lot of communities have directed that funding to enforcement. We've directed it more into research in the area.

Since '98 we've been directing some of those funds towards monitoring the activities of the salmon-farming operation. We're making the assumption that there are impacts. We make the assumption that it's not sustainable, when we actually start looking at doing monitoring projects, in the hopes that we're going to uncover and look at the information — the things that make people the most worried around what the bottom looks like after salmon farming, sea lice issues and that sort of thing.

I'll go through some of the history. Last August we had in this room what was called an environmental day. We went through and brought up all our partners that we work with. This has nothing to do with Marine Harvest. This has everything to do with Kitasoo, our own professional team that we have here, and partnering with people in academia — primarily UBC, UVic, SFU, some of the environmental groups we partnered with as well — in order to do research around concerns that people have, not only in Klemtu but outside Klemtu.

One of the groups that we have partnered with is Health Canada. What we do with Health Canada is.... Our original farm in Jackson Pass.... We have three locations: one within 50 metres of the farm, one within 300 metres of the farm and one within 600 metres of the farm. In each of those three locations, every two years we collect sea cucumbers. We collect clams, because there are small beaches close to the farm, and we collect prawns in the deeper water off of those sites.

We send these samples to Health Canada in Vancouver. It's a one-off. We approached Health Canada to do this, so they've been working with us. It's not a big project or a program. It's a one-off that we do with Health Canada. They've basically been testing these for antimicrobial residues and heavy metals. Heavy metals we've been doing with Environment Canada at the lab in North Van — but Health Canada with the antimicrobials.

We go to Marine Harvest and say: "What compounds have you been using in your feed — chemical compounds, antibiotics or what have you — over the last two years?" We can actually give that list to Health Canada, because there are certain tests they would do for each of those different compounds.

Then of course we have control sites, which are far away in Meyers Pass and 50 miles away from the farms, where there wouldn't be any effects. We take control samples of prawns, clams and sea cucumbers. I

won't go into all the details, but the long and the short of it is that we've found small levels of certain substances particularly in prawns. I won't go into it now.

When we went back to CFIA and Health Canada and asked: "What are the needs for human consumption?" They were like $\frac{1}{100}$ of what would be considered a level where you wouldn't want to have it fit for human consumption.

Because the equipment they're using is so sensitive, the levels are very, very low. In particular, I think we picked up an oxytetracycline and in one case some sulphur, which showed up as well. Oddly enough, I believe it was only in the prawns. It wasn't showing up in the clams, and it wasn't showing up in the sea cucumbers. Again, the levels were very minute to the point where you wouldn't be prohibited from consuming those once a month or once every three months, as there would have been no restrictions in terms of consumption.

Oddly enough, oxytetracycline was also showing up in the control site. In talking to scientists, OTC is a very stable compound that is quite ubiquitous and has somehow made its way through nature. So you find it in very remote areas, even where there's no human development. It's naturally occurring as well, they say — or certain components of it.

Again, that's one of the pieces of work that we do on an ongoing basis. We continue to collect these samples every two years and deal with Health Canada. None of this is published right now. We're working with Health Canada, and they have certain sensitivities around this sort of work. They want to continue the work, but I think there may be a point where we may want to publish it.

In terms of looking at sea lice, we actually work with a couple of different groups. One is UBC with Dr. Kevin Butterworth and Fiona Cubitt, who were here about three years ago. Kevin has it well published now in some of his reports, in terms of what he was doing. Basically, we were catching wild salmon close to the farmsites — wild migrating pinks and chums, which were anywhere from a gram to about five or six grams as they're moving from the inlets out to the open ocean — and looking at the levels of sea lice on those animals.

[1150]

Kevin was looking at the amount of stress. He was actually taking blood levels out of those fish. So if he found a couple of lice on a fish, he would record the size, the number of lice, the number of lice per gram and then take blood levels. Well, the highest he received — and again, you'd have to correct — was two and a half, and I think it was lice per gram. That is the highest level he could find in this area. At that level there was no indication of stress on these out-migrating smolts — none. So he was going back into the lab to try and infect fish so he could find where the stress level started to occur.

Also, one of the artifacts of the work.... It was a one-year study, and we were collecting samples above, near and below the farm in terms of their out-migration. There was no difference in numbers of sea lice that we found above, at or below the farms on their

outward migration, meaning to say that in that particular year there was no perceptible impact, although that wasn't totally the direction of the study.

Another group that we worked with and might be familiar, too, is the University of Victoria. Corey Peet, who is a grad student, was here for.... He actually collected data for three years. We had him present here last year as well. I don't think he's actually produced his thesis yet, so I can't really say much about it, but the long and the short of it is that I think his data actually concurred in that same year because he was collecting data that didn't seem to be.... There was minimal if any amplification, he said, around the farms.

He did say the year previous and the year after that he did maybe detect some amplification, but he said it wasn't what they've seen in other areas, in terms of sea lice and impacts from sea lice. He hadn't completed his analysis, so I don't know what's going to come out in his final analysis, but it didn't appear that it was a slam dunk, huge, the sky was falling, sea lice are taking over.... It appeared that there may be some amplification.

We were finding sea lice on fish 50 miles from the farms, so it wasn't that they were just all coming from the farms. Sea lice were prevalent everywhere we sampled, including the control areas, like I said, which are well away from the farms.

We're continuing to do that work as well. We're continuing to collect data ourselves. I'm going to be sending some of our workers down to the centre for aquaculture research in Campbell River. We're going to actually train them to do a lot of the analysis so we can do it real time, and we collect the samples of juveniles so we can just continue to monitor the effects of sea lice levels around the farms over time.

The other thing we do every two years is we go into all of the farmsites, and we look at the richness and abundance of species. We have control sites, again 50 miles away in Meyers Passage and one in the lower Mathieson. Then we go right around the farmsites themselves, and we look at the numbers of species that are around and, basically, the numbers of those species. So basically, richness and biodiversity is what we're looking at.

It's really quite interesting. When we did it in the first two years, when we started in 1999 as a baseline — 2001 — we actually saw an increase. You can see families and species. You can see 89. There's actually a hundred and something. It's just off the screen for some reason. So we actually saw an increase in abundance after the two years, which you might expect. After you start farming intensely, there's a bit of an increase of richness in the area because you've got some nutrification.

But oddly enough, and I don't have all the data, in 2003 we then saw a decline. So what we expected.... Especially around where the footprint of the farm was, we saw a decline in numbers of species, and in the overall numbers that were there, as well, we saw a decrease.

Then we went to the company and said: "Look, we're starting to see some changes at the site. We feel that maybe you're pushing the site a little bit harder than you should." So the site was fallowed. Basically, it

was shut down for a period of time. We were forced to use that site more than we wanted to back then, because that's when the moratorium was on, and it was very difficult.... We couldn't get any new sites, except for transfer sites, so they were actually pushing the site harder than they normally would.

But once it was shut down, we came back in. Within two years again we saw the biodiversity starting to come back up, and we saw that the species were moving back in. So it was actually recovering very quickly, which is what the literature says it should do. That says, "Aha, you can do monitoring, and you can do adaptive management with these sorts of things over time," meaning that you just don't stick your head in the sand when you've got these farms in operation. You go in there, you constantly monitor, see what changes are occurring, and then you talk to the company. Basically, you have a back-and-forth, and you can mitigate some of these issues just purely by management and making people aware of what's occurring.

[1155]

This is the last slide. In terms of what Kitasoo feels are keys to sustainable salmon farming, number one is maintain community control. Within the agreement that we have with Marine Harvest, they are able to come up. It's their farm; it's their fish; it's their operation. They've got to hire people from here, but in the end the community has control over time with how that farm is operated. If we feel or the community feels, and it's in the agreement, that that farm is not living up to.... We've got a very long section on environmental issues. If they breach any of those components, Kitasoo can basically shut them down within a short period of time, and the company would have to go.

