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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

**Bella Bella**

**Thursday, October 5, 2006**

**Issue No. 20**

ROBIN AUSTIN, MLA, CHAIR

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE**

Bella Bella  
Thursday, October 5, 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)  
Dorothy Jones (Committees Assistant)

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*Witnesses:*

Jeff Brown  
Susan Brown  
Steve Carpenter  
Charles Gladstone  
Keith Gladstone  
William Gladstone (Heiltsuk Tribal Council)  
Chief Gary Housty (Heiltsuk Nation)  
Ellen Humchitt  
Mel Innes  
Peter R. Mason Jr.  
Reg Moody  
Andy Peers Sr.  
Raija Reid  
Brian Starr  
Michelle Vickers  
Georgia White  
Chris Williamson (Raincoast Conservation Society)  
Ken Wilson  
Michael Wilson  
Ross Wilson



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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2006

The committee met at 9:05 a.m.

[R. Austin in the chair.]

**R. Austin (Chair):** Good morning. My name is Robin Austin. I am Chair of the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Aquaculture Committee's public hearings here in Bella Bella.

I would like to begin by thanking the hereditary chiefs of this traditional Heiltsuk territory, the elders, the council and all the citizens of Bella Bella for allowing us the opportunity to come here and listen to what you have to say about this important matter. I'm very delighted to see so many young members of the Bella Bella Community School who are here today. It's wonderful to see so many youth coming out to both witness the political process and, hopefully, partake in that and share your views as well.

For your information, today's meeting is a public meeting, which will be recorded and transcribed by Hansard Services. A copy of this transcript, along with the minutes of this meeting, will be printed and will be made available on the committees website at [www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/aquaculture](http://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 committees website to enable interested listeners to hear the proceedings as they occur. Sometimes technical difficulties prevent a live broadcast, but an archived copy of the audio broadcast is retained on the committees website.

Let me also, for the benefit of the witnesses, read out the mandate that this committee has. The Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture was restructured with 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 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 looking into B.C.'s regulatory regime as it compares to other jurisdictions around the world. The committee is to report to the House no later than May 31, 2007.

This morning we have a number of people working with us. On my right we have Doug Baker and Alison Braid-Skolksi, who are here from Hansard Services. They record what is being said during the hearing and, as I've already mentioned, make sure that's posted on the Internet.

We also have staff here from the Office of the Clerk of Committees. Brant Felker, who's a research analyst, as well as Dorothy Jones, a committee assistant, are at the front of the room. The Clerk Assistant and Clerk of

Committees, Craig James, who's with us as well, will be sitting to my right. You are welcome to help yourselves to the material that Brant and Dorothy have laid out at our information table.

Before asking the members of the committee to introduce themselves, I would like to welcome Al Horning to the committee. We've had to have a replacement very recently, as the former member who was on this committee was moved into cabinet and therefore had to resign, as cabinet members or members of the executive can't be on a parliamentary committee. So welcome, Al.

I'm going to start asking people to introduce themselves.

**D. Jarvis:** My name is Daniel Jarvis, and I'm from the area of North Vancouver-Seymour.

**A. Horning:** I'm Al Horning. I'm from Kelowna-Lake Country.

**R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair):** I'm Ron Cantelon, Nanaimo-Parksville.

**C. Trevena:** Claire Trevena, North Island.

**G. Coons:** Gary Coons, Prince Rupert. I represent the North Coast.

**S. Simpson:** Shane Simpson, Vancouver-Hastings.

**S. Fraser:** Scott Fraser, Alberni-Qualicum. That's on Vancouver Island.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Now I would like to begin by inviting witnesses to come up to the witness table and speak into the microphone so that everyone can hear, and throw as much light as they can on this important topic. I'd like to begin by inviting Raija Reid, who's going to speak on behalf of Fred Reid, to come up to the witness table.

### Presentations

**R. Reid:** In your introductions, what parties do you represent? You've told me where you're from, but what parties...?

Scott, who do you represent?

**S. Fraser:** I'm a member of the official opposition, so that means I'm a New Democrat.

**R. Reid:** NDP?

[0910]

**S. Fraser:** Yeah.

**R. Reid:** Next.

**S. Simpson:** NDP.

**G. Coons:** NDP.

**C. Trevena:** And it's purely by coincidence that I think we have the split here, but I'm also opposition NDP — to make it easier for you.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Yeah, I'm also with the opposition.

**A. Horning:** Liberal.

**R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair):** Liberal.

**D. Jarvis:** And I'm with the Liberals.

**R. Reid:** Before I start, what is the NDP's position on this versus the Liberals'? What am I dealing with here, first?

**R. Austin (Chair):** Actually, what you're dealing with here is not what oppositions are. What we're dealing with here is us coming — forgetting our positions that we had — and listening to what people have to say, and then coming forward with recommendations based on what we hear in our hearings. So we're really more interested in listening to what you have to say, rather than you coming and asking us what we think in the past or now.

We're still juggling all these ideas. We've spent weeks going to various communities, and the idea is to listen to what everybody has to say. Then we'll have to sit down and figure out this important issue amongst ourselves.

**R. Reid:** I'm here to speak on behalf of my father. This was generated with my father's point of view in mind. His role here in this community is.... He is regarded and respected as a local historian. What he wishes for you to know is his life in the fishing industry and the dependence he had on the fishing industry and the dependency of his children and the futures yet to be born.

What he wishes you to know, and he was part of this.... In the 1960s Tony Pomeroy from the University of Colorado came to Bella Bella on an archaeological expedition. He interviewed elders — Offling Harris, Bertie Humchitt, Willie Gladstone, Eli Wallis, Johnny Humchitt, Charlie Moody, Harry Humchitt and others who I didn't get to record — who gave testimony that the Heiltsuk occupied various areas, which they verified through Mr. Pomeroy. He, in fact, discovered evidence in our traditional territories.

Just so you know, we have staked out territories. Just so you know, we are claiming these areas. Just so you know, Bella Bella has a large stake in many areas.

In addition to that, in 1948-49 or 1950, our northern border was established by Wally Brown, who is now deceased. He was contracted by Fisheries to eliminate sea lions at our northern border. We claim as far as Moore Island, and our southern border goes to Cape Cowashin.

Mr. Reid would like you to know that we know that our ancestors depended on fish for centuries. In our diet, it was the main staple. That we know. That's in history, but that we still do. We still trade fish of various sorts, and we use these main fishing areas to

gather our resources, whether for traditional food or commercial trade — areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

We all know the value of fish, but Mr. Reid, for 69 years, can testify that he has relied on the fishing industry, both for commercial and for harvesting. He has fished as far as the Alaskan border and the San Juan Islands. He fished the Skeena. He's seined, he's trolled, and he's gill-netted. He knows the industry.

One of our other staples is a dependency on clam. In our history we know — Mr. Reid can add to this — that at one point fish were scarce, so the first nations people literally had to rely on clams to supplement their diet. He wishes for you to know that we are all well aware — and the evidence at the Namu dig supports our claim — that we have been in this area for many, many, many generations — 10,000 years plus. Also, we do know there are 450-plus clam beds in our territory. We use a lot of them.

[0915]

Basically, there are seven-plus more clams that we do eat and harvest for personal consumption traditionally. It's cockles, the horse clam, razor clam, Manila clam, butter clam, rock clam and geoduck.

Mr. Reid was also asked to identify our cultural foods that we depend on traditionally. These are just some of the resources that will be harmed if fish farming is allowed in our area. Mr. Reid was part of this study.

We rely heavily on the pinto abalone. We rely on the flat abalone. We rely on the goose barnacle. We rely on the giant barnacle, thatched barnacle, acorn barnacle. We rely on the geoduck, Manila, butter clam — those I just read to you. We rely on the knotted cockle, the Pacific tomcod. We rely on the kelp crab. We rely on purple shore crab, hairy shore crab, Dungeness crab, peak crab, crown crab, which is also known as fox crab. We rely on red rock crab, porcelain crab and tanner crabs.

The oolichan. We rely on ling cod, and we rely on kelp greenling. We rely on Pacific herring. We rely on giant kelp. We rely on bull kelp. We rely on leech kelp. We rely on little black mussel, horse mussel, blue mussel and the octopus.

Perch. Pile perch. Kelp perch. All of rockfish — quillback rockfish, China rockfish, yelloweye rockfish. We rely on canary rockfish, copper rockfish, tiger rockfish. We rely on vermilion rockfish, yellowtail rockfish, black rockfish. Pink salmon, chinook, chum, coho, sockeye, Pacific, and we rely on sea cucumber, steelhead salmon, black cod.

We also rely heavily on seaweed, spiny dogfish, blue shark, Coonstripe shrimp, shrimp itself, black-tailed shrimp.

Long skate. We rely on the common Pacific squid. We rely on Dolly Varden, the brown trout. The rainbow trout. Purple sea urchin. The sand dollar. The giant red urchin, the green urchin and the sleeper shark.

Those are just traditional foods that we eat. There are other ones. Instead of reading the list to you, there are other commercial fish we rely on for commercial fishing purposes.

What Mr. Reid knows from his own research is that fish farming causes contamination. He knows the infestation levels are profound. It has cancer-causing agents

in it. He knows the fact that there are three-eyed fish coming from fish farms — a result of fish farms.

He knows for a fact there have been two-headed fish born at these farms with many fins, many tails. He does know that parts of the fish, once open, expose toxic....

He knows of the 1970 Boddey Pass fish farm. They contaminated all the clam beds in the area and literally wiped out the clam beds in that area. He can testify to that. That was one of his resource grounds.

What he also knows is that he is absolutely opposed to any farm in our tribal land or our tribal territories or our tribal waters. Also, Mr. Reid wants to know why, with all the research done and all the government spending on preventing cancer in Canadians, they would subject the first nations to the possibility of getting cancer from these fish. They have toxins; they have cancer-causing agents in them. Why would they subject the first nations to this sort of thing — literally, psychologically, emotionally, physically?

[0920]

We're just speaking of one generation here. Mr. Reid is speaking for those generations yet unborn. Establishing fish farms in our tribal territories and letting one farmed fish out is equivalent to letting TB out in the world. How do you contain it once it's gone? It's difficult.

He says: "Absolutely, no." He wants you to take his message strongly, sincerely and literally for what he says. No, he doesn't want fish farms. He will never vote for it today; he will never vote for it in the future.

I strongly agree with my father. I would never vote for fish farms in this area, now or in the future. No good can come of it. We rely too heavily on that list I read. We always will. That's never going to change. To wrap it up and sum it all up: no.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Raija, for your presentation. I must ask if any members have any questions of you. Okay, I appreciate you coming.

I would like to invite William Gladstone to the witness table, please.

**W. Gladstone:** I've also invited a representative from our Hemas to be here with me. He'll be doing his presentation right after me.

Good day. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our Heiltsuk traditional territory on behalf of our Hemas, elders and Heiltsuk people. We would like to thank you for coming to Bella Bella and giving us the opportunity to present to you our opinions and position on what wild salmon means to our people and sustainable aquaculture.

We have much to say about this. For the record, the Heiltsuk do not consider this meeting to fulfil the obligation of the province to consult with the Heiltsuk on this matter.

Before we begin, I will tell you that the Heiltsuk have lived here since time immemorial and have aboriginal title and the right of self-determination, including the right to manage our affairs. We have never surrendered these rights or title to anyone. We have many stories and history that tell us of our rights in our tradi-

tional territory. There is no question in our minds as to who the rightful owners of this traditional territory are.

The sea is an important part of the Heiltsuk, providing resources and habitat for many of the species that we rely upon for our food, social and economic needs. The Heiltsuk have been utilizing these areas since the earliest history of our people.

The Heiltsuk continue to rely heavily upon resources from the marine environment as part of their way of life. Many resources from the marine environment are utilized for food and sustenance as well as for cultural purposes. The outer coast is particularly rich and diverse in the resources that are available and harvested by my people.

Our way of life is not about the bottom line. Health issues that affect my people, like diabetes, confirm the need for wild salmon and other species of the sea to uphold our way of life. Our balanced diet from the sea far outweighs the fish farm industry.

[0925]

Economic, environmental impacts of the aquaculture industry. Commercial harvest of marine resources by the Heiltsuk is of paramount importance to the Heiltsuk economy. In recent years the fishing industry has experienced severe and harmful changes but remains the largest non-government employer for the Heiltsuk.