We made sure, through that agreement, that the community maintains that level of control over the operations. I mean, they get the benefits. It would be a very tough day if all of a sudden we said: "Well, this just isn't going to be sustainable. It's hurting too many things." But there's a million and a half dollars, so you'd lose half your economy by making that decision. So that'll be a tough decision. Again, maintaining that community control is very important.

Educate the community. These sorts of sessions are excellent. We have these at least once a year. Like I said, we had the environmental days, so the community has the information.

Listen to the feedback from the community. Again, through community meetings, there are a lot of give-and-take issues. I'm hoping that we learn more today just from what people have to say, and I'll hurry up and get off so that they can say what they have to say.

Practice EBM. Again, I relate this more back to traditional ecological knowledge. Let the people tell you where they think farms will be sustainable. It's funny because with our first farm that we put in Lochalsh Bay in Jackson Pass, one of the older folks from here, who's since passed away, basically told somebody here — I think it was Eric — that you shouldn't put a farm there. There are too many sea lice.

This was before we were even salmon farming. This was back when they had herring days, when they were doing herring reduction fishery back in the '40s or '50s. They knew that certain areas had a lot of sea lice because they were on the herring. So they said: "You shouldn't go to there. There're a lot of sea lice." And sure enough, we've had some sea lice problems in that particular site. People know. They've lived there; they've worked there. They've passed that information on. So EBM and TEK, I think, are very important.

Hold the company to the highest environmental standards. We feel that we actually, in our agreement, have much higher standards. There're regulatory agencies that the province and the federal government set. We actually have even higher standards that we set within our agreement for the company.

Develop credible, independent monitoring. That's ourselves and our fisheries program working with outside institutions, academia in particular. So you've basically got credible, independent monitoring.

Understand the impacts, because there are impacts. We're not going to come here and say that there are no impacts from salmon farming. We know that they're impacts. There are localized impacts. A site can be pushed to the point where it's not good. You basically have to understand where those thresholds are and manage that site accordingly, and you can only do that through monitoring.

So taking a risk-adverse approach. Obviously, don't put it on top of some of your most important areas. And again, practise adaptive management, where you've got to change on the fly. As you get your information in from monitoring, you've got to be able to put that into practice and change your management practice, potentially.

Somewhere down the road, I think, if we feel that the impacts are outweighing the benefits, then that's going to be a difficult day. I know that in the environmental report card that we had last year, we looked at all these components — sea lice, the contamination issue and the biodiversity issue.

Basically, the feedback that we're getting is that this industry can potentially be sustainable. It's probably just a question of scale with respect to how many farms we have in a certain area and what the cumulative impacts might be. But we feel that at the current level that we've got and the projected level that we have with the company, there's a very good chance that it could be something sustainable for the long run here. Again, only time will tell, as we continue to do our monitoring. Thanks very much. I'll pass the torch here, and if you have any questions....

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks, Larry. Let's open the floor to questions.

J. Yap: Thank you, Larry, for an excellent presentation. I had questions, and as you rolled along, you answered my questions. But I do have a couple.

[1200]

First of all, it sounds obvious that KITASOO and XAI'XAIS have really embraced aquaculture as a way to

create economic opportunity for the people of the community. I'd be interested in hearing — perhaps from the Chief or perhaps from yourself, Larry — how you, as a community, have come to be able to balance this approach with your traditional heritage, which is rooted in the wild fishery, in wild salmon.

I ask this from the point of view of having travelled with this committee to different communities up and down the coast, where we've heard from other first nations communities who have very strong anxieties and, in fact, opposition to the whole idea of fish farming. I'd be interested in how you were able to do that as a community.

L. Greba: I can give you one feedback, and maybe Ross or Archie or someone else could provide some additional. From my perspective, it's because Klemtu, or KITASOO/XAI'XAIS, got involved back when the industry wasn't controversial. They had the opportunity to sort of learn and grow with the industry and recognize that it's not a real.... You know, they're hearing all this negative stuff coming from outside and not really quite seeing it. In terms of actually really doing it, there's no three-headed fish coming into the fish plant. Nothing is neon, glowing. A lot of people have eaten the fish here, and it tastes different, but it's a fish — right?

I think a lot of the first nations communities now.... There's been a lot of negative propaganda information. Some of it's good information; some of it's just not the best information, not the best science. People get confused. KITASOO probably would have been the same way as a lot of these other communities if they hadn't already been doing salmon farming for ten or 15 years. It's just a question of when it happened.

Maybe Archie or Ross, you can add to that.

A. Robinson: My name is Archie Robinson. My hereditary chief name is [Heiltsuk spoken].

I told you in my opening welcome to the people that we have two tribes here. This community was a wild-fish community also heavily involved in the wild fur. Those were the two main ones we used all through the times when companies were buying the clams from us in early days, but they're no longer around. Yeah, and we've been struggling, really struggling, to get to where we are today.

As a young boy, young man, I witnessed those days. The seals, the wolves. The seal: they'd buy the nose. The wolves: they paid \$25 for the ears. But we did not go out to kill them just for the bounty. We did it because we wanted control. We felt that the otters and seals and wolves were taking over. A lot of our resources — the deer, the wild salmon and other things — they control.... That's the reason why the government of those days gave a little bounty — \$5 for a nose, \$25 for a wolf's ear.

That was good, until such time it was stopped — by who? Environmentalists. [Heiltsuk spoken.] We named them. They were there. They stopped those things on which we....

We didn't go out and shoot seals just for the sake of \$5 — no. We shoot the seal when it's time to use it for

our ceremonial purposes or a banquet or something we want to put up in the community. We didn't kill it just for the sake of \$5, no.

[1205]

Those things were taken away from us by activists, environmentalists or whatever — taken away from us. Now we've got too many of those two animals: on the sea, the sea lion and the wolves out in the woods — far too many of them around now.

When the salmon were running less than a month ago, there would be about half a dozen seals inside that bridge going across when the tide was high, getting at the salmon. In some places when I go out to get some of my other resources which I want to use for the winter or whatever, I see far too many of those two: the seals and the wolves.

That's all we see on the beach just now these past few months. It's wolves running around — not only one; maybe three, four in a pack. Where are our deer? No more.

Kitasoo is a fish community — wild fish. We have a fish cannery over there, which was all created by J. Todd and Sons and then with B.C. Packers, where everybody worked there in season — be out in a fish boat or fish packer or working in the plant. Everybody worked. That closed down. The wild salmon closed down.

Sometimes they point at the Indian people as causing the demise of the salmon, which we're not. We only take what we need to put away for the winter, what we need to use for our table or our gatherings, ceremonial purposes. We just get enough, and that's it. We never once abused anything or any of our resources, yet we get blamed for the demise of the wild salmon.

That was one of our dreams — to put that plant over there to use for wild salmon — but it never worked. There was not enough fishing time that was provided by DFO at that time to go and catch the fish. So we started to look into what to do.

Larry never mentioned that we started ours — our very, very own — ourselves out of some funds which we realized through our J licence, what we call a J licence. We annually harvest eight tonnes of roe through our J licence operation out in Kitasu Bay every year. In the early days it was good money, really good money. But now it's down there. Ben will tell you how much a pound we did compared to the first few years. We started at \$45, \$55 a pound. That's how much we were getting.

At first every one of us in this room held on to a trapline, which was passed on from generation to generation. Now I have the trapline that my dad operated when he was still around. He passed that on to me.

Again, who caused the wild fur industry's demise? Again, activists. Again, them. People overseas. You see it on the news all the time. They paint up the pelts so nobody would buy them.

[1210]

Those were the two main things we used to do in this community before we got into what we're doing now: the wild salmon and the wild fur.

We started very small, fish farming ourselves. Larry never mentioned it. Very small, 75,000 pieces, 50,000 pieces of coho and springs — Americans call them kings — which we did ourselves. The money we

realized from the J licence which we operated.... We did that just down the channel here a little ways. The customer was from the Vancouver area at the restaurants.

Eventually we had to shut down. It wasn't done by activists or anything. It was just done by the cost of us getting our food and whatever else we needed to carry on. The leaders of those days decided to shut down for a few years, and we got into partnership with what we call Marine Harvest. We've been with them for many years, and we're doing good.

We've worked and worked hard, especially on that agreement. You heard Larry mention the agreement in there. It didn't take us one week to do it. It took us months to do it. We worked on it hard because we wanted our resources protected. Up to today I don't think anything has happened since we started working with our partners Marine Harvest. Nothing has happened.

You heard Larry mention clam beds, prawns. Right just into our fish farms and fish farm operation in Jackson Passage, Connocose, whatever. I have two of my children, two of my boys that work over there. The tide is good. They come in with cockles, a big five-gallon pail of cockles and take them to the farm operations — nothing wrong with them. Really good clams and good cockles and good prawns and cucumbers that are around here — nothing wrong with them. You heard what Larry said. I'm sure our partner is still watching, as we are watching, our operation hard.

They said we will fish. I mean the wild fish, and we were working day to day out at B.C. Packers until 1968. The cannery closed down. Who came to our aid? Nobody. Nobody came and helped us to find out what else can we do to try and create employment for our people. It was our team that's here that worked hard. Our various councilmen, various councils worked to create employment for the people of the community. They worked hard to keep us here in '68.

In 1969 or 1970 — one of those years — I was the chief councillor of the community at that time. We still had our Indian agent stationed at Bella Coola in those days. I don't see any more Indian agents around.

That month — 1969, I think it was — they came to pick us up. There was only one phone in the band office. Everybody could listen to you while you were talking.... There was no privacy. They asked us to be ready to go to Kitimat. We were going to have a community meeting over in Kitimat. So we went.

[1215]

Little did we know that the Department of Indian Affairs tried to move this community to Kitimat. No fooling. They tried to move us away from this community. At that time we said no. We said no. This land, our territory, is too rich — too rich to leave. We said no, we'll stay where we are today. So we're still here.

I thought I'd bring that up to you guys, and that is to let you know that we've been struggling — struggling to stay here, to create employment for people. We've got one J licence. That's in operation too.

Interjection.

A. Robinson: We've got two now? Oh, I'm sorry. I understand we've got two now. It makes a bit of money for us today for our teams to use — the development board or whatever — in this community to create employment or invent something for this community.

You heard Larry say that there used to be a lot of fishermen here. Ben, Les, Francis, Charlie and the other men who are here.... They had fishing licences — not here anymore.

We had at one time, fishing for the company, about eight, ten, 12 seine boats operated by members of this band, and we fished down there. No more. We don't have any more licences to do those things. There are other species or resources we'd like to get into, but we don't have access to them. We don't have sufficient funds to get it, especially the geoduck. We'd like to have a geoduck licence.

You heard Larry say that we have surveys of all of our species, one of which is the geoduck. There's great abundance in our area, but we don't have access to it. The geoduck licence is out of our reach. In order for us to go a little more, we need more licences.

I thought I'd mention to you guys who work in Victoria or Ottawa or wherever you work.... I thought I'd mention there are plenty of taxpayers. A lot of the guys who run for office don't even come to Klemtu. I don't see our MP here, yet I heard he was going to be here. Where is he? The only time he wants to come here is when it's election time. That's the only time we're likely to see him, which is not right.

You guys are there, put in office to help society and community, to make this a better place to live — right? I don't know where our MP is. I haven't seen him.

They said we sell a lot of our early...fish farms. We started down Granville Island in Vancouver. That's where a lot of our customers were, the restaurants — 50 to 7,500 people. That's all we used. But the cost of freight to get the food and things here....

[1220]

We didn't go broke. We just have the line that we decided to quit. Here we are today with Marine Harvest.... Oh, looks like you can't go anywhere.

[Laughter.]

J. Yap: We can stay here and chat.

I have one more question. It sounds like, under the agreement which you are looking at extending for a further term of five years, it's a partnership between Marine Harvest and the band. In your presentation, Larry, you make mention of the fact that Kitasoo Xaisais are able to do this work, they enjoy doing this work, and they are competitive. It has to work from a business standpoint.

Currently the technology that is in place is open-net cages for salmon farming. You've obviously heard of, and you've addressed in your presentation, some of the specific arguments against this technology: sea lice, wastes, the benthic waste. You've obviously heard of suggestions by some that one way, potentially, to address this is through some kind of closed containment farming.

I'd like your opinion on that discussion that some people are advancing.

L. Greba: Sure. There are probably two components to that I would address. Let's say, for instance, if closed containment was made mandatory to farm salmon in British Columbia. Well, number one, British Columbia wouldn't be farming salmon any more, purely because of the economics. Marine Harvest — because we've followed it fairly closely — has done a lot of....

Well, they had a pilot farm down on the inside.... It was Saltspring Island, I believe. They were able to grow fish in the end, but it was at a lot higher cost. One of the costs is energy — basically, running power to run pumps. You're putting the fish more at risk because you are having to rely on pumps.

If you've ever had to deal with fish and pumps — even if you have an aquarium at home — you know that it's not the best way to go. You're going to have some disasters. But the long and the short of it is that it's probably 30 percent to 40 percent more costly, and you just cannot compete with a commodity industry that's global.

The second part is if you went to closed containment, and let's say it was economically viable, then there's no reason to do farming up in this area. People would not farm in the remote hinterlands where we have pristine water quality, pristine opportunities. If you've got that much control over your environment, you can draw water from deeper down. There are a lot of things you can do. You can basically farm salmon in downtown Vancouver or anywhere in the south. So the remote areas would just not have the opportunities.

I mean, in a lot of ways it would be nice. Closed containment would certainly be a way of controlling the situation a little bit more, but the economics do not appear to be there. The rural development opportunities in the future are probably not going to be there either with that.

I'd be interesting to see if it could be developed over time. Unless Norway and Chile go to the same and they are on an even playing field, I just don't see it. It would be a de facto moratorium if you basically required everybody to go closed containment in B.C.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Again, this relates to a lot of what we've heard. We've heard from various people that salmon farms are destroying the clam beds, specifically, and the biodiversity. Larry, so your question: have you seen that? How long have you been doing monitoring?

L. Greba: We started monitoring in '99. Basically, right after we signed the agreement, we started monitoring all of the sites. We knew that working with Marine Harvest — large company — they're going to go to large production. I mean, we're talking fairly significant production at these sites, so we knew that there was potential for impact.

Again, I think in terms of clam beds. Archie mentioned it himself. He still harvests and goes to harvest

in the site that has been the longest-active site in the territory, and it's continuing to be active by Marine Harvest.

[1225]

In our monitoring work, like I said, we only look at those three specific beaches. We don't go around looking at all the beaches, but nothing has come back to us from the community that I've heard of — they've made reports because they do harvest in a lot of the beaches that are close to the farms — where's there's been anything out of the ordinary.

The same thing goes for biodiversity or people's inability to catch certain things around the farms or close to the farms. I haven't heard any feedback. We haven't, like I say, detected that. If there are impacts, they seem to be very, very localized to within probably a hundred or 200 or 300 metres from the farm. Beyond that there doesn't seem to be much of any change at all that we've seen. But there's more work to be done.

We just say that we're scratching the surface. We're not going to say, "Oh, yeah, everything's groovy; let's carry on," and put our heads in the sand. We're saying: "No, what's the next thing? What are things that we haven't thought about that are creating impact? What sort of partnerships can we develop with people that are legitimate academia or whatever?" We can look at some of these issues.