The Heiltsuk Tribal Council has invested millions of dollars in the fishing industry, running a fish-processing plant. Our citizens have invested large sums of capital into fishing boats, gear and licences. My people have survived the corporate, commercial exploitation of our fishing knowledge within our traditional territory and the systematic licence limitation regulations that push our people out of all fishing sectors.

The finfish aquaculture program in British Columbia cannot guarantee that our wild-stock salmon will not be affected by open- or closed-pen operations. Recently our commercial fishermen have stated that sea lice are showing up everywhere on all species. Preliminary results of a sea lice survey indicate that sea lice are confirmed, with a larger prevalence near the Arthur Island fish farm.

We have many concerns about the impact of fish farms in our territory: contamination to the environment; sea lice infestation — the potential of sea lice wiping out wild salmon; and escapement. Our commercial fishermen have caught farmed fish. Industry cannot state that these open pens are contained.

The wild-stock salmon experience in Norway and its demise will not happen in our traditional territory because we will not allow it. The provincial government of British Columbia cannot force finfish operations on the central coast. We are the majority populace of the central coast and do not and will not endorse finfish aquaculture in our traditional territory.

Sustainable options for aquaculture in B.C. We are a nation that promotes growth, development and diversification, but not at the stake of our generations to come. We believe that both the provincial and federal governments should be focused on increasing the wild stock. Funding should be allocated to stream clearing

and ocean ranching. A sustainable option, in the Heiltsuks' view, is to replenish the wild stock.

We do support shellfish aquaculture. We are currently exploring possible diversification through new avenues of long-term sustainable economic development. Shellfish is a sustainable option for aquaculture. The Turning Point initiative with first nations on the central and north coasts has been working very hard on developing a joint venture on a shellfish initiative that will subscribe all beaches for a wild-stock clam fishery in our traditional territories, as well as potential farmsites for our first nations members for current and future endeavours.

We have signed a land use plan with the province of British Columbia. We cannot emphasize to you, the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture, how important it is that we the Heiltsuk Nation develop our land use plan, along with our members, in a holistic, integrated and sustainable manner for our future generations.

We have also developed a 15-year comprehensive economic plan and strategy with 13 sector units that total \$518 million in current dollars for the next 15 years. The two priorities in the plan are the fishery and the forestry strategies. The fishery strategy totals \$52 million to \$55 million in the first three years of the plan. That includes some 200 licences.

We own a fish plant that has a reputation for great quality of fresh fish sales in a very competitive market. We have capacity and skilled shoreworkers and fishers that would like to work 12 months of the year. We have always been a fishing community, with a history that goes back long before European contact. For your review, we have provided a copy of the marine sector chapter of our 15-year economic development strategy with this presentation.

[0930]

We have also engaged in discussions with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under a memorandum of understanding, an MOU, for the reconciliation of Gladstone. This process will be concluded in 18 to 24 months with the final agreement on Gladstone for the Heiltsuk people.

We also travelled to Ottawa last month to meet with the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans staff to talk about commercial access to fish — along with the seafood alliance, member organizations like the Canadian Fishing Co. with Glen Clark and Rob Morley, the president of the seafood alliance and the ground fishermen group. Never in the history of the fishing industry in British Columbia has such a group, comprised of first nations and the fishing industry representatives, ever sat down together with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to promote first nations issues on the central and north coast for commercial access.

The real estate for commercial sites is very limited in the central coast when dealing with protected areas, parks, conservancy areas, commercial fishing areas, shellfish wild stock fisheries and the potential for shellfish fish farms for the future, sports fishing lodges, anchorage sites for commercial boats and yachts. The southeasterly winds in the fall, the northeasterly winds

in the winter, the westerly winds in the spring and the northwesterly winds in the summer do not give too much room for areas with good tidal flow that are not already nor will be subscribed.

In conclusion, we must emphasize a number of key points to you.

(1) The Heiltsuk Nation has unextinguished aboriginal title to our territory. The government does not have the unencumbered right to allocate resources in Heiltsuk territory prior to resolving some form of mutually acceptable relationship.

(2) The Heiltsuk Tribal Council does not support finfish aquaculture development within Heiltsuk territory.

(3) The Heiltsuk reliance upon the marine environment is a fundamental and defining factor in our culture, identity and economy.

The potential harm proposed by fish farms is a real and significant threat to the way of life for my people. The risk of harm from fish farm industry is not acceptable. For future generations, we are against fish farms in the Heiltsuk traditional territory. This is the position of the Heiltsuk. Thank you for your time in hearing our presentation and position on finfish aquaculture and sustainable aquaculture.

What I would like to do is I would like to also.... In our presentation we've kind of identified a map for you to look it. It talks about protected areas. It talks about sustainable areas. It's all part of the land use process that we're involved in, the kind that speaks to the limited access of our availability, of what we want to do as a first nation versus anybody else coming and promoting finfish aquaculture.

The last part is the 15-year fisheries plan for your review. I would like to turn it over to our representative from our Hemas. He's here to speak on behalf of them, and I'd like to introduce Chief Gary Housty at this time.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Okay. Would you like to take some questions first on what you've presented?

**W. Gladstone:** No problem.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Okay. I'd like to open the floor up.

**G. Coons:** Thank you, Bill, for the presentation. It's fairly strong and coming from the heart, I think, of your people. There's just one question about the fish farms in Klemtu and Kitasoo. Just sort of wondering: did the flavour that's going on there, with your concerns...? Perhaps you could comment on that.

**W. Gladstone:** I think our hereditary chief here is going to cover that. I'd prefer he do that and state his case on our behalf regarding the Arthur Island and other fish farmsites that are being promoted within our traditional territory north of us.

**D. Jarvis:** I just wondered if the.... The land use plan that you have signed with the government: when

was that done, and was there any aquaculture component to that land use plan?

[0935]

**W. Gladstone:** It was signed about a year ago. Right now, Ross, when he was the chief, signed a strategic plan with the province in June of this year. We've always promoted shellfish aquaculture, but never finfish. That's something that we consider to be sustainable, and that's basically the position that we're coming from.

**D. Jarvis:** There was a shellfish component to that land use agreement that you had, was there?

**W. Gladstone:** I think with the land use plan we're implementing it right now, and we're talking about a lot of the strategies that we have as a first nation with the province. That's an ongoing process that's in the works right now.

**S. Simpson:** In your presentation you made a reference to ocean ranching — that that was something your people might look at. I know it's interesting that we had heard when we were on the north coast.... We spoke to people on the north coast — some of the first nations there and aboriginal people — and they talked about what was going on in Alaska with some of the ocean ranching. It's fairly new to us, what this is, so I'd be interested in what exactly you've been thinking about or whether you're at all considering that option.

**W. Gladstone:** Ocean ranching is a fancy word for hatchery, and we've been involved with a hatchery for over 30 years now. It's in McLoughlin Bay. It's very successful. Our commercial fishermen have an opportunity to fish on those stocks. For the dollar that we've invested in it every year, the return is a lot higher. We spend about \$157,000 a year on that site to rear salmon and release them to the wild.

Ocean ranching is something we've always been interested in, because the wild stocks at their present state, the way they're going right now, need a helping hand. I think if we did ocean ranching to help our commercial fishermen have an alternative fishery other than the wild stock, and put production through our fish plant, it's a good alternative. Also, it is a lot more sustainable.

**S. Simpson:** Thank you. So just as a follow-up there. I know that part of the push and pull of this discussion is that when we talk to people who are very concerned about finfish aquaculture, we often hear that there needs to be a greater emphasis and we need to be paying greater attention — we being the Legislature — to enhancement of the wild fishery and doing what we can to strengthen the wild fishery. Do you think that model, the hatchery/ocean ranching model, is something that needs more exploration as one of the tools to help enhance that wild fishery?

**W. Gladstone:** I think we've been promoting that for quite a few years now. The Department of Fisheries

and Oceans has a position on that, and until they change their policy to expand on that particular type of fishery and promote it, it won't go anywhere. That's something we've been saying to the federal government for quite some time now. We've said that in talks we've had with them off and on over the years.

Our people are well aware of the science that's going on with finfish, but nobody talks about the impacts that have happened in Norway with the bleaching of the rivers because the wild stocks have been basically terminated. Our people don't want that to happen here. We're really adamant about that, and as you can see the representation from my community, they're adamant that there be no finfish aquaculture within their traditional territory.

I think the government needs to understand that. Too many times the government has sent people out to regions within the province. They've never, ever come to our community. This is the first group that I've seen since the study that was done by the ex-Newfoundland Premier a few years back.

No federal group has ever come here to listen to us. We're a fishing community. We live and die by the sea. I think it's paramount that the government realizes how adamant my people are about keeping finfish aquaculture out of here, for a lot of good reasons. I think we've got to quit talking through our hats and start realizing the impact of finfish. It's not all about the bottom line here; it's about our way of life, and I think that's what our people are saying.

**C. Trevena:** Thank you, Chief Gladstone. Some of the questions I have may be in your 15-year fishing strategy, but I did want to ask a bit about the commercial fishery that you have at present and what you hope to have. What proportion of your people is actually working at the moment in commercial fishery?

[0940]

**W. Gladstone:** We have a fleet of about maybe 20 or 30 gill-netters?

**A Voice:** Twenty-five gill-netters.

**W. Gladstone:** Twenty-five gill-netters and about two or three commercial seine vessels. We hire about 40 or 50 continuously during the summer for four or five months. We would like expand that into a 12-month scenario by getting involved with more commercial licences, purchasing them through government assistance programs or going to financial providers to do that.

That's all part of the planning for the next 15 years. We would like to engage in more fishing endeavours so that we could put our people into a 12-month scenario. That's basically what we're trying to do. The 15-year plan is a planning tool.

**C. Trevena:** I think some of the questions I have will be answered there. The other question I have is on your fish-processing plant: is it just working during the

fishing season, or have you managed to sustain it through other processing?

**W. Gladstone:** We have some other processing activities that go on there other than commercial salmon. We have our spawn-on-kelp operation that happens every February, March and April. But right now, continuously for work, we need more licences to keep it active.

Right now, like everybody else in the fishing industry, we're struggling. We want to be able to do something that's more comprehensive to create employment and make it into a business venture that, if not break-even, makes money.

**C. Trevena:** One last question, which is a little separate. You're talking a lot about shellfish aquaculture. I wondered, in your projections, if you projected the possible employment impact of shellfish aquaculture in that.

**W. Gladstone:** Shellfish aquaculture will bring a lot of employment to our community. Some of our members are very interested in it. We've been trying to look for a process where we could accommodate them. Right now, I think, you have to respect the fact that we have title and rights issues that we deal with. We're like the government. We have to recognize conservation, title and rights issues and then create employment for our people — you know, whether it's shellfish or commercial salmon fishing.

With the shellfish, we're looking at the subscribing beaches for our potential wild stock clam fishery. We're working in statistical area 7. We would like to expand that into 8 and 9 within our traditional territory. We've never had that ability to do that. Now that we're implementing a land use plan with the provincial government, we're prepared to do that.

We're looking at possible farmsites with our group here. We've engaged in that in the last couple of weeks. We want to look at these potential farmsites for shellfish aquaculture.

It's been ongoing. We've had a study that's been ongoing for quite some time for the central and north coast. Now we're about to implement that. We're going to talk to community members about possible areas that they would like to get into. Hopefully, quite a lot of people, and I know that.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Dan has a supplemental question.

**A Voice:** ...sentimental?

**D. Jarvis:** Sentimental, yes.

With regards to the fish ranching aspect that you were discussing, do you have any numbers as to the number of juveniles you've put out to sea? Do you have any record as to what kind of return you may be getting? Or is that just an open equation? Tough question.

**W. Gladstone:** I'm not God. I'm not going to predict how many fish are going to go back to the ocean. I'm not going to go there. But if you look at the success in

Alaska — it's done well for the people there. The communities up there have done very well with the ocean ranching endeavours, and we've looked at how successful they are. I think it all depends on the kind of species that you raise. We're looking at chum salmon as a fish to raise. There's a lot of potential there in the egg markets for that.

With us, it's all about creating employment for 12 months. I think our people have enough traditional knowledge that we can do a better job than everybody else has been doing with their hatcheries throughout the province. Our statistical information with our hatcheries far supersedes any other success story that's been going on in B.C.

**D. Jarvis:** Why I was asking was that when we were in Rupert, months ago now, they had a breakdown as to how many fish actually went through, down the Skeena, and went out. They had almost a dollar component as to what was returned.

[0945]

**W. Gladstone:** Our best example is our hatcheries. We've been able to fish on the returning stocks from what we release. It's been not too bad.