Unfortunately, the environmental communities are very.... I won't mention the name, but there's one very prominent one who we approached about ten years ago — well, when we started with Marine Harvest eight years ago — to say: "Look, you've got problems with the salmon-farming industry. We have concerns around the sustainability. Let's just say you come and work with us around those things that bother you the most, and let's do the research, let the chips fall where they may and report it out publicly."

They said: "Nah. We don't want to go there. We'd rather put our money into lobbying against it rather than trying to find solutions for the industry."

We started to think now, because we went to these groups.... They're not all that way, but I know this is a fairly prominent one, and they just really didn't have any interest. They said: "We do wholesale, not retail." That was their response.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Why wouldn't you let us know the name of that group? They don't seem to be shy in fingering out salmon farms.

L. Greba: Probably shouldn't at this point.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): One question for the Chief or whoever. One thing I don't understand is that some first nations — yours — are very supportive and others are supportive, but some just have this image of how horrible salmon farms would be. I know you discuss among yourselves with the tribe at Bella Bella. How does this happen? How can there be such a conflict of opinion on salmon farms?

A. Robinson: We work together. We try to work together to create employment for our people and protect our resources.

We're just like maybe some of you guys sitting there. We're probably more protective than you guys because it's our resources. We go and get it. We use it. I said earlier that we work on our agreement with our partners — not only for a week. Day after day we're working on it. We're happy with the agreement to protect our resources. Up to today nothing has happened yet.

In closing, again I'd like to thank you for coming to visit us to find out what we're doing and what's happening here. Glad that you could come. As I said earlier, I hope through these deliberations that we come to some resolution for everybody in society to work together and understand what's going on.

I'd like to ask society and other nations: please leave us alone. We're doing everything good. Nothing's happened to us here. We'll let you know if anything's happening. We'll let you know.

[1230]

You may smile, because we're working hard at it. We're still working hard at it. We'll let you know if anything happens within our territory.

We're here to work for our people, to create employment and protect our resources. That's why we're here. I'm asking society to please leave us alone — other societies, other nations. We're doing the things we want to do in our territory. Let us do it. That's all I'm going to ask. Leave us alone. Let us carry on with what we're doing.

We have done wonders since we got into partnership with Marine Harvest. Our young people are coming out and going shopping. They never used to do that before. They go to Port Hardy. Get lots of grub for their families and other things. Before that, they just relied on welfare, which we don't want.

Again, thank you for coming.

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

I'd like to open the floor to anybody else who would like to speak. Just say your name before you start.

B. Robinson: My name is Ben Robinson. I am the person in charge of the processing plant, and I'm also a member of the band.

One of the questions I heard earlier from John Yap.... Those locations are studied very carefully, and the land use plan that we have in place coincides with the location where we picked our sites. Usually these sites have no impact on the gathering place, whether it's clams or seaweed and all our sustenance that we have in our communities. That's one of the criteria we use when we pick our sites. I just thought I'd answer that question.

I'd just like to maybe put a little human element to the people of Kitsoo, the Xai'xais people. Most of us are ex-commercial fishermen. We've all gone up to the Skeena and down into the Fraser, so we know the coast quite well. We're really gumbooters. The element I want to touch on today is that most of our parents and

grandparents have always had contact with some other groups of people. In the 1930s J.H. Todd came into this community and had a plant operating here until the late '60s, until B.C. Packers bought them out.

The things you see happening over at the fish plant — it's nothing new to us. We've all worked in fish plants. We've all had a stint working in the ice house or the fish shed or whatever. We know the industry, so there's a lot of comfort.

People say: "How do you, so isolated in Klemtu, manage to create an industry?" It was nothing new to us. We have the confidence that we can do it. But this whole process, the human element I'd like to stress is.... We always hear: "How do you build capacity?" Capacity, whether it's human or economic or business acumen — whatever.... They go hand in hand.

[1235]

For us to operate up in this part of the world, we really have one huge Achilles heel. That's transportation — the cost of transportation. That's one of the biggest obstacles we have in operating out of here. This community is very fortunate to have its own hydroelectric power. What you see here is owned by the band. We have very good water. If you were here yesterday, you would have probably seen one of our coast guard transport vessels sitting over at the government dock. It takes our water, and there's a reason for it — good water.

There were those two elements that we knew for quite some time that we could utilize. Not only that, but how do we start to try and generate activity in this part of the world, where there are so many challenges? Having a partner, making a deal, getting people to work. And number one, we had to be competitive, because there are people out there doing exactly the same thing that we're doing.

How do we become competitive? We've got a darn good product. Cents-per-pound is down. Marine Harvest isn't here because they like us. They're here because they're making money, and we're making a few dollars also. There were a whole slew of learning curves that have been thrown at us over the number of years: how do we do this?

You heard some of the speakers earlier talking about the dollars from the J licence. Where did it go? It went into facilitating that complex over there. So it was really a band initiative. Really, that plant had almost 90 percent of band funds that went into that activity that you see over there.

They're proud of that. They created employment for themselves. But how do we get people to take a look at this industry and say: "Well, why are they doing it? Why do they want to do it?"

You know, Larry mentioned earlier about that public meeting we had a number of years ago. In the mid-'80s we were all still commercial fishermen. We looked, and we were still skeptical. As commercial fishermen, we were still viable at that time, but we went along — wouldn't you? — because we could see the trends happening in the coast here. We could see the runs depleting. I've been a commercial fisher for 40 years. I've no-

ticed that up and down the coast. We needed some other things to do.

If we had our druthers, I don't think we'd ever cut one more tree or commercially fish any of the seafood in here — if we had a person like, say, Bill Gates that can give us a chip and do something in this part of the world so that we didn't have to harm the environment. We're no different than our parents, our grandparents. We extract to survive. If there is something else, show me. We'd gladly do it.

But no, reality is that we're here. We have to work with what we have today. So here it is. You heard our hereditary chief make a statement to leave us alone, but I think maybe the message should be that we all have to have a better understanding of this industry.

If you take a look at every day — I assume that some of you read the papers and watch the news; I hope you don't have a Hershey bar in you pocket — the thing here is that things change. So how do we do it?

I think, you know, Marine Harvest has a poison pill. If they don't live up to some of the things that.... I guess, same with them. If they don't like dealing with us, they can walk also. That's an agreement, and we have to be fair, but we both want to put our best foot forward here to make this thing work.

[1240]

I don't think any one of us — the leaders of Kitasoo — signed this agreement saying: "Well, I have aunts and cousins and brothers living in this community. Why would I want to participate in something that might harm them?" We had to deprogram ourselves as commercial fishermen to see the reality of where this is going. You can take a big slab of bologna. You put it up there, and you tell me what's in that big slab of bologna. Enough nitrates over time will also give you cancer. Those are the things that we need to do. I'm not too sure if we've done enough on our side. When we go through the grocery store.... You all know that three-quarters of your groceries somehow falls into the category and labelled, you know, whether you have some sort of packaging. They've been altered to some degree.

You read labels. Sometimes there is an 18-letter word that you don't understand because, maybe, it's some sort of a life preserver — shelf life. When you were kids, you remember when you had fresh milk and you had to drink it within — how many days? — two or whatever days it is before it goes bad. Even fresh bread goes mouldy in the fridge. But you buy something today that never goes mouldy, never disappears.

So that's the deprogramming that needs to happen, needs to take place in our communities. When you take a look at the communities I speak of, I feel really.... I guess my heart goes out to a lot of them because you're looking at communities that are 90 percent unemployed, band offices giving out welfare cheques, and watching your members going and doing other things. You know, alcohol is just as devastating in our communities, and more so than eating some of the products that we deem to say are not really good for you.