**D. Jarvis:** It has been steady.

**W. Gladstone:** The returns are not too bad.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thanks. The final question is from Scott.

**S. Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Gladstone. I would like to acknowledge the Heiltsuk traditional territories. The work you've done on land use planning is impressive. Also, the young people here — it's great to see them. I know the school is across the way, but this is a part of their education, too, so I'm glad they're here.

You've mentioned your position on fish farms and shellfish, which are opposing. How many finfish tenures are within your traditional territory?

**W. Gladstone:** You mean...?

**S. Fraser:** Fish farms.

**W. Gladstone:** Well, our traditional territory goes far north, as you can see on the map that you have before you. It's the line of our traditional territory. Our northern Heiltsuk relatives have chosen to go with your fish farming. We don't agree with that, but our chief here will speak to that and the ongoing discussions that are going on with that. We've always been opposed to it, if you want to know.

**S. Fraser:** A lot of the time, if I could just ask, were you...? Do you feel that you were consulted, meaningfully, in that process?

**W. Gladstone:** No.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Bill. Thanks for your presentation.

Now I would like to invite Chief Gary Housty to make a presentation.

**G. Housty:** Thank you, and good morning to everyone. I am a commercial fisherman, and I've been fishing for 40-plus years. I am 61 years of age.

I want to say that thanks to hard work and the wild salmon, I have been one of the biggest investors in the fishing industry. Over the years I have purchased four gill-netters — four vessels. I am a central coast adviser to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and I've been doing that for 17 years. I am a hereditary chief in my community. My hereditary name is Naci.

I want to thank the students and teachers who are here with us today. It's very important to have them here with us because what we are doing here today is on behalf of them. Like what was said before, we're doing this for our yet unborn children. I want to thank them for the banners they put in place. It's a strong message.

I want to thank you, the special committee, for coming to visit us because this needs to happen. I don't think that in the past we have been represented properly. Proper consultation was never done in the right way. As Bill said, on the Kitasoo fish farming, we weren't consulted fully with that. They just went ahead and did it.

I want to say that your presence here for three hours to hear our great concerns is a very short time. The special committee needs to walk and talk with us throughout our community — to our rivers and our streams and our ocean, which means so much to our people and the way we live. We are proud how we enhance chum and coho, as Bill talked about.

We have been doing a form of ocean ranching for many years, with great success and great returns, and we continue to do this work.

[0950]

As we learn more, we look forward to different forms of aquaculture and different species of shellfish. Our people have been experimenting with different species of shellfish with great success. When we decide to go into aquaculture, we will need a large area of our territory. There will be no room for fish farming.

I want to talk a little bit about the social issues that were mentioned by Mr. Coons, our MLA for North Coast. This is a very important question, because ever since fish farming came into our territory, it has divided our two communities.

It's been very, very awkward, because many of us in this room are relatives to that community. My mother's maiden name is Starr. It comes from Klemtu, so I am part Klemtu. You know, I find it really awkward. When their community has to come through our community for medical services, we're always there to help them.

When fish farming came into place, all of a sudden the invisible boundaries that we put in place many, many years ago... We shared those boundaries; it didn't matter if we went across each other's lands. It wasn't long ago when the Kitamaat, the Kitasoo and

we harvested herring eggs for food, side by side, and talked and were happy while we were doing our work.

Ever since the fish farming was put into place, I feel that there has been a big wedge put among our communities, and it hurts, because our relationships are not the same anymore. We have to find a way to correct that.

I was always very concerned about the geographic locations of their fish pens. They're in Mathieson Channel, they're in Jackson Passage, and they're in Goat Cove. All of these areas, to me, are very sensitive areas. By that I mean that if you look at a map, it clearly shows that a young and an adult salmon coming in and out of the ocean have to literally go through a narrow, narrow channel, which to me is a funnel. It's a greater chance of contaminating our wild salmon. That has always been a concern of mine.

As mentioned by the speakers before me, I worry about our clam beds; our precious seaweed, kelp for our spawn-on-kelp operations; and all bottom fish.

Wild salmon has sustained and nurtured our people for hundreds of years. Wild salmon is sacred to our people and to our culture. There is a salmon dance that takes place in our potlatches that is very important to us. There are salmon eggs that were part of the formula for making paint when my ancestors placed their paintings and drawings on our rock bluffs to mark our territories. That's important to us.

[0955]

There are salmonberries that grow and tell us the salmon are arriving. That's important to us. You cannot place a dollar value on our great refrigerator, the ocean, and everything that's in it.

Regarding the smolt factory in Ocean Falls, we were promised 32 jobs for our people. One non-Heiltsuk works there, because everything is automated. The hereditary chiefs took Omega to court. Although the factory is operating, the case remains open. We will be doing follow-up in the near future.

Atlantic salmon escapements. As a commercial fisherman I have caught seven farmed fish in two openings this past season. It is recorded in my logbook and will be mailed to Victoria. Fish farmers continue to falsely say "little or no escapements" when there are thousands recorded.

Sea lice are making news this week on BCTV and CBC radio. It is now proven that 95 percent of young salmon are killed by sea lice. One louse can kill a young salmon because it doesn't have any scales yet. I'm going to be having my friend Chris Williamson, our marine biologist who has done sea lice studies in our territory, to speak on this. I believe he's on the speakers list.

Our neighbours to the south, the Alert Bay people. Their traditional clam beds have been destroyed because of farm pens. They warn us to be careful.

Farming Atlantic salmon in our territory is not accepted. We say no to all foreign species. There will be no fish farming in our territory. It is our wish that the special committee before us be honest, be sincere when they present our concerns to the government.

We are the hereditary chiefs. We are the real stewards of the land and waters. It's not the Department of

Fisheries and Oceans. We have to carry on. The best knowledge is local knowledge, and we look for advice to our elders, such as a very important person, the first person that came up to this table, a man I respect highly, Fred Reid.

Salmon need herring to survive. We learn to be cautious for good reasons. Over the past decade we have been telling the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: "Industry is overfishing our herring stocks in the central coast." Three years ago Department of Fisheries and Oceans scientists told us that there is an abundance of herring in the central coast, and it could stand three times the allocated quota.

We are now faced with little or no spawns in our traditional area. They now say: "No commercial herring fishery in the central coast this coming season." Local knowledge warned the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that this would happen.

[1000]

I would like to close by saying that fish farmers, people and industry come and go. We are here for the rest of our lives. This is our homeland. Always respect it. We will always fight to keep our waters clean and our forests green. We are the salmon people. Thank you for listening.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Chief Housty. I'll open the floor to questions.

**S. Fraser:** Thank you, Chief. I hope we're here to learn from traditional knowledge and the wisdom of the elders. I think that's been lacking, in a lot of cases, in fisheries issues, but that's my personal opinion.

I have a question. You said you caught this year — in how many openings? — seven farmed salmon.

**G. Housty:** Seven in two openings.

**S. Fraser:** When would that have been, and can you remember where that was?

**G. Housty:** This would be in about mid-July.

**S. Fraser:** That was gill-netting?

**G. Housty:** Yes.

**S. Fraser:** Were there any escapes from the farms reported at that time that you're aware of?

**G. Housty:** Not that I'm aware of, but we know for a fact that there had been incidents because of storms up in the Kitsoo area, where an anchor literally rolled off the shelf and dragged the pen down. Of course, as I said, very few or no farmed salmon escaped when that pen went under two or three fathoms.

There's too much false information out there. The proof is in what I just reported here — that we are catching farmed salmon. One of the things that one of our eldest fishermen for our company and our community has been noticing and has had me observe is

that we are starting to notice more sea lice in our adult salmon.

**S. Fraser:** You said that you recorded that?

**G. Housty:** I recorded it in my logbook, which we're required to do each year. At the end of the season, you mail it off to Victoria.

**S. Fraser:** Has there been a government reaction? Have you informed either DFO or...?

**G. Housty:** As a central coast adviser, it is my duty to do that. I have reported to the head person in Bella Coola. Those are the people I work with.

**S. Fraser:** Was there a reaction to that?

**G. Housty:** Only that it's recorded.

**S. Simpson:** Thank you very much, Chief. Your comment about us only being here for three hours: I think that's a pretty fair comment. I know that as members of the committee, we spend short periods of time in many communities on the coast, and it's never enough time. I think it's fair comment that we would learn more if we were here longer. But life is as it is.

In our time when we visited on the north coast and now in the midcoast, we have heard from first nations people up and down the coast who, in the vast majority of cases, very much share your position in regard to questions about finfish aquaculture and fish farms — and feel very strongly. When we spoke to people up the Skeena River, the voices we heard were very passionate and very strong.

The question I have is: as there are issues there, what advice would you give us for how we respond to the challenges in the case of your territory here — the Kitsoo situation in Klemtu where there are farms — where we're hearing here today, and we may very well hear in Bella Coola, very strong views that believe that farms are not good for your territory?

What advice can you give us for how we deal with that situation — and, of course, the Kitsoo, who have had longstanding farms in their area and have made that choice?

[1005]

**G. Housty:** Well, I think that first and foremost, they have to be open with us. Consultation has been a very one-sided affair as far as I see. As Bill mentioned, they're definitely in what I call our territory. So we have every right to voice our opinions as to their operations in that territory.

I don't quite know how to answer your question. One of the things that could possibly be done is... The hereditary chiefs who have been involved always said: "Look, there is much rapid tide in your actual area. Why don't you go there?" We've asked them that question many times, with no response. They choose to come to an area, which I explained to you, that is to-



tally a funnel effect, in my mind. As a commercial fisherman, that concerns me.

For the future of our rivers to the future of these young people — that is my concern.

**S. Simpson:** Just as a bit of a follow-up, one of the things that has been said to us, and I would ask for your comment on this.... As Bill said and as you've said, Chief, these are matters that are going on in your territory. You have a right to be the key decision-maker about what goes on in your territory. That's the right that you have.

Should those kinds of questions in some fashion be put back into the hands of your people to sort that out among yourselves and make those decisions?

**G. Housty:** A very good question. We've been doing it for a long time. We've been attempting to do it for a long time, with no positive results.

There is a very simple solution to this. Like I said, if they want to do fish farming, why don't they do it in what we call their own area? Then we won't have so much to say about it. It's too one-sided.

**W. Gladstone:** Maybe I could expand a little bit on what the Chief is saying. The Kitasoo are flying both the Tsimshian flag and the Heiltsuk flag; 85 percent of the population there is Xaixais people — our relatives. But I guess Gary can tell you that through treaty arrangements, they're talking Kitasoo-Xaixais.

I think the issue is what the Chief was saying. If they want to do fish farms, do it in Kitasoo territory, and that's on the outside. If you talk to them, they'll tell you that they don't want to do that either, for a lot of reasons. They're scared. But you know what? They're putting it into our traditional territory, and that's the issue.

**C. Trevena:** I just want to go back to the issue of escapes. You say you report it to Victoria. So you reported to the provincial government that there have been escapes, the number of escapes every year. Is that correct?

**G. Housty:** We are required to fill a logbook every day, every set throughout the season. When we're done the season, that logbook goes through Archipelago in Victoria. It's recorded. I don't know what they're going to use that information for, when all that information is directly in our fish plant. All this information that we put in this logbook can be picked up at the fish plant.

I totally disagree with the logbook rules that we have to do these days. I think it's totally unnecessary. I think it's job creation for an ex-fisherman who decided he needed a job.

**C. Trevena:** But the logbooks do show the number of escapes. This is an official record from your vessels each time there is an escape, and then it is reported. What I'm trying to clarify is: is it reported to the federal government, the provincial government or an independent body?

**W. Gladstone:** All commercial fishermen are required to fill out a logbook. That's part of the licensing process with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. It's a federal matter.

The organization is Archipelago out of Victoria. They're ex-Department of Fisheries and Oceans people who are doing so-called science that goes on forever. What they do with that information after they get it is basically up to them. They're the ones doing the research, and they report to the feds on that.

What he's saying is that we're putting all this information on this logbook.

[1010]

**C. Trevena:** Right. It's just to find whether they can get a track of, obviously, the number of escapes.

My other question is on the farms that are in Klemtu that the Kitasoo have there. I know that there are a lot of concerns. They've been farming there for, as I understand it, about 20 years. I just wondered what impacts you have seen over the 20 years that they have been farming in your territories.

**G. Housty:** Only that the diving surveys that happened within the pen areas.... You know, what we've all been hearing on the news throughout the years is that whatever is down below the pens gets killed off or that there are things like sea urchins, sea cucumbers, that grow to extra-large proportions, which is unusual.

It's going to be a lot of time before you see actual effects. They say that the fish farming industry prefers strong tide areas, which, to me, just takes the waste somewhere else and spreads it out in a farther area. I don't know. It just doesn't make sense to me.

**W. Gladstone:** Just to add a little more to it, it's an industry that's self-regulated. I think if the provincial government did justice to the process, they should have had an independent going out and doing these studies. The advice that's coming out in the last week is good, and I think it speaks to some of the issues that we're talking about.

**G. Coons:** Just for your information and for the people here, our site visit to Klemtu was cancelled yesterday because we couldn't fly in. We are disappointed because, again, we need to listen to everybody involved and come up with some recommendations. As pointed out by Scott, I think it's imperative to listen to the elders and get the local knowledge. I'm not quite sure what we're going to do about Klemtu and a visit there. We'll have to discuss that.

As we look at my jump into being a representative for the North Coast, I'm beginning to understand the sharing of the territories versus the government's interpretation of overlapping, and the coming to that determination — the thousands of years of sharing that have been worked out between nations. I'm sure it will continue here.

You did mention something about Ocean Falls. I think just for the benefit of the members here — we

have our map, and we can find Ocean Falls, and there's a hatchery there — perhaps you could just go into a bit more with.... I guess there's a dilemma there in that you have concerns with the hatchery that services the Klemtu farm. Perhaps just a comment on that?

**G. Housty:** Right from day one our community and the hereditary chiefs were opposed to the smolt factory in Ocean Falls. We did two or three protests. We brought half of our community there, and we talked to residents of Ocean Falls.

I thought that, speaking to them, I would be hearing things like: "They will be employing us." To the best of my knowledge, none of them are employed.

Like I say, the hereditary chiefs brought this to court. Although the factory is under operation, the judge made it very clear that the case remains open. It's not closed. So in the event of something tragic happening in regards to the factory, we will be immediately going back to court.

[1015]

**R. Austin (Chair):** Okay. Seeing no further questions, I'd like to thank you very much, Chief Housty, for making your presentation.

I would now like to call Mel Innes forward to make a presentation. If you'd like to come to the witness table, please.

**M. Innes:** Good morning.

Yeah, I thought some people might have been from industry, or I was going to get cheeky with you guys. But seeing you're at government level, I have to show some respect here for you people. I'd like to thank you very much for coming up.

Just a question on the way the presentation was made to us — how important salmon is to your lives. At one time I made a very good living as a salmon fisherman — a very good living. During the summer it's in our fridge, from June to August, and from there on it's in our deep-freeze, things like that.

When it comes to asking how important salmon is, it's very important — very, very important. If you're here between June and July and August, all you'll see are people looking and hoping to get some fish. Canning, smoking, barbecuing. Some used to do it salted but not anymore. That's how important it is to us.

I guess a lot of the questions I was going to ask were done by the previous speakers, and I thank them for doing that. It was brought up, too, by the three universities that it's 95-percent detrimental to the smolts coming into the sea. There was UBC, UVic and University of Hawaii. It goes on to say that there are 16 more units of PCBs in the farmed fish than there are in the wild.

I just want to know how many more tests that we have to take to prevent fish farming in our area. It's going to kill these people if we don't have salmon. We have bologna and wieners, but you get tired of that.

I'd just like to mention, when you guys were talking about Ocean Falls.... There was such a heavy RCMP presence. They brought in extra RCMP when

we went out to protest the smolt farming in Ocean Falls. They had snipers up in the bushes, for God's sake. We're gentle people. We're kind people. We let anybody come in here. Sport fishing out here is rampant in St. John. They've turned a bit. They were hiring some of our people that want to go out there.

You go up to the airport and you can't even stand around there when the time comes. Our freight gets bumped; our mail gets bumped — just to get those people up here. And all they do is fly in and fly out. There's no monitoring of what they take out.

There's no Fisheries there. They only mark on your card. So when you're trolling out there, you're trying for the big one and you get one small one. Then the next line you get a big one and you let the one you just...go until you get what you got when you're done. No monitoring.

You know, it's ironic. Before the moratorium was lifted, your people should have been here consulting our people, asking if they could open. I'd like to say that I'm very, very disappointed that it had to come to this part.

It's more like putting the cart before the horse. It hurts me for something like that to happen when it should have been done prior to coming in now. It's taken a hard, hard time for me to be very.... I feel so angry, but I know you people here are the ears of the government, so it's not going to do me any good.

With that, I'd like to say that I'm against farmed fish. I have fish three times a week if I can. I'm 64 years old; I look 50.

I'd like to thank the students and all the people that are here supporting us in our endeavours. I'd like to thank you people for coming and thank you for listening.

[1020]

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Mel. Thank you for tempering your remarks, even though I can see there's a lot of passion there.

Does anybody have a question of Mr. Innes? No? Okay.

Thank you very much for making your presentation.

**M. Innes:** Told you that'd happen.

**R. Austin (Chair):** I'd like to call Ross Wilson up to the witness table to make a presentation.

**R. Wilson:** Good morning, Mr. Chair, MLAs.

Thank you for coming to Heiltsuk territory. Just for your information, the definition of "Heiltsuk" is to speak or act correctly, and that's what you heard this morning.

I have a lot of thoughts going through my head and a lot of answers to your questions that you have here, so I could very well be jumping all over the place. Bear with me.

I come from a line of commercial fishermen. As you know through studies, the Heiltsuk people have been here for well over 9,000 or 10,000 years. Through those studies they've found many species of food — and

other outerwear and buildings. But it's evidence that we've relied on the salmon to survive. It's evidence that we've relied on the seaweed and the clams, etc. So I just wanted to make the point that today is historic because — Mel is right — you come as the cart, when the horses should have been here.

The chiefs had a position on finfish, and their position was: no. That position went to court against both the provincial government and industry. The council supported the chiefs 100 percent. The decision that came down from the judge was that "no" was not a reasonable position, that the Heiltsuk should be more open to industry and opportunities, and that the Heiltsuk should work with the company that wants to open the hatchery. I want to make the point here that it's not the court's decision to be involved in economic opportunities in any territory.

It's a hard position to be following the term "Heiltsuk" because these are proud people. They do speak and do act correctly. When you say to them, "Work with a company that produces the very species that negatively impacts not only our whole environment but the ocean environment and the food that we take in on a daily basis," it's a hard position to be in. You're telling them: "Go and work with that hatchery." Well, that hatchery is going to be providing product to a farm that's going to be impacting our environment, our ocean environment.

Gary — Chief Housty — just told you that he caught some escapement. Chiefs cannot be seen as hypocritical, to be working with the hatchery and then knowing that that hatchery is providing the very species to the neighbours who are involved in fish farms. How do you expect them to answer that? They can't. They're looking to help their people, and at the same time they know the impact that it's going to have.

We did have some meetings with the company in Ocean Falls. Our position was very strong. To be truthful, that's not consultation and accommodation. What the courts have said is that consultation and accommodation come from the government. That's both provincial and federal. I recognize that you're the MLAs, but are you the government that should be here?

[1025]

You had Chief Bill Gladstone sitting in front of you — our government. That's who you should be meeting with. They represent us because we voted them in, very much like you are. You're failing there. This accommodation and consultation process is failing first nations people. It's allowing industry to get carried away in doing what they want, and you come in after the fact.

The company that we were just having discussions with when the factory was going up, even though we opposed it, said that there would be no deliveries of their product to any farms in Heiltsuk territory. We brought up the fact that there are four tenures in the Xaixai's territory.

I'm Xaixai. There are Xaixais in Klemtu. The Xaixai population in Bella Bella is larger than the Haihai population in Klemtu. There was no consultation there.

They said they would not provide any product to any fish farms in our territory. At the time a different company owned the hatchery. Today that very hatch-

ery is owned by the tenure holders in the Xaixai territory. Now, put two and two together: what do you think's going to happen? The very thing they said they wouldn't do, they're going to do.

Chief Housty talked about the relationship, how it's hurt this community and Klemtu. The chiefs are very close. Over the past four or five years it's been a real struggle for them to have good dialogue. And when you make a comment on who should be looking at providing fish farms and territories, it should be first nation against first nation who should come to a conclusion on this.

The land-use-plan process that we got involved in was, in a sense, forced on us because we knew that if the CCLRMP was allowed to go ahead without first nations involvement, you were going to impose your process on us. So we got involved in land use planning. That was another reason why we did it.

I can imagine you've heard all of the issues on the impacts from fish farms. The current study that came out — that the previous speaker said.... What alarmed me was that when I was watching TV, there was a representative of this very committee who made a comment that well, it's their science, and we have science. What I was afraid of was that you've come to a conclusion or a position on this already, when you have one of your representatives stating that right in front of the camera.

You had four people that just sat up here and gave you traditional-use information. For years and years and years we've been saying that traditional-use is very valuable information. You tell us that science is the only answer to getting answers to your questions.

An example that I'll give you is that we've been involved in herring-roe-on-kelp fishery for centuries, and through the Gladstone decision, we've gotten the commercial right to fish that — the only first nation that has a commercial right. At the time you said, "Our science is right," and now you look at the west coast and the Queen Charlottes, where their herring stocks are so low that they can't even have a roe-on-kelp fishery.

[1030]

What do we do? We look at your science, and we don't agree with it, so we get involved in our own science. We then bring our science to the table. The comment I read from that TV report was: "Well, that's your science. This is our science." Where does it end?

I think it was Claire that asked a question about a fish plant. Somebody asked a question about the fish plant and the operations that we had and whether it's successful or not. We're struggling, like Chief Gladstone said — okay?

The Kitasoo have not been involved continuously for 20 years in fish farming. It has only been for about 10 years. They did have a farm over 20 years ago that failed, and then there was a hiatus there, and they came back.

When they first started up, they started doing their processing, and they were engaged in hiring people both from here, from Kitimat and wherever else. They asked us if we would process at the time. This is before we decided a position on net pen farming. So we did. Our plant was in operation, with I don't know how many deliveries, but we did do some processing.

I don't want to be sensational about this, but here's an example of how we're perceiving fish farms. They would process, and then the remains, the waste — the heads and the guts and all that — would be shipped out. I don't know where it was shipped out, but it was shipped out.

One time the truck broke down, so they left the trailer just up top of the hill here going to the ferry. It was in the summertime, and that truck sat there for about a month and a half. As the heat hit it, all that waste started to just expand, as that's what happens. It started to pour out of that very small container. It popped the lid, and that stuff was coming out.

Now, nobody was looking after it, because that wasn't our responsibility. We only processed. It wasn't our truck; it wasn't our trailer. But what's interesting is that everybody who went by that very site.... The smell was overwhelming. We can all imagine. There were no birds there; there were no rats or mice there. That stuff just rotted.

No animal would eat it. We have wolves here, and we have bears here, and apparently, we've had a cougar sighting. Nothing would eat that stuff. And you want us — I'm using the proverbial you — to look at fish farming, when the very animals that we live with, that are our clansmen, wouldn't even touch it. I don't mean to sensationalize it, but that's one of the issues we've looked at.

Chief Gladstone made a point in commenting on our marine initiative under our 15-year economic development plan. That's to be involved in the wild stock — period. The plan is very ambitious, and we are going to work hard to get there. But the plant that we have will process all those species we are hoping to go after.

We're involved in the fishery for a number of reasons, because we have history, but we want to provide employment. Those kids you saw that had to go back to class. Our population is upwards of 60-percent youth. What do you think they're going to do? I'm not talking in ten years. I'm talking about five years.

[1035]

When we put initiatives forward, such as that marine plant, for 15-year economic development, we want it happening quickly. The Heiltsuk people and the Heiltsuk Tribal Council put a lot of time and effort and many dollars into putting economic development forward for our people. Fish farms are not on the plate.

Were fish farms a part of the land use plan? Yes, only because the land use plan identifies tenures as a provincial responsibility. It's not a federal responsibility. We're going to expand on that in the marine use plan that we're engaged in right now.

There are studies going around the world on fish farms and the impacts. One of the things we're very interested in is the study on the viruses that come from fish farms. It's been acknowledged that the virus IHN comes from the wild stock and can be transferred into the pen, and then whatever passing stocks hit those pens can pick up that virus.

Earlier I made mention of the herring-roe-on-kelp fishery that I've been involved in. It's not a few-thousand-dollar or a hundred-thousand-dollar fishery for us. What was the number for this year?