There are so many things in this world that are no good for you when you overconsume. Take a look at

the high rate of diabetes that we encounter in our communities. Why is that? Take a look at all the poverty and all the mismanagement that has occurred with some of the developments that we've seen in our communities. We need to be educated in how to do business in the real world and really try to be competitive in those fields. So we need to educate ourselves.

This isn't just about growing farmed salmon. It's about people living in communities like Kitasoo — isolated. Why would you want to put yourself in isolation? This is home for most people here. This is where they grew up, and they're comfortable here. I've been asked many times — I also have a home in Nanaimo: "Why do you come up to this part of the world where it's so isolated and you're probably not going to have a very good plane ride?" We've had some miserable days during the last 20 years I've been here, flying in weather a lot worse than today.

I love this place. It's my home and always will be my home. When there is so much unemployment.... I guess the hard thing you see in life is that there's always pre-occupation with alcohol and drugs no matter where you go. So education is very important with everyone.

[1245]

I just want to maybe close by saying that I have an album that's floating around here that I always like to take in meetings like this. It's about pictures taken 25 years ago in the community. Take a look at them, because there was nothing here.

I can remember one day at the fuel dock there. My late friend and I were at the fuel dock, and a little sailboat came in. The person came by and said: "This is a beautiful, beautiful place." When he left, my friend looked at me and said: "There's something wrong with his eyes." He said: "Take a look at the old cannery. Take a look at the destruction, half-torn buildings, the old piling." He said: "It looks like a war happened here." That was the late Mark Edgar.

From that day on, I said to myself: we need to do something. That was the fish company leaving us high and dry, as you heard earlier. They just packed up and left.

When you have the desire to make changes and want to see changes, leadership is so important in communities like this. Doing business in the real world is something else. We in Kitasoo have had some good experiences and some bad experiences. We've lost money processing. We've lost money doing urchins. The airlines got all our money, and the Japanese got all our urchins. But we got the big bill.

It's a learning curve. I'm glad to say that what I see happening in our community are so many positive things. I'm only wishing some of our friends and neighbours.... No matter where I go, I always extend an invitation to Kitasoo to come and see the farm, come and see the plant, come and see what we're doing, to this day. It's been how many years now? We haven't had one visit. Boy, it must be so comforting to make observations from an armchair.

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks very much.
Do members have any comments or questions?

S. Fraser: I've just started going through the album. It's fascinating. I'd like to acknowledge that it's Kitasoo First Nation traditional territory we're in. I want to thank you all for having us here and giving us confidence in our flight back.

The model you're showing here, then, that Larry pointed out in his earlier presentation, of using ecosystem-based management and traditional knowledge and combining that with your work with Marine Harvest, is obviously a model that works here. It's community-based. From what I hear, the siting criteria for farms certainly go through a community process and are agreed upon. Obviously, this is within your traditional territory, so I think that's not just wise; I think it's a requirement, too, in a lot of ways.

You've made the choice to go down this road. It does seem to be a successful road for this community. I think I'm safe in saying that too. It's been touched on by some of my colleagues that it's not.... There are first nations that have taken other routes and have made other choices. They don't always see it the same way. We as a committee respect that too.

[1250]

If you as a community chose to not take this route with Marine Harvest — this partnership — would that be your right also? Is that an understanding that you've got? The model of this particular agreement with Marine Harvest.... I don't know if it's confidential, but it would be interesting to see that. I think the committee might make use of that, if possible.

L. Greba: It would be up to both parties, but it is confidential.

S. Fraser: I understand that. Okay. We don't see this level of cooperation always, so it might be useful. I want to thank you anyway. We're learning a lot up here.

This was not our first attempt. We got fogged out the last time. We did try to come here before. I don't know what the MPs are doing, but I think the federal people are actually.... The House is sitting in Ottawa right now, so I think they're probably indisposed right now.

R. Austin (Chair): Just so you're aware, Gary Coons, who is the local MLA, was going to be here. He definitely was all intent on coming here. He has a personal matter. His mother is very aged, and he has gone to Ontario to sort out her state of affairs right now, so that's why he's not here. Otherwise, he would most definitely have been here.

R. Neasloss: My name is Ross Neasloss. I'm the elected chief councillor for the community. First off, on behalf of our community I'd like to start by welcoming you to our community.

From listening to some of your responses and some of your questions that you have.... I know that John mentioned something about the culture and how we manage our community with the indifference of surrounding communities and other first nations. Our rights and title that we hold in this place we call

home.... It's a right and title that we have, and we're never going to sell it or surrender it.

Talking about the commercial fishery, you know, that's a privilege. Yet when it comes to harvesting, our food — social and ceremonial — seems to be last to have access to any of the resources. The commercial fishery always has the first crack at it.

I know it's a really contentious issue, but we did have our conversations with our neighbours, seeing how they feel about the fish farms. But in saying that, with our capacity-building and our workforce, we've actually had people from other communities coming here to work on the farmed salmon. We've had people from Bella Bella, Hartley Bay, Kitimat and Prince Rupert. There was a time when there were unfamiliar faces, and yet as leaders our goal was to get that employment for our people.

I think it just depends on who you talk to about salmon farming. From our perspective, a lot of it is propaganda, where.... Our door is always open. Like Ben said, we welcome anybody to come and do their observation on how we run the operation.

As a community our success is with industry — our partnerships that we developed with Marine Harvest, with the forest industry and Western Forest Products. That's where our success is as a community, where we're able to develop the partnerships and get what we need from the extraction of the resources. Then, again, we apply our local knowledge to a lot of this.

[1255]

I've found myself on our crew boat taking our chief out because there had been a protest at one of our sites. We've had close to a confrontation with neighbouring communities or whoever they may be. I know it's a fine line between respect and disrespect. They have their right to their opinions, but we'd like to act on a situation rather than react. We're always preparing ourselves for the different kinds of dealings that are put in front of us.

As a community, the chief and the council.... We meet, and we know there are issues where we just can't make that decision ourselves. We call together our hereditary chiefs and our elders, and we discuss it with them. From there we go into a public meeting, and we either make.... We provide the community with the information, and then we get feedback on how to deal with the situations. Nothing's going to be successful in our community if we don't get the community support. That's first and foremost all the time, from our point of view.

If there are big decisions to be made that are going to affect the people, we have the people as part of that process. There's a lot of transparency and fairness. We give anybody and everybody a right to speak on decisions that are made on behalf of the community. You can see the change in the people socially. You could see that, going from a \$185-a-month cheque to some of them making \$3,000 or \$4,000 a month now. They're setting up bank accounts. Living here all my life.... There are people now who are travelling out of the community who didn't before.

The economic factor — and the funds that are provided for employment — is a big benefit for our community, and a lot of the people take pride in earning that paycheque. It's something that we're going to work towards and monitor.

I think that's all I have to say for now, but I'd like to add more later if you have questions to answer or if I have any questions.

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks, Ross.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): As Scott pointed out, it certainly seems to be successful for you here, a successful road you've gone down. But I've got to tell you that in other first nations areas that we've been into, they don't want to have anything to do with it. It's something that I'm quite perplexed by.

Ben mentioned earlier that they haven't visited here. I'd just like to know, from your point of view, what your understanding is. Why is there such a...? You know, it's either black or white. There's no in-between for many people. Why is it that other first nations haven't come to you more to see how it works? Certainly, there's no question other bands we've been to are suffering 90-percent unemployment, and it would seem logical that they would at least want to take a look at things. Can you tell me why that is?

B. Robinson: One of the direct results from.... The Broughton is really the area that is of grave concern to all first nations, and I think most of those.... You can remember that most first nations interact with one another. They're as family, and everything else. It doesn't take that long to really see some of the devastation that does happen in certain areas.