**A Voice:** Three million.

**R. Wilson:** Three million. Last year it was four; the year before, three. You're looking at a \$3 million to \$4 million average income for people on the very stock that they won in court — to be involved in commercial fishing. So if they're going to be affected by IHN on fish farms, that's going to have a severe impact on our access to that fishery.

It's not your responsibility, but it has to be stated. It's a federal responsibility. I also understand that as a provincial government, you're responsible to look at this issue because it is a provincial initiative. The feds have no play here. But the problem is that you can't have the feds looking at this from the outside. They play a part in this, because they manage the wild stock, and the impact on wild stock, as you know from all the work you've heard, is devastating.

How do you get them to the table? I don't know. They have to accommodate and consult us as well.

We look at the impacts of any new initiative that happens. The chiefs have always been consulted on what's going on, whether it's a potlatch or a new forestry initiative that's coming or farming.

We talked about the impact of oil and gas. One of the questions that went out there was: are industry and government willing to put up an environmental bond in case of a disaster? I ask you that question now. Would you be willing to put an environmental bond on this industry, and what would that bond be?

There was a question earlier about our hatchery and its contribution to the wild stocks. It says here that there's a 72-percent survival rate. That was released. We took in 1.2 million eggs, 1.1 million chum fry. I can pass this over to you for your information. This is a report from our hatchery, just to give you some information on the question of that.

[1040]

I think the last thing I want to make a comment on is that — and I'll reiterate — the consultation and accommodation process that the provincial government has is failing first nations. You can't expect to develop a policy and then know that if we don't like it, we're going to fight it. It's got to be worked on together. Our position, from the chiefs and the tribal council and a few community members that you've heard today, was a no to fish farms.

It's not open-net-pen. If it was open-net-pen, then all the fish would get out. It's net pen fish farms. I read that all the time. It's not open-net-pen; it's net pen.

We're very interested in other opportunities, such as ocean ranching or land-based. We're willing to talk. If you look at our 15-year development plan, I think there are a lot of issues in there that you might want to question us on. We're hoping to move on stuff because we have to provide economic development for our people.

My last comment is that we would like to present our position to your parliament. Our council would like to present this to your parliament — and you have

to do your report — just to give them a sense of the importance of this issue.

This is a historic day for us. Fish farms are not trivial.

Everybody had a good year this year catching sock-eye — everybody. They were really happy. Last year nobody caught anything.

I want to thank you for your time.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thanks, Ross. There will probably be some questions.

**S. Fraser:** You've touched on a few things that I just want to get some clarification on.

Around your marine planning process, it's been mentioned before that shellfish aquaculture figures largely there. And then you were talking about the processing that's being done here and hoping that that goes all year long and provides, obviously, youth employment and everything else. Do you have the ability now to process shellfish here?

**R. Wilson:** Yeah. We've been involved in a commercial shellfish fishery for about 12 years now, and it's very successful. Our diggers are really great diggers. There are a lot of problems, but they're great diggers. They know what they want.

Involved with the shellfish, the issue becomes a tenure thing. Once you're tenured, it's not available to the commercial fishery. That would impact on their access to a spot.

I also wanted to make a comment that through the Turning Point initiative and all the other first nations on the central and north coasts, we've been involved in that shellfish initiative. We've forecasted that per farm there are 12 employees.

We could put a hundred farms in Heiltsuk territory. What they're not telling you is that we have a lot of great sites here because of the many islets we have and the water movement. It's all accessible to pristine waters. So we could be heavily involved in shellfish tomorrow.

We've been riding that for so long. I'm not sure what the holdup is, but we want to move on that.

**S. Fraser:** Ross, I've had some experience with shellfish too. I hear what you're saying.

I'm just curious. If that were expanded, is there the ability at this point on the coast to attach you to the processing? Or does everything have to be shipped out to a processing plant at this point?

**R. Wilson:** We would do the processing. Under the Turning Point initiative on the shellfish industry, what was discussed was that there would be two processing plants, one in the north and one in the south. You're talking about eight first nations who will be involved in shellfish aquaculture of two species, both the bay scallops and the oysters.

You have two processing centres, because not everybody that could have one has a processing centre.

We have one, and we have the history of processing shellfish in our territory.

[1045]

**S. Simpson:** Two comments. One is that I would assure you that among the committee members there is a variety of views around where we're going with this, I think. I know that a number of the committee members have made different comments about that sea lice study from a variety of places. I know that depending on which media you happen to be listening to.... I know that I certainly am of the view that it is groundbreaking and very compelling research that can't be dismissed. But having said that, I don't think.... There's not one view here on this committee around those issues.

The question I wanted to ask, though, was around.... You made a comment at the end of your presentation, Ross, where you talked about ocean ranching. You talked about the potential. I think you made a reference to land-based containment as a possibility. One of the things we've heard about land-based closed containment models is that it's very expensive, largely because of power costs, because you need to pump ocean water in and out 24-7. That's a big-ticket item.

We're starting to see.... We saw in other communities, where there are models being looked at for floating closed containment — whether they be like a bag, concrete drums that are totally enclosed.... Then they have a model where they pump through water with filters, and also, because of the depth of where they pump the water, they think they deal with most of the concerns.

The science on that hasn't been done by anybody completely, but the viability of these things isn't there. I'm interested to know whether that's something you've looked at, at all. Some people have said: "Yeah, that might be something that works." Others have said: "No, if it's in the water, we're not interested."

**R. Wilson:** We haven't done any studies on closed containment.

In regards to power, we have a power line that comes from Ocean Falls, which is about 25 miles away. We could tap into that power anywhere along that line. It's the mandate of the owner of that power plant or that independent power to provide access to industry. That was one of the reasons why he got that site. So we could go in and put a land base anywhere along here to Ocean Falls and set up a site.

**S. Simpson:** Yeah, I think the question was the cost of the power — the numbers of megawatts, the amount of power they'd have to take. The industry folks told us.... It gives it to them at about 15 percent of the cost if you float these things versus the cost if they're not in the water. Regardless of that, it's not something that your people have looked at in any kind of clear way?

**R. Wilson:** No.

**D. Jarvis:** Mr. Wilson, if you wouldn't mind, you brought up a couple of subjects, and I wondered if I

could get some better clarification from you on them. That was in regards to the population in your territory area.

We're all concerned about what's going to happen to our children and grandchildren — where they are going to work and all the rest of it. At the same time, you mentioned: what are you going to do with your children coming up behind you here, as far as keeping them here, work and responsible jobs, etc.? Yet at the same time, you say you do not want any fish farms.

Are you, therefore, relying everything on a shellfish industry itself — that this may be part of the answer to provide jobs in the future? And if so, what are the impediments that are stopping you from doing it now?

**R. Wilson:** If you're just talking about the farming issue, the aquaculture, our land use plan addresses many economic development opportunities, and the 15-year economic development plan addresses 13 sectors of industry that we would be involved in for our community.

It ranges from the airline industry, to oil and gas, to you name it. But in regards to sustainable aquaculture, shellfish would be one of our priorities — correct — but we're also looking at issues of kelp, because we know there's a market out there for kelp. That very product we use in our roe-on-kelp, so we can also be involved in that. When you're talking to the buyer, they want the best quality. If you have to set up a farm for the best-quality kelp, you do that.

These are initiatives that we've been involved in — yeah. One thing we don't want to impact is the commercial access that our people have. We have those licences still. So if we put tenures in place, they'd lose their access to the site.

We still have a lot of clam beaches that are viable to us. We're treading the line. We have to do the right thing, and they'll be give and take.

**D. Jarvis:** But there's nothing specifically impeding you from going ahead and doing it now, is there?

[1050]

**R. Wilson:** Oh, sure there is — money.

**D. Jarvis:** Other than the old problem — money.

**R. Wilson:** The advantage we have as Heiltsuk people is that we have the population to be involved in any industry. If you look at a lot of small communities along the coast, they couldn't do it. If they wanted 12 people per farm, they can't do it. We can do it.

We have 1,000 people off reserve, and many of them say: "I want to come home." Well, there has to be an industry in place for them, and there has to be housing in place for them.

**D. Jarvis:** So you have the product but no money to build infrastructure.

**R. Wilson:** We're rich in....

**D. Jarvis:** Land poor.

**R. Wilson:** Right now we're land poor, yeah, but we're rich in all species. We can go from tourism to forestry to fishing and shellfish aquaculture. We want to be involved in that.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Great. Thank you, Ross, for your presentation.

I'd like to call Chris Williamson to the witness table, please.

**C. Williamson:** Thank you, committee. My name is Chris Williamson. I'm a biologist, and I work for Rain-coast Conservation.

I just want to first thank Gary Housty, Bill Gladstone and the rest of the Heiltsuk people for allowing me to speak here today. I don't want to take up too much time, because I feel it's really important that more members of this community are allowed to speak.

I do want to speak briefly about some of the science that has been going on in this area. We have been involved in some of it with regard to wild salmon and fish farms.

We have been involved in a study with the University of Victoria for the past several years regarding sea lice levels on juvenile wild salmon in the Heiltsuk traditional territory as well as in the Kitasoo territory. As you know, the Heiltsuk traditional territory is free of fish farms in the majority of the territory, except for overlap with the Kitasoo. While I was not directly involved with the study, the authors of the study were able to get a great natural experiment where they could look at lice levels on juvenile salmon in areas that are free of fish farms and areas that also have fish farms that are adjacent to each other.

This data is presently being prepared for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, so I can't speak too much to it. But indications reveal that salmon that swim through waters in Heiltsuk territory out to the ocean are literally free of all sea lice, whereas juvenile salmon that swim through areas past farms in Kitasoo territory do have elevated levels of sea lice. They're not as high as what we're seeing in the Broughton Archipelago, where you have really high densities of farms, but they are getting average levels of approximately one to two lice per fish. We need to wait until that paper is published before we can go into that topic further.

What I want to speak to more is a study which we just conducted this spring within the Heiltsuk territory along with Heiltsuk Fisheries Co-Management. We looked at juvenile pink and chum salmon primarily — where they're migrating to, what routes they're using and habitat use.

We're still digging through the data, but preliminary analysis looks like instead of having very distinct migration routes through the channels and inlets, we're seeing that salmon are everywhere. Juvenile salmon are using all habitats. They're using bays, points, channels. While there's some temporal variability where you see spikes during the season of fish moving through certain areas throughout the season, we're seeing them use pretty much everywhere.

In the central coast here there are over 2,500 individual salmon runs. That's incredible. They don't nec-

essarily have the big rivers like the Skeena or the Fraser or the Nass, but they've got lots and lots of little really important systems that support salmon populations.

[1055]

It's been documented scientifically, and there are probably many more species that haven't even been documented or that people here could tell you about that rely upon the salmon. We know that at least 190 species of animals and plants rely upon salmon — everything from killer whales to bears, wolves, little moths, slugs, trees. Up to 90 percent of the nitrogen that some of these thousand-year-old Sitka spruce trees require comes from salmon carcasses. We also know that coastal bears — black bears and grizzly bears — acquire up to 80 percent of their dietary requirements from salmon every year.

We need this wild salmon on this coast, not only for all of the people here that live in these communities and who fill their freezer every year with salmon and halibut and rockfish but for all the wildlife. The entire ecosystem needs it.

I also want to speak a little bit to some of the other studies that have been going on. I'm sure you guys are probably aware of the study that was conducted by Adrian DeBruyn at the University of Victoria that looked at contaminants in rockfish, particularly near salmon farms. One of their field sites was the Kitasoo farms. What they found near these farms was that rockfish, which are generally very sedentary fish — they will migrate, but they tend to be sedentary — are up to two to three times higher in mercury concentrations than rockfish found away from fish farms.

The paper explains in great detail about how this process takes place. It has to do with the fish feed sinking to the bottom, as well as the fecal material, creating an anoxic environment that converts a type of mercury into methylmercury, which is then absorbed into the food chain and is ultimately brought into rockfish by the rockfish consuming prey near the fish farms.

People up and down the coast in this community catch lots of rockfish. Go to anybody's freezer, and you'll probably find rockfish, halibut, ling cod, salmon — lots of it. If more and more salmon farms are pushed onto this coast and small, indirect effects such as mercury contamination in rockfish is taking place, this could be extremely detrimental, especially to women, young children and pregnant women.

I don't want to speak too much more other than that, because I know we've got lots of speakers. I want to say thank you, and I appreciate your time in coming to this community.

**R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair):** You mentioned the study that's being done on sea lice and you did, more or less, give us the conclusion. Who would be the authors of that so we could look for that coming out?

**C. Williamson:** Corey Peet is going to be the lead author. Like I said, it shouldn't be used too much before the study is actually released.

**R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair):** Well, we can't really, but could you give me the name?

**C. Williamson:** That's P-e-e-t.

**R. Cantelon (Deputy Chair):** Okay, and the spelling of Adrian DeBruyn.

**C. Williamson:** That has been published. That is, I believe, D-e-B-r-u-y-n. That has been published in *Environmental Science and Technology*.

**G. Coons:** You mentioned that you are doing some sort of study on migratory routes. When was that going to be ready?

**C. Williamson:** We're hoping to have all of the data analyzed by the end of the year and ready for publication early in the spring.

**G. Coons:** Now, why would you be doing a study on migratory routes?

**C. Williamson:** Well, we've been hearing all the controversy down south about the fish farms in the Broughton and how everybody is really worried about sea lice attaching to the fish there and wondering where the fish are actually migrating through. We were interested not only in finding out where the fish are migrating through here for the issues of fish farms in the future but also just for basic biology.

So little is known about juvenile wild salmon, especially once they leave their natal streams. I think it's important for other industries as well, whether it's mining or.... Any impact on these habitats can be detrimental to them, so we're just trying to determine where they're found.

**G. Coons:** In my reading, if we look under the Fisheries Act, it talks about: "No person shall carry out any work or undertaking that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat." Fish habitat is referred to as rearing, food supply and migration areas.

[1100]

When we look at migration areas versus migration routes.... I guess there's a different defining DFO factor whose responsibility is looking after wild stocks and migration routes and areas. Could you clarify for me the difference between a route and an area?

**C. Williamson:** Migration rivers of migration area.... That seems quite ambiguous to me as well. I would imagine that a migration area, perhaps, is where they might be holding for a little while and feeding and actually resting versus direct migration routes through channels, for instance. I can't conclusively say, though.

**D. Jarvis:** First of all, are you a biologist?

**C. Williamson:** I am.

**D. Jarvis:** Okay. A previous speaker mentioned that there were approximately 25 different populations of salmon that migrate up into this area. Can you tell me where their outflow and inflow is? It is straight through Milbanke Sound out to sea? Where do they go from there?

**C. Williamson:** The juveniles or the adults?

**D. Jarvis:** The juveniles.

**C. Williamson:** The juveniles. I couldn't say conclusively where the majority of them exit. It appears that they exit in a variety of places. There are only a few options — right? There is Seaforth Channel, which is just north of here, that heads out. There's down near Hakai Passage. That's a route where they believe that some of the Bella Coola stock migrates down — through there.

It appears that what's happening is that all of the different populations are merging from the streams on the coast, are mingling and making their way slowly in and out through the inlets and islands and then migrating out through the large passes.

**D. Jarvis:** They don't go north, though.

**C. Williamson:** I couldn't say. Our study only extended into the outer boundaries of the Heiltsuk territory.

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

I would now like to call Andy Peers Sr. to the witness table.

**A. Peers:** [Heiltsuk spoken.] Thanks for having me.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Andy, could you just move a little bit closer to the mike just so that we can.... Thank you very much. That's great.

**A. Peers:** My name is Andy Peers Sr. I am a member of the Heiltsuk Indian tribe from this territory. I'm very glad to see you here representing your government because it's very, very important to discuss what we're discussing today. I've been around a long time. I'm 80 years old now, and I've seen a lot in my time.

One thing I'm not hearing is that you don't touch on countries that have fish farms and have done it in a big way, such as Norway. You've heard of what happened to that country. They devastated their whole marine resources. There was nothing left, all because of the fish farms. That's how bad it could get for us.

I'm going to be touching on a few things that I've heard here today. What I want to touch on is: I really believe there is no such thing as overlap in any territory.

[1105]

I heard one of you on the panel mention that Klemtu and us are just like one big family when it really boils down to it. Like Ross Wilson touched on, the Kynoc tribe, which consisted of both places —

Klemtu and Bella Bella.... Like he said, most of the people from that tribe moved out to Bella Bella, and the other remaining tribal members moved to Klemtu. Percy Starr is a member of that tribe. So when you really look at the picture, there's no such thing as overlaps.

We talk about chiefs. There are three of our chiefs from here. They intermarried. They married Klemtu women. Our highest-ranking chief was one of them, and the other one was Carmen Humchitt. To top it off, the other chief was the highest-ranking chief from Klemtu. For some reason, he moved here, and our chiefs welcomed him with open arms, and he became one of us. His name was Alfred Hall. He was the highest-ranking chief at Klemtu at that time. I just want to give you some history here.

Getting back to the fish farming, around the Alert Bay area, have you had any reports on how devastating the farm fish is down in that area? It's really, really bad.

I have a young friend whose name is Stevie Beans. He told me about 15 years ago, after they put the fish farms in that area.... There are lots of them there. Even in Deserters there are lots. In Gordon Group there are lots and all around the straits — Double Bay and those places.

He told me 15 years ago how bad it is — the fish farming, the waste. He said from way up inside where they've got the fish farms, around Double Bay towards the mainland, all the way out to past.... You know where the Deserters Islands are? They're outside Port Hardy. Some of those islands are almost up to Pine Island.

It didn't take long for them to devastate the seaweed. There's no seaweed in that whole area, right from way up inside the straits all the way out to half-way across the Queen Charlotte Sound, almost to Cape Caution. I just heard that they've devastated the clams, the shellfish. This is what's going to happen here if we let this go on. I think we should do away with fish farming. It's that bad.

[1110]

I listen to the news most nights. Two nights ago.... Do you know how many of the fry that the biologist was talking about? Do you know how much of the fry that they devastate that are...? You should see what they do to those little fry; 75 percent of the salmon fry are devastated. They are no longer.... They are killed.

You know how they get killed? Swimming by those pens Ross Wilson was talking about. That's how the sea lice get at those little fish. There's nothing left of them. That came on the news two nights ago.

You have a big job ahead of you. From what I hear, some of the Members of Parliament in Victoria are shareholders in fish farming. This is what I hear. I don't know. Could be that's not true.

**R. Austin (Chair):** I don't know.

**A. Peers:** Okay. I don't know, either, but I hear that. Mel touched on how important salmon is to our people. When I was a little boy — two, three, four years old — we had fish three times a day. We had it for lunch, and we had it for the other two meals. That's



how important it is to us. Maybe that's why some of us are so healthy, because that's how we nourished ourselves. That's how important our salmon is.

We have a lot of big salmon creeks in our area, and we've got to look after those. If we don't, we'll be like Norway. They have no kind of marine life there. Or is there anything that has come back since? They've devastated their whole marine life. Do you know? Is there any marine life there, like cod and other fish? I don't know, but I'm asking anyway.

I've said a lot today, and I'll leave it at that. Thank you very much for the time you gave me.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Andy, for your presentation. Scott has a question for you.

**S. Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Peers. You referred to south of Cape Caution — a reduction in seaweed, you said, associated with the farms. Are you referring to kelp there? Kelp beds? What seaweed were you referring to?

**A. Peers:** Our seaweed. It's very nourishing food. We eat it.

**S. Fraser:** I've eaten it too.

**A. Peers:** It grows in late spring, around April, May, June, and we have it year-round. There's just no seaweed left in that whole area, and that's a huge area I'm talking about. Let's not let it happen here, because seaweed is a big part of our nourishment. We'd like to protect it. Thank you.

Is that it?

**S. Fraser:** Yes.

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

**A. Peers:** Okay. Thanks for having me.

[1115]

**R. Austin (Chair):** That's the last of the speakers who had called ahead and had said that they would like to make a presentation. But now we have some time open here, so what we're going to go to is an open-mike session.

We have some speakers who have come and given their names forward to Brant here. I'm going to invite them up, but I would ask that they limit their comments to a few minutes each to enable as many people from this community as possible to speak to us.

If possible, could Ellen Humchitt please come forward and express her views to the committee.

**E. Humchitt:** I want to present this petition, which 335 members of my community have signed. It states: "We, the undersigned, oppose any form of farm fishing in the Heiltsuk territory. The health of the wild salmon and the marine environment must be protected against the harmful industry." I would like to present this to you.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Ellen. The Clerk of Committees will take the petition. Thanks very much. Thanks for coming forward.

I'd like to call Brian Starr, if Brian Starr would like to come and say a few words.

Hi, Brian.

**B. Starr:** Hello. I'm here speaking on behalf of the youth of the Heiltsuk community. I noticed you said that you were glad to see many of the youth here to listen in on this, so my assumption is that you must be interested in our views on the subject.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Absolutely.

**B. Starr:** We as the future leaders feel very strongly about the issue of fish farming. As you can see, many of the children have come here bringing posters, and I'd like to say that they were not.... This was their choice to do so.

All of the children here have given up their time from school, and they have got permission from each of their teachers to be here. Although some of them have gone back to the school, they have all made some sort of appearance to support us in our decisions.

To touch on the fish farm that takes place in Klemtu, personally, I feel that it should have no effect on the decision made for a fish farm in our Heiltsuk territories. Also, I'd like to point out that Gary Housty.... He mentioned that seven farmed fish were caught during the opening, and I feel that the number will only grow larger if we are to continue into fish farming.

I really thought about what Rajja said, when she mentioned that there are certain chemicals that are coming through these fish that may cause cancer and other various diseases, which I feel should cancel out any thoughts of fish farming completely.

I know because some of my family members have actually had allergic reactions to some of the chemicals that are in the fish from the farms. We know that it is from the farm that these reactions are coming, because they've had no reactions to any of the wild salmon that they have eaten.

[1120]

I would also like to point out that mutated fish with more than one head or more than the regular number of fins should be a sign to immediately stop farming, right then and there. It's obvious that our people feel so strongly about this. As you can see, so many of our community members have come out to tell you our views on this issue.

I believe that's all I'd really like to say, and I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak. As you can see, the young people of our community feel so strongly about this subject that we've given up our time from school to come and give you our views.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you very much, Brian. May I ask, before you leave: what grade are you in?

**B. Starr:** I'm in grade 12.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Okay, great. Well, it's good to see you coming and participating. Thanks very much.

**B. Starr:** Thank you for your time.

**R. Austin (Chair):** I'd like to call Steve Carpenter forward to the witness table.

**S. Carpenter:** Thank you for having me here. I thank the community for having the membership of the community out to this meeting.

Before I start, I'm 68 years old. I've been on a boat since I was seven years old — a long history. I've been through the times when we had just about our whole community in the fishing industry. At one time we had probably 80 of our men on seine boats; we now have 15. At one time we had six active trollers from this community; we have none now. Our gill-netters have held steady at about 25 or 30 since that time. At one time we had quite a few of our men and a lot more of our ladies working in canneries. We are now down to less than 50 percent participating, working in canneries, and now their hours of working in the canneries have been cut down to about 20 percent of the time that they used to work at one time.

So my concern is the jobs on the central coast. There are none in the fishing industry. People like me will be getting out of the industry pretty soon. I give myself two years at the maximum. Five jobs will be lost from this community when I'm finished, if nobody from this community buys my boat and my equipment. I was active in salmon fishing, herring fishing — in all aspects of herring fishing — and I also was active in halibut longlining on Goose Island banks, probably the last person to take a boat up from Bella Bella to go out fishing on Goose Island banks. I took my dad's boat out for two years.

I don't reside in Bella Bella. I haven't heard too many of the.... I call it propaganda, from the environmentalists that are here. We have three of them across on the other side, three different groups. They spread their gospel and their propaganda to this community, but they don't provide any jobs at all to our people, and that kind of upsets me. That's why I'm coming from a different perspective. Probably within 20 years we're going to have to.... We might leave Laglisla if there's nothing done to promote some sort of a long-term fishery plan, and I mean immediately. Twenty years from now you're going to have no active fishermen from Bella Bella, and that's scary.

[1125]

Our youth here, if they're going to stay here, are going to have no job opportunities anywhere. Maybe they'll have to do what some of us have done — move off the reserve and move elsewhere, where there are jobs.

I, too, like my seafood. I, too, like my fishing, because I've been in it for over 60 years now. I started being out at work with my dad when I was seven years old on a gill-netter. But when it comes to job prospects, I get concerned. I get very concerned. So maybe this fish farm isn't the big boogeyman it's made out to be, as far as I'm concerned. This is just a personal opinion.