You've got to remember, too, that this industry wasn't all roses in the '70s. One of the prime examples.... At the turn of the '70s, when everyone was trying to get on board and thinking this was a goldmine, there were a couple of farms here that were abandoned. It happened in our neighbour's back yard. They have every right to feel the way they do, especially the communities in the Broughton area.

[1300]

It's just that we do need to maybe have some sort of a forum that can move us from that. I guess they made their mark on the sand there, and they're not going to move. There are so many of the high profile leaders that have taken that stand, so the influential scuttlebutt that comes from some of these people is.... It's underlining that you can't move from that position. I say this in so many ways: I don't blame them. If it had happened in my back yard and if I was living down there, I think I would have reacted the same way.

You heard Larry's presentation earlier about: there's no other farm on the other side of Cape Caution. We're the only farm in sight here. We have limitations also. Our plan isn't to grow any bigger, and there's a reason for it. Like I said earlier, I would gladly participate in trying to entertain other communities to come and take a look and see what the alternatives are.

I mentioned the word "deprogramming." When I said deprogramming.... When you consume food, you want to know everything about what you're consuming. We don't. We're still doing the wrong things as a society. We're eating a lot of junk food, and you can see it's hurting. You can see it in our children. You can see it in our teens. We do have a problem because we don't understand what we're consuming.

If we can start to work in that regard, to say: "Wow." If we're talking about foods that we're consuming, and it's how many parts-per-million traces.... Those are the buzzwords that are always used by ENGOs, but they don't say parts per million. They just say there's something in that.

It's just like you go to a sports day. We all have sports days. What's there out in the field? Hot dogs. We all love hot dogs. Sure, there's nothing wrong with hot dogs, even though we know they have little traces of nitrate. So certain perspectives have to start to fall into place with meat, with alcohol and all the preservatives in food. Understand them. Understand what they do to you. That's the problem we have with some of our first nations. That's the deprogram message I had.

Like I said earlier, they have every right to feel that they've been threatened, and it's the sea lice. Most of us are all ex-commercial fishermen. I can remember in my early 20s talking to an old halibut fisherman, and one of his trips was a bad trip. Most of the halibut had sea lice. It was so hard. It didn't happen every year, but it was there. I think if we don't send the right message, you will always have this position with farms.

[1305]

Just recently Larry and I and the team went over to Norway, Stavanger, to watch and see some of the operations over there and the inroads, the advancement. We're so far behind here. Those are the kinds of things I'd like other people to see and to try and understand. We don't have the perfect model. It doesn't matter what you're doing, whether you're packaging food for Maple Leaf, or whatever it is. There's always going to be something happening to your product.

I'd really like to see people understand what they're consuming. If you want to dissect your meats or what's in your canned goods or whatever it is.... Sooner or later, at the end of the day, make sure that it's not going to be more than three syllables. Try and put layman's language on some of that labelling to make you understand what you're consuming. That's what it's about to me.

I would be skeptical too, if I didn't go through this process, if I didn't see the farm, if I didn't have the assurance in watching and finding out, testing the oils, looking at the gills, having a hands-on feeling, exactly, that hey, this is a good product. This is a good product. Why is it a good product? Because it has no more additives or any kind of chemicals than what you see on some of those shelves you see in the grocery store.

I'd just like to finish in saying that what I mentioned earlier about the human element. I want to tell this little story. When I was about six or seven years old, coming home one day.... I guess it's what the people here call chase time. You had to go home at seven

o'clock or whatever. You go home and you grab the doorknob on your house. All of a sudden you hear this godforsaken music. You open the door and kind of peek, and you see a grown man dancing around in a skirt. He's playing this godawful music. Open the door. Here is a guy who had bagpipes. He was blowing these bagpipes. I didn't know what it was. This story really relates to our interaction with different groups of people at an early age.

Like I said earlier, operating that fish plant was no big obstacle because we were already integrated. Our parents were integrated. This is the least number of non-natives we've ever had in the last — how many? — years in our village, yet in the '50s we used to have maybe 600 or 700 people here, and we were only 150 strong.

We had interaction a long time ago — a long time ago. That's where you see the will of some of the people here that: hey, we can do something. Even though our partner did leave us, we can do something. That kind of gave us the ability to move forward.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much.

R. Austin (Chair): John has a question for you.

J. Yap: You made me think of this question as you were talking there a bit. Your product, which you are comfortable with, is farmed Atlantic salmon. Some of the criticism against the industry — aquaculture — is that the salmon-farming industry is primarily based on introducing a species that is not native to Pacific waters.

Share with us your thoughts on this and your feelings on that particular issue — the fact that it's Atlantic salmon and not Pacific.

B. Robinson: First of all, I'd like to say that it's not our salmon. We custom-process. It's Ian's salmon.

J. Yap: Okay, the technical answer, yeah.

[1310]

B. Robinson: The thing here is that he can probably give you some of the reasons why Atlantics.... I think it's the grow-out rate, and/or they're not so susceptible to diseases and that sort of thing. The price is just as good, and that's a good product even though.... What is this species doing in the salt water? You know, it's just the freshwater trout family.

Ian can probably give you a little more information about why they....

J. Yap: Actually, I understand the economic reasons — the business reasons, the technical reasons — for why it's a great species for salmon farming. I'm more interested in your perspective as a first nations person involved in the industry, handling and promoting this product.

B. Robinson: We don't see, in our eyes.... When you take a look at this particular product, it's a product. When you look at this product, now we've had a

number of community activities and we've also consumed the product. Even our elders have consumed the product. Most of the community finds almost no difference at all in consuming this product. It's been tried and tested, like you say, and it's a good product.

But we can't relay that message to anyone else. They've never tried it because you've already placed the poison pill on it that there's something drastically wrong with it. We're not all glowing. We're still okay.

I want to get back to the farm itself. You know, when we did this agreement — and like I said, I'm not here to kill my family.... We had this agreement in our inner sanctum, as we are wont to call it: let's do our homework too. Let's do the testing. Let's do the testing of what's underneath here. Why do people fear so much that this is so bad for you? Let's see if it really is.

We were confident all along, and we still are doing tests, whether you get your samples back from Nanaimo or not. I know we do. Well, they're not coming in here to run roughshod or do havoc in our back yards. It's no use having employment if you're not going to have good health.

Good health is so important. I think that's number one. When you take a look at what we're doing in this society, first nations are no different — more so, where diabetes is so rampant in our communities. We're about — what? — three times the norm. There's no use talking about an endeavour if we're not going to say: hey, there's bigger fish to fry here.

Let's look after the health of the communities first. Let's look at this. Why are we in that state? Why are we so unhealthy? It's because we're consuming all the bad oils and eating too much sugar, but we've been doing this for a number of years.

When I hear some of our members are collecting prawns right off the farm — best prawns they ever had — or the clams, not too far away from the farm.... Those things are actually happening. We're not just saying that. They're actually happening. They're still alive. We're still alive.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Ben, I wonder if I could.... I don't want to interrupt you, either, but I'm just....

We've been told by our pilot that we're going to have to fly out of here at two o'clock, so I just want to encourage as many people who want to speak as can.

Please don't take any disrespect, but....

[1315]

B. Robinson: No, no, not at all. There's a fellow here that works at the farm. He wants to make a presentation, and I encourage more of them if they want to say a few words.

L. Neasloss: My name is Les Neasloss. I'm one of the hereditary chiefs of this community, the Kitsoo. I also work in the salmon farm. I've been there for about five years. A lot of the things that have been brought up already are some of the things that I'd like to touch on also.

I'm going to start with a bit of a history of our community, which people have talked about. Our community was a commercial fishing community. We have a cannery here that was built in 1927, and as Archie says, it closed in 1968. We all worked in the cannery there seasonally, and it provided good employment for us. But when it cost so much to operate when it was easier to process in the bigger centres, they shut down our cannery and left without looking back, and no one even bothered to do anything for us.