I would not like to see our people fully dependent on a government cheque. I would like to see them work. I would like to see them work because that's what makes a person — providing for himself and his family. That's what I was taught, not only by my dad and my mother but by my grandparents. They told me to work hard. "Go, go. Work hard. Make your place in society." Those things were taught long before.... When my dad was 13 years old, his grandfather told him: "Get out there and work. Don't lay back. Don't wait for anybody else to work on your behalf. Go. Go out there and work."

Even though fish farms.... Everybody says it's a bad, bad thing. My brother has got a degree as a marine biologist. He's got a master's degree in marine biology. He went to a meeting in San Francisco, and they had a taste test. Seventy percent of the people that were taking that test favoured farmed fish over wild salmon. I couldn't believe that, but he showed me the paper that he had. I don't know why it was. Maybe it was because those people down there had never tasted wild salmon, I guess. It was in San Francisco.

Just this year our production in our plant was 600,000 pounds. One seine boat used to catch that. On a bad year two seine boats caught that much. So my feeling about wild salmon fishing is.... I'm not too optimistic anymore. Two years in a row our plant's had 600,000-plus pounds.

I'm the only one from this community who takes an annual trek to our northern neighbours to do some of my fishing. I go by their farm. I go to the community sometimes and talk to the people, try to keep an open mind about what they're doing. What I see when I'm there are people working on the shore, and I see people working on their farm. I see homes that are.... I don't know who provides those homes that they live in, close to those. I guess they guard the pens. I don't know. Maybe they're people that feed the fish that are in the farm.

[1130]

I see people working, and I sort of don't want to close that door. It's not going to affect me, but I will be out of this industry altogether at the maximum in two years. I'm going to quit when I'm 70. I'm going to outlast everybody that's ever fished in my family. That's my goal, anyway. One of my uncles quit when he was 68. I'm 68 now, and I'll last longer than he did. I told him I was going to.

That's the perspective I come from. It's a job perspective. Our people are starting to log now. Our generation.... The school kids here now, some of them are just about through school. What are they going to do? What's their job perspective? Are they going to go to university and move away to get jobs? If they want to continue to live in Bella Bella, what's there for them? Even though I don't live in Bella Bella, I'm still concerned. I have a lot of relatives that live in Bella Bella, and I'm concerned for them.

We shouldn't close that door if that other door is going to shut down on us. I've been hearing about studies on initiatives for Bella Bella for the last 15 years. I haven't seen one fully developed yet other than the one that was won in court, the Gladstone decision on

spawn-on-kelp. It wasn't given to us; it was a court case decision. It was a judgment in the court. If we didn't have that, we wouldn't have that money that came in through the spawn-on-kelp.

I don't know. I'm puzzled by some of the statements that maybe we're not.... I was always told to look at 20 years at a time. When I look back 20 years ago, this community produced between ten and 12 million pounds of salmon delivery to the plant. This year it was 600,000 pounds. It's worrisome. I know you are here just for the finfish farm. I know that's what you're here for.

Another thing I should tell you, I guess. I was with a pal of mine who had a contract to pack farm fish from Indian Arm, just inside from North Vancouver. I looked through the farm there. I looked at the product when it came on board the boat. It was pumped on, and they swim the last little bit onto the boat. I'm trying to scratch my head if I saw any sea lice on those salmon. I can't recall if there were lice.

I was there when it was pumped on, and I was there when it was pumped off. I was there to watch how they processed it, how they zap them with these electrical things that have been put on the tank to kill them instantly and then slit their gill and put the salmon on a sort of a spike that was sticking out, so the blood would run out right away. I was there, so I sort of know a little bit more about that fish farm.

We borrowed one and ate it. I'm so used to the wild salmon taste there that I didn't like it. It tasted bland to me, and the meat colour wasn't all that great. It was pale, pale pink.

I'm one of these people that might say: "Let's not close the door. That other door that might help you might not open."

[1135]

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you very much, Steve, for your presentation. Thanks for coming.

I'd like to call Keith Gladstone to the witness table.

**K. Gladstone:** My name is Keith Gladstone. I'm a member of the Heiltsuk tribe here. I am basically your uneducated native fisherman, and I've seen better times, I grant you. I take a look at the whole concept of fish farms, and it rankles me no end. Here's an industry that has been foisted onto the people by various government people giving their approval for these farms to be set up where they are. We've all seen the problems that have arisen from these farms being situated where they are, and still people are here, basically, to try to promote fish farms. That angers me no end.

This gentleman here, Mr. Shane Simpson, speaks about the cost of operating the fish farms on land and the cost of the electricity — the cost to operate the pumps and whatnot. Do you see these native people who live in this area being subsidized for their fuel costs to go out there and harvest wild salmon? Not likely. But here the situation is that we've got fish farms and fish farmers wanting to come into our territory and ruin our pristine waters and possibly take and affect

some of these seafoods and resources around them that we rely quite heavily on in this area.

I had hoped to make a presentation, and I'd started writing things in the computer. I was going to present to you people because there are just so many views I have regarding fish farms and their negativeness, basically, to the environment and to people. I am dead against any concept of farming in our waters. I think that if fish farming is such a lucrative business — and the thing is that it is a great source of revenue for the governments — then put it on land where it belongs, where you can control all the various diseases, effluents and whatnot that come from the farming process.

Don't stick them in our water and say: "Oh, we're going to do contained pens." To me, that's a lot of bull. You still have a lot of the problem if you have to get rid of the effluent and everything else. What are you going to do? Flush that out into the water like everything else? These types of things need to be looked at in the long term.

The overuse of antibiotics. We all know what happens when you overuse antibiotics. Just take a look at our medical field there. You see the problems that arise in the various hospitals regarding the superbugs and flesh-eating diseases and things of this nature.

We don't know the long-term effects of the use of antibiotics in fish farms and in these fish and shellfish in and around them. I know from firsthand experience exactly what happens. A number of years back I fished rock cod in the Tofino area, on the west coast there, and I've caught fish that have fed close to fish farms, fish pens. I've seen the listlessness of the fish. They're soft and flabby and with absolutely no colour. They weren't a vibrant colour like the normal, healthy fish that you catch further out on the coast.

One time I had the experience of digging clams close to a fish farm, so I know what happens when the effluent and whatnot settles on the clams and smothers the beach. The clams rot and die.

[1140]

In fact, a number of years back there was a protest held in Vancouver, and the fish farm owners had made sure some of their employees were there to promote the concept of the fish farms. They were standing around in a circle, so I walked right into the circle and approached one of the loudmouthed people that were there. I asked them, "Hey, would you eat product that was harvested near a fish farm?" and he assured me he would. I said: "Great. Give me your name and number. I'm going to go to a spot that I know in Port Hardy. I'm going to harvest some shellfish there. I would like to see you eat it."

He wouldn't give me his name and number. I said: "Well, just give me the company you work for, and I'll track you down that way." And he refused to do that. That just showed me exactly how strongly he actually, really believed in the product they put out. He says that there is no effect to the surrounding fish there, but I know better.

I've caught, firsthand, Atlantic salmon in gillnets and have turned them over to Alexandra Morton. An-

other time, before that, I caught an Atlantic salmon down in Koeye, when the nearest fish farm was down in the Broughton islands, for Christ's sake. I know that they're moving around. The thing is they have a wider range than a lot of people expect.

I'm basically wondering, you know, the whole question.... How important are wild salmon to the Heiltsuk people? I thought: what a stupid, inane question that was. We've lived here for thousands and thousands of years. We've fought wars for control of various streams because of the livelihood we derive from these. I would think that if you people are here to, sort of, promote fish farms, I'd say you'd better leave town now, because I do not want to see them in our territory.

**R. Austin (Chair):** I'd like to call Peter Mason Jr. up to the witness table.

**P. Mason:** Hello. I'm speaking on behalf of the Heiltsuk people.

I've been fishing all my life. I've been here, just like Steve, when I was seven, so I know how much fish was caught in those days and how long that took to deplete. It went down pretty fast as I grew older. Now that I'm 47, that time is getting less.

On account of the sea lice I'm totally against farm fish. I went out to the islands with Ian McAllister, and we set the net out for little fish, fry, and we did come back with sea lice on there. As a fisherman I did go out to see for myself what's going on, and that's what's happening out there. All the destruction.... It will leave if we get that. We'll have no more waters.

What I'm out to protect is the fish. My grandmother always said: "You are the titleholder of this land. The water, the fish, the land are yours. It belongs to the natives. We've been here from time immemorial to stand that ground."

I don't know why they keep looking back to that time. You know that time's there. We've been here just as long as everybody else. We were all plopped on this earth the same time, and you guys came over and started your farms over in Norway. The Atlantic salmon — when they tried to farm that, it just got out of hand. All their natural stock isn't there. It's totally gone.

It never succeeded, and I don't see how it's going to succeed on the B.C. coast. We're jeopardizing every stock that we have left, and we just have a little time frame for our fish to be there. We've got to look after it, you know.

[1145]

If we do go through with this, or what I don't want to see, we'll be blacking out this whole B.C. coast with no life. The tidal waters in this area are really strong, and it does come right around the Alaska panhandle and Vancouver Island. It pushes so hard that it'll move all that stuff, and then that'll jeopardize all our cod out in McInnes, the whole area behind us.

That's the only place that we get our food fish, and we totally depend on all the fish that we have around our area. We're pretty fortunate that we have a rich fishing ground there, but it's still an hour away. We

can't afford to jeopardize all of that, which would be changing our way of life.

All our freezers right now are full of wild-stock salmon, to the top. Last year this whole reserve had no fish in their freezers, and I saw what they went through. We're all down at the band store getting our little meals here and there. We can't afford to jeopardize our fish. That's our way of life. We've got to look after it.

You know, we've got nothing against that fish farming, but it has its own big problem. We don't need it here, because our refrigerator is doing well and we're surviving. If we lose that fish, we're going to die off. We're going to split up, split apart. We're going to have nothing left. We're not going to have a good reserve.

We've managed to survive so far. I think that we should just keep our fish and our waters clean so that we can have fish for the future. We're only looking at ten-odd years, whatever, five. Our fish right now are having a hard time. Plus the water has warmed up 1 degree, so the fish dive down farther under the nets, and we're not catching them. They're going to the river. That might lead to overload, and that'll have its own destruction.

Just to keep this short, right now: that is my plan — to speak for the land and the people. The water — just keep it clean. We don't want that here. We're surviving. We've just got a little time frame left, for the fish too.

I was there when the sea lice were there on that little fish. They get on dog salmon, pinks, and those are the only fish we've got here. Down south it wiped out a big river there. And the lady in Alert Bay that almost got fined a million dollars? You know, she's got a lot of pressure on her. She's doing the same thing, but she's just one lady who is pushing. I'm pretty sure we're all right behind her — I hope she knows that — to protect this whole B.C. coast.

We're probably one of the last puzzles to hook up, to put that puzzle together, which we don't want to see because it's jeopardizing all our fish and our life, most likely. The kids behind us probably will never catch a fish. Their grandchildren will never catch a fish on a rod.

If you guys caught a fish, it's a lot of fun.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you very much, Peter. Thanks for making a presentation.

I'd like to call Charles Gladstone.

**C. Gladstone:** I'm Heiltsuk too. I'd like to have a little history here. I come from a family of fishermen. My grandfather started fishing for B.C. Packers when they first started. They used to sail out from Namu, sail the rivers, fill their boats up, and the next day they'd come back.

My dad lived to 75. He fished every day of his life, food fishing and commercial fishing. I grew up commercial fishing and food fishing. You could check with co-management. I food-fish every week of the summer, mostly for the rest of my family and myself.

[1150]

I caught a couple of your Atlantic salmon about four years ago. I remember the smell from when they

processed them in our plant. It had a funny smell. It was soft. We tried to clean it, and it didn't.... It looked awful when we cleaned it, so we threw it down the beach with the rest of our sockeye heads and bones. Even the birds wouldn't eat it. They drifted away. You know, if the wildlife tells you it's not good, it's not good.

My grandsons fish every day, summertime here. They go casting down Old Town. They're seven and nine. I wouldn't want to see that destroyed for farm fishing. They enjoy it too much.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you, Charles.

I'd like to call Susan Brown to the witness table.

**S. Brown:** I just wrote a piece in the last half-hour, so I don't have a copy for you. I want to acknowledge our Hemas and thank them for bringing the strength of our land here. I want to acknowledge our people at the meeting today. My name is [Heiltsuk spoken]. As a member of the Windsor family, I'd like to welcome you to the Heiltsuk Nation.

I'd like to discuss four things today: a spiritual relationship, the Haida Gwaii court case, the Gladstone reconciliation and the government's fiduciary obligation as it may relate to fish farms.