The fishermen — it cost them a lot more money to go out to fish than what they were able to take home. In that happening, our community became welfare people, and there were very few jobs available in the community. Most of the jobs that were available were make-work programs that never went anywhere.

Leaders at that time started looking to see what could be done for our community. I commend the leaders for what they have done from that time until now because I'm really proud of what our community has been able to do. They started the hatchery, and we had the roe-on-kelp. That helped us with seed money to be able to go on and do the other things that we are doing now today. We were able to build that processing plant, the band store. We also had our own fish farm, as you heard.

I worked in the welfare office in our band for ten years and just seeing how the people that were on welfare — especially the single person that was getting anywhere from \$175 to \$185 a month — had to live, plus shelter.... That's not very much money to live on. I don't think anyone can live on that.

When the people started earning their own money, there was a big difference in what was happening in the community. You could actually see them walk a little different, you know, because they felt a little better for themselves.

A lot of people have tried to move, but because of growing up here, it's not always easy to move into the bigger centres. Some have made it, but a lot have gone there and they ended up on the streets, which isn't very good.

We started fish farming, and it has provided work for our people at the farmsites, the processing plant, our harvest boat. We had to buy another boat to use because the other was a little small.

Aquaculture has provided us with a better lifestyle in this remote area. We still harvest the traditional foods: the clams, the urchins, the sea cucumbers and the prawns. I also fish prawns right at the site, and like Ben was saying, you know, the prawns are really good. I have a friend that commercially fished prawns at one site over at Jackson Pass years before the farm was there. He's still coming every year, and he likes it. He likes fishing there because he does good there.

[1320]

Aquaculture has been good for our community and our people. The territory that the farmsites are in is ours, and it's up to us to make sure that we take care of that territory because it's ours. It's got to be there for our children for the future — the future generation. We

will not continue if we perceive that any damage is being done, as you heard other speakers were saying, because this is ours. We're going to be here. We're not going anywhere.

I've been working there maybe five years now. What I saw from the beginning when I first started working on a farm is how the industry pushes to improve the practices they do on the farms. I know we use cameras to make sure we don't waste the feed because feed is expensive. We don't want to pollute the bottom. Cameras — I like the idea because it's our stop signal when we see the feed come in. We stop feeding the fish.

I'm happy to see the company continue to do things to improve the sites, the farms. I'm very happy to have Marine Harvest working as our partner here because it does provide a very good lifestyle for our people. A lot of these young people that you see back here probably wouldn't have a chance because the jobs are so limited in the community, but with the fish farms they're all working. That's what I'm so happy about. I'm happy to be a fish farmer because I know it can be sustainable if done properly.

That's all I have to say. Thank you.

R. Austin (Chair): Anyone else have any questions? Anyone else like to make a comment? We have been asked to try and leave by two o'clock otherwise we're looking for nine billets, nine beds, tonight. Please come forward and have your say there.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): We pay good rates.

A Voice: You'd have no choice.

G. Robinson: It's about time we have people sit down and listen, for a change, because in your world, you're always rushing. Got to catch the plane; it's the weather. Sit down for a while.

I work for Marine Harvest. I've been working for five years now. I've benefited from it. I've seen the company work with the government sustainably with their rules and regulations. If I saw a company that didn't comply with these rules and regulations, I wouldn't work there. I know for a fact that they are within the standards. That makes me feel better to work in a safe environment place. I enjoy it. I take pride in it. I'm happy. Seeing the rest of the guys that I work with, they're happy too.

Past speakers said: "Where would we be now if there was no salmon farming?" We would be just collecting welfare, and I've been there. I've done it. It's not a good feeling.

[1325]

There are a lot of negative people out there that like to say they haven't been out to the farm to witness what is going on out there firsthand. They've been invited to sit down at our meetings, but they never do show up. I'd like to see more of that, for them to come and to witness firsthand what we do out there with compliance with Marine Harvest. They're sampling. There are a lot of things going on out there.

We go by the code of ethics — what to do and not to do out there. We've got good managers who we work with, too, who keep us safe and tell us what to do and not to do out there.

I'm really grateful. Like I said, I take pride in what I do. I'm happy. I'm grateful for Marine Harvest for coming in here. I can speak for the rest of the guys who I work with, too, and how they feel about working out there. That's all I have to say.

R. Austin (Chair): Great. Thank you very much. Ron has a question for you.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Certainly, I wish we could stay a lot longer too. We always feel that we're just rushing in, rushing out, but they keep us on a pretty tough schedule.

My question, Gary.... You work out on the farms. One of the things we hear about is escapements. What has your experience been with escapements?

G. Robinson: I haven't seen any so far when I've worked out there.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): No net failures or anything like that?

G. Robinson: No, the nets are constantly checked by divers. We do visible inspections during the mornings and before we go at the end of the day to make sure they're secure. But they're continuously monitored by divers when they fly in to do net inspections.

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Can you tell me a bit about the fallowing that you do here. I understand that you have four farms and that you fallow two and operate two. Is that basically how it works?

G. Robinson: Did you say fouling?

R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair): Fallowing. You know, letting the farms rest.

G. Robinson: ...was fallow for a bit there, but they're in operation again.

W. Starr: My name is Wayne Starr, and I work at one of the farms out here. What I have to say about fish farming myself is that when I came back to this community about three years ago, I did not know an absolute thing about fish farming at all.

I used to listen to people up north in the Kitimat area, where I spent the majority of my years. They had their opinions about farms. I cannot have an opinion about something I know absolutely nothing about. The best thing that I could do for myself was to get educated. You know, what the majority of the people on the B.C. coast should do is get educated and find out for themselves. Come to the sites to find out what it is like, what it's about.

When I was given this opportunity to work at this farm, these people didn't know me and I didn't know them. But they were good enough to give me this opportunity, to say: "Here's the farm. Give it a shot."

I've heard about the stories that were going on up in Kitimat. I kept that to myself. I didn't let these guys know what was going on. I wanted to find out for myself. It's what I had to do. If I want to learn something, I have to actually see it myself, not go by: "He said that she said that we said that we heard because we have somebody working there, and they got the paperwork."

Your best bet is to see with the two things you got best for you: your own eyes. And your own feet and your own mind. Check it out, and see what's there.

When I stepped off of that dock when I got hired on there, I didn't know what a fish farm looked like. They got me on how they grow fish in the water with the style that they were doing it. When I stepped onto those polar circles, I saw the abundance of life that was on there.

I asked when those circles were put on, and they told me. Right away that told me that the abundance of life around those farms already was just a positive thing. The amount of life that I do see around here every day when I'm out there at work.... There's tons of life around there as compared to what you've been hearing — that it's a death zone — or what I've heard so far.

Like I said, I have to see with my own eyes to come to a conclusion for something that I have to know about or that I do want to know about or learn to understand. Being given this opportunity to work for this company has also given me an opportunity to get a house here and to move back home to earn good money, to earn an honest living, where I can come home happy at the end of the day, at the end of the shift there and see my family, spend time with them.

I spent three years alone, by myself, building a home thanks to the community — where they supported me. You know, they have to have a house built. I had to make sacrifices at the same time. I missed my grandson's first birthday, his second and third birthday, and I'm still missing it today because these are the things that I want to do for my family. It's to support them with everything possible I can give them out there.

[1330]

You know, when I step out into a boat, that is my grocery store out there, when I get on that boat. There's no way that I would ever bugger up my own grocery stores, as you wouldn't as you walked into your own grocery store — an Overwaitea or wherever you decide to shop. Everything is kept to their best expectations as possibly made. That's why I say these farms are improving every day.

When I finish my shift this Friday and go back next Friday, there are more improvements that we have to deal with, which we learn and are taught by our managers. We do have good managers, and we do have really good workers. We have people coming up from down south all the time checking up on us, who would like to touch bases with the workers to see how we're doing and what's going on.

I find this whole Marine Harvest here is very positive, the best thing I've ever come across yet in my life. I've worked for companies in Kitimat. One job I walked away from because of the lack of knowledge they had on the amount of stuff flying around in the air in that plant.

When I had enough sense to find out what I'm working around and what I'm working with.... If I can't pronounce a word, I look at that word and then break it down. I find out what that word means and what effect it has on the body or on whoever is taking it. It's not just that I got a job. I'm going to throw this in here and then throw it into the boat and then go home. I like to learn stuff. I like to learn what things are about and how things work. If I disagree with something, I do have a voice and can speak out rather than be quiet about it and let it blow up to an extent.

I don't think I would ever let that happen to myself if I walked under these circles here within my first month or year on the site, if I found the exact opposite of what I've been hearing up and down the coast about dead zones and stuff like that, which I see as totally misunderstood. I see the total opposite of what I've been hearing.

I can't have an opinion about something I know nothing about until I personally get educated. I don't know anything about your jobs until I start hearing about what you people do, as well as you guys coming into our community and learning about what we do and how we deal with it.

I am very grateful for this farm that is here. As one family member here, it's given me a lot — to stand up for myself and be proud of myself and proud of this community for the positive things that it's given us, for the work. It's not just about work. It's about the people that I've come back to see. A lot of these people here I haven't seen for years and years. It seems like we just picked up because we get to know each other all over again.

It's nice to come back home to this community, even in weather like this. This is nice weather to me, compared to living in Kitimat. Any day of the week I'd rather wake up to hear an eagle calling or a crow calling rather than listen to a horn honking or a siren going by like that there. I don't miss it at all. Even this wind here — I'm okay with it.

It's about the farm. I do have positive things to say about this farm, but this is my own personal opinion. I do enjoy it, and I am grateful that they are here.

R. Austin (Chair): Thanks very much for sharing your experience.

I. Roberts: My name is Ian Roberts. I am the area manager for Klemtu, working with Marine Harvest. By no means did I want the honour of being the last speaker, so hopefully someone will wrap it up after me.

I've been here since the beginning, eight or nine years ago, when we started. We built the cages here on Roderick Island — Kelly, myself and a couple of other guys as well. I just wanted to make two comments.

One is that I want to thank you guys very much for battling the weather, having a long day and missing lunch that should still be coming. John, Al, Ron, Craig, Robin and Scott: thank you very much for attending.

I would like to make special mention about those members who have not attended. I would ask that they take the opportunity. There is always an open invite from the KITASOO. I believe there are another seven or eight members that could have been here. Condolences to Gary Coons. I think others chose their constituents over Klemtu, and they understand the importance of seeing this area in operation. Archie, if I'm correct, the invite is still open to those that...

A. Robinson: Wide open anytime. If you guys want to come back, come back. The door is always open. If you want to learn more about our operation, come back. Do that.

I. Roberts: The last thing I'd like to say — Ron, you alluded to this — is about the following periods. We do have a plan here, which is all part of the agreement that is very open. We have two smolt sites available in Jackson Pass. Due to the restraints of those sites, we don't feel they make proper grow-out sites.

I think Larry or Ben alluded to the fact that we've been pushed on those sites due to the fact that the moratorium was on. You wouldn't know the moratorium was lifted, based on the speed of some sites being applied for.

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We would like to have those as smolt sites, which means that we're only growing the fish to about one-kilo size. We'd like to move those fish, then, to our grow-out sites. We currently have two grow-out sites: Kid Bay and Goat Cove where Wayne spoke. That's where Wayne works.

We are applying — very soon, within the next week — for two sites in Sheep Pass, which is just north of Kid Bay and Goat Cove — very close, too, at the top of Roderick Island.

I would like to ask for assistance from you, however it can be done. This will complete the agreement. We'll have the six operating sites, and in fact, we'll leave the one site that is contentious. We are willing, as a company, to leave that site alone. We have met with those groups that find it contentious, and we have explained that to them as well — that if we are given these two new sites, we have no intention of using Arthur Island, which is the site of contention.

Unfortunately, there were comments made by this committee at some time — I think, in the heat of the moment, up north — about a moratorium that should be instilled or installed to salmon farmers on the coast. That was repeated when we went to visit the neighbours here that they indeed thought there is a moratorium based on comments from this committee.

I would just like to ask the committee if that had been followed through and what is the situation. So perhaps on the record we could get that cleared up on

whether this committee itself recommended a moratorium — or members did — where that sits today.

R. Austin (Chair): A motion was passed by the committee asking the government to not bring forward any new sites while the committee was doing its work, until May. The government, though, has the right to do whatever it wants. It was just a motion that was passed.

It's entirely up to the government, and I believe the government's reply was that they will continue to work the process that they have in place.

I. Roberts: Okay. Very important, because of course, we have smolts, which don't wait for government, that are ready to go in the water in February. We would like a push on those sites so we can avoid stocking Arthur Island, which we'd prefer not to.

On record, I appreciate the help or any help that can be done.

Thanks again. Please, someone else follow up. I don't want to be the closing speaker.

R. Austin (Chair): Does anyone else want to follow up?

L. Greba: I'll just say a couple of things before I go. I just wanted to follow up, to sort of tie a few things together. We have, within our agreement with Marine Harvest, as Ian mentioned, six sites that we need. We agreed to that number of sites back in 1998, but for one reason or another and moratorium, it has been difficult to achieve those.

We are in a tough spot right now. We do need those two sites. They have been chosen by the community. So it would actually be, as Ian said, helpful if the committee, from what it saw today, said: "We can see the KITASOO knows.... They've got a path. They've been on that path for a number of years. They want to get to the end of that path."

There are a couple of things. One, as I mentioned before, the community wants to control this industry. What would not work at all is probably what has occurred everywhere else in the province where you've got three or four other companies who are coming in, willy-nilly. Mind you, there's a longer referral process now. But you start having too many companies in an area like this, and the community loses control. Then it becomes potentially unsustainable.

The key, we feel in this, is that community control. The fact that we've said upfront that we only want to work with one company and the six sites are basically.... There are enough sites to create enough employment for people on the farms to keep the plant going. We don't really need to expand the plant. It's really a level of sustainability socially, potentially, as well as environmentally.

You know, why would you put a 500-man pulp mill up here, which potentially has some detrimental effects, when only 30 or 40 people here could work in that industry? That's what we're getting to. We've got a

model that has been designed a number of years ago. What we said to the company is that we know that by nature the companies want to grow as large as they can — right? — as quickly as they can. That's the nature of business.

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But, in this model, we're saying no. Let us go in ten-to-15-year increments, and if within ten to 15 years, with our monitoring — and let's say we've got a number of young and up-and-coming people in the community that want to work in the industry — then we might consider it, based on environmental issues and impacts that we've seen or haven't seen, plus people available to work in that industry.

Again, what would be totally devastating is if all of a sudden a moratorium — let's not say a moratorium.... All of a sudden they've started inviting a bunch of other

companies to come up into the area, without Kitsoo having any part of that process. Then it just upsets that whole balance. I think what's here is a real balance, but the main tenet is community control.

That was just the last thing that I wanted to mention.

R. Austin (Chair): Thank you very much, and on behalf of the committee I would like to thank Ross and Archie for the invitation and for the welcome that you've given us here on behalf of the Kitsoo. I'd like to thank Ian for really organizing this and bringing us here.

I think it's been very interesting for all of us to come to a very remote part of the B.C. coast to see what's going on here. It's been very useful to us. Now I'd like to have a motion to adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

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