The spiritual relationship with fish in my family goes back to some of our creation stories. It's from the family.... One of my elders was raised by her uncle, and one day she asked him why she didn't live with her natal family. He told her: "I used to go to the dock to sit and mourn my loneliness" — he didn't have any children — "so day after day I would go to the water and sit, telling the sorrow to our land. The great spring salmon heard me, and felt sorry for me. I went to the shore one day, and he brought me you."

If I can take the liberty to explore some of the elements in my uncle's explanation. A child creates this image, both physical and spiritual, of a great gift she is and the great relationship she has with the spring. So at an early age she begins to link this relationship to our lineage and survival of our people, to the land and the spirit in that land.

She is a gift of great mercy, not because of parents who could not or would not provide for her. The epistemology of this type of teaching brings the wild salmon into our family circles, where the separation of human and animal — or fish, in this case — are tied to our very existence.

The Haida Gwaii court case in forestry has set a precedent that there's a duty to meaningfully consult, and the issue.... The Kitsoo fish farm has not complied with this decision. The Heiltsuk Hemas and the Kitsoo Hemas should put their fish farm issues forefront, and the operation should be halted in order to allow the hereditary leaders to meaningfully discuss the known and potential impacts of the farm operation in the Heiltsuk Nation territory.

[1155]

There is no incentive unless there is consequence to the Kitsoo for not listening. The Gladstone case of the aboriginal right to spawn-on-kelp is further reconciling

our aboriginal right, and the scope of these negotiations is not limited to spawn-on-kelp, so the industry, for us, may expand in our aboriginal rights.

The potential impacts of fish farms and any other non-Heiltsuk marine venture should be considered. All decisions affecting the Heiltsuk Nation's territorial waters from the time we began our first meeting about reconciliation should be subject to direct compensation.

The government has a fiduciary obligation to act in the best interest of first nations. So where is our presence after today? There should be a first nation representative from the various nations that you are visiting, or at minimum, there should be a DIAND representative, Department of Indian Affairs representative, to consult with first nations more than the few hours you are here today.

Define where the fiduciary obligation is being meaningfully met and what further first nation consultation after you leave our community will guide your process.

My position is this: I should not be here before you today proving my dependence on wild salmon. I should be here listening to why the industry thinks they can infringe upon my and our nation's current and future familial relationship with our land.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you very much for your presentation. That's great.

I'd like to call Michelle Vickers and Georgia White. I don't know if they're coming up together. I believe they are.

**G. White:** My name is Georgia White. I am the chair for the Heiltsuk youth council.

**M. Vickers:** Hi, I'm Michelle. First off, I'd like to say that I'm 17 years old, and I was born and raised here. We are very dependent on our salmon — very dependent. We do not have a lot of land, and we can't plant crops and grow food and live off it. The ocean is our farm. That's our field; that's how we live.

I eat fish three times a week at most. I enjoy it. It's not the only thing I eat, either.

I'm strongly against it. In Canada it is illegal to use malachite green in fish farms, but it is used. Just this past month there have been two fish farms off the coast of Vancouver Island and in Tofino that have had malachite green levels in them. It's used to kill the fungi off of eggs. It causes cancer. If you eat it long enough, it causes cancer. It's just not good for you.

**G. White:** First of all, I'd like to say welcome to Bella Bella. I know your stay is quite short here. I just wish you guys stayed here long enough to feast with our Heiltsuk people, to see what we do with the fish. Not only that, we're really diverse, and we're always welcoming to visitors. People.... We're always commented on, on being a tight-knit community and our generosity. No one can ever come here just once. They always like to come back to Bella Bella.

I just wish you were able to sit with us, as a community, on the table to talk with us, and not only that, feed you our fish.

We do many things with the fish. We can make candy out of it — jerky. We can it. I enjoy it every day, and I'm sure you would too.

[1200]

One thing I just want you to envision is that you're on a canoe with us. We're paddling as one. We all agree on fish. I'm sure that you guys aren't always about the negative. I'm sure there's something positive coming from you guys as well. We're just always stressed, but this is our tradition. With you on our canoe, I'm sure you'd see our tradition, as well, and paddle with us.

We always have to set out the pros and cons — like in the agreement, with sea lice and cancer. I'd like to know how you would prevent that. What would you do to work with us, and how?

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you for your presentation. You'll see the results of what our outcome is when we make a report. We're really here today just to listen to the views of all of you. I appreciate both of you coming up, especially as youth and members of this community, to speak.

**M. Vickers:** Let's say we do get a fish farm here, and you employ people from here for five years. But within that five years our environment gets so damaged that everything dies along the coast. With that not only dies everything that allows us to survive on this coast, but you're killing our culture.

The lessons that get taught with salmon get passed down from generation to generation. It is a vital part of passing down our tradition to our children.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you for sharing that, Michelle. Thanks very much, both of you.

I'd like to call Ken Wilson.

**K. Wilson:** I'd just like to make a few comments in regards to what the committee here in front of me has brought up to this community.

I'm very thankful that we're able to relate to what is going on. The overall view that I have in my heart is the fact that it all comes down to the economics and the viability, regardless of the given situation that we have in front of us, for what I hear about the farm-fishing industry.

I think about it, and I look at it from the aspect of the economic part of it. What does this industry generate in respect to going back to the tax levies they have to pay out and the spinoffs? Like everybody says, what happened over in Norway or Sweden — wherever — has been a very detrimental impact on the ecology for the marine life.

I feel that we really have to weigh our words of what we're going to say, if we're going to correspond with one another. I'm a man that used to have prejudiced feelings. They call you [first nations language spoken] in our language.

I thank God; he changed my attitude. I'm a strong believer in unity, and I don't want to be a hypocrite to

talk with one side of my mouth. What I want to say is to show you transparency of what the Heiltsuk people have been saying.

[1205]

Based on — I have to bring it up — the word of God... God blesses you. God is fear. God is love. How we live our lives morally or immorally or in promiscuity and that... God can bless, if we do the proper things. One of the proper things this community has shown well is that they've always embraced and given the place the benefit of the doubt — to try and work together and the respect for that.

We work with the federal fisheries, trying to negotiate in good faith, making amendments to the fisheries that we have. There are different areas that this community is having, like going into forestry. I know that you as a committee have a real challenge in your heart, because you have a God-given conscience to know what is right and what is wrong.

We are stewards of this central coast, and we have the rights to the resources around here. We should have a voice with respect to having consultation. How far does the consultation go? What kind of impact are you going to bring from this community? You've just heard the voices of our people. You hear that there's distress in the voices of our people. Their sentiments are such that I don't think I'd like to eat that farm fish because of the things like...

Not only that, but the natural food we have — the venison and all these other types of foods, seafood and the seaweed that comes from the rocks... We don't even have abalone. There's a moratorium on that. We used to have that as one of the sustainable resources, but these things are going from us.

You know, you're an extension of our voice here in Bella Bella. You need to bring out to the forefront, first and foremost, who you represent. All of you are entrusted to this community, regardless of where you come from, as a government. I would like to see more transparency, more upfront in regards to what is going to happen at the end of the day.

I know for a fact that farm fishing is a lucrative business. It's a multi-billion-dollar industry. I feel that has swayed the government — I don't know, provincially or federally. God knows who it is. They know they get taxation levies paid to them even to have a licence put in. But we never did buy licences here until they made us go to the table and receive a licence.

You look at the technical matters of what goes on. What is the definition of a licence? You look at it in the dictionary, in a Webster's. It's "to plunder; to do things inappropriately." But we as stewards should never have done that. We've never plundered. We've always just taken enough to sustain us.

When we didn't have hydro, the other resources, the luxuries that we have now... We're coming further and further away. We used to do things to preserve what we have all around us — everything from clams, cockles, all the seafood we're blessed with. Preservation was done to dry them — even the wild salmon that we're speaking of, even other species in this ocean.

[1210]

My sentiment is ours. I'm reluctant to come into any consensus of agreeing to this matter. I don't know what our future.... You see all these young people here in this community. You know, it's beautiful to have something like what they spoke about — the farm, aqua-farm shellfish. But for some reason, the reluctance, you see, to the salmon because of the impact that it has taken.... You've got data — you don't even have to be a rocket scientist; you can punch it up in the computer — to tell you what's happening.

All these things that I brought out are the sentiments I have, and for most of it, I believe the community in Bella Bella here has the same sentiments in regards to what is....

I'm happy that you have come and graced us with your presence as a committee, and hopefully, it will be a workable committee so that when you go back wherever you have to, to make up your written reports, it will be a positive message.

The pros and the cons of the things that are going on today.... This is a history for us in this community, because for a lot of us, the history in the Heiltsuk is by word of mouth. But you know, our people are getting educated, and they're starting to question the validity of the things that are taking place in the government.

It's too long that these people have struggled. Economically, the last 30 years it's been going down. I remember when I used to work in the fish plants. I remember when I used to fish in the industry — salmon. You know, these things were a viable resource that we had. But looking to the farming, I think the government is realizing that it's kind of like a copout. It's that the commodity of the farm fish is more accessible, and they don't have to subsidize it, that I know of, from the government, for taxation.

These are the things that I have in my heart and that I needed to share and express. Thank you very much.

**R. Austin (Chair):** You're welcome. Thank you, Ken. I'd like to call Jeff Brown.

**J. Brown:** My name is Jeff Brown. I'm from Bella Bella. I don't want to take too much of your time, but I have some concerns about fish farming. You guys come here presenting fish farms as an employment opportunity for people in this community, and yet since I was a little kid....

I'm 44 years old now. I started fishing when I was probably about seven or ten, and back then the fish were so plentiful that you only had to be out for two or three days to get your catch, and your week would be finished.

Today the fishing industry has plummeted drastically because of the mismanagement of the governments. I don't know how.... They probably play a large role in how much fishing goes on here or how much fishing goes on there. You guys are here to....

My concern with the fish farms is the mismanagement. Two years ago there were fish farms on the west coast of Vancouver Island. You're here talking about management of fish farming for jobs and stuff, yet you can't even manage your fish farms where they are put. On the west coast of Vancouver Island there was a pen

that broke open there, and over 5,000 Atlantic salmon broke free into the ocean.

[1215]

Up in Kitsoo last year their fish farm there broke open, and they lost salmon into the ocean. That's how the Atlantic salmon that you're seeing caught in nets and all the Atlantic salmon that you see being caught on hooks and lines through trolling....

You're here to give jobs to people, and yet you can't even manage the fishery that you want to bring here. Plus, my uncle Andy just brought a point across to you guys about the devastation that fish farming causes, and you see it on Vancouver Island. I don't know how far down it goes, but I know how far up it comes. I know, because I've heard from a lot of people who I know down there, that they don't have any kind of sea life there anymore.

As a community member, I'm strongly against your fish farms. I don't believe they're going to do this community any good other than kill everything that's here. I've been a sport fisherman for four years, and I can't even count how many wild salmon I catch in a three-and-a-half-month period for a resort that I work for.

The lice that you see on these things are tremendous, and these are full-grown salmon that we see them on. Sometimes some of the fish that you bring in.... Their whole bodies are infested with it. It's inside the skin on the meat. You see bumps all along the whole body of the salmon. I just don't see....

If the fish-farming industry didn't work in Norway, and wherever else you guys have put these fish farms, it hasn't worked.... I had a friend just a second ago put a question to me: why don't you have fish farms in the San Juan Islands, where the water is moving rapidly all the time? Is it because you don't want the farms close to the cities, or do you guys just want to use these places as your hiding places for the money that you're making? That's my question to you guys: why won't you put them close to the cities where you people live, and see what kind of devastation it would cause there? You wouldn't even have bird life there. Outside Alert Bay and Port Hardy you never see bird life — never.

The stuff that they put in to feed the fish.... You see these things that look like red tides. It floats from where those things are, and it goes right onto the beaches there. It's red. I don't know what it is, but I know it's not from the ocean. It's got to be from the farms. There's nothing in the way of clams, cockles, seaweed — probably not even bottom fish.

Another thing: Klemtu has — I know this for a fact, because I've seen them myself — come here to get their bottom fish. They never get it in Klemtu anymore. It's probably gone forever. So I want to know what that tells you guys about wanting to try to bring fish farms to this community.

Thank you very much for your time.

**R. Austin (Chair):** I'd like to call Reg Moody.

**R. Moody:** My name is Reg Moody. I'm a Heiltsuk band member. I'm 42. A good part of my life I've been a

fisherman as well. I was elected to the tribal council for two terms, and we've done a lot of work during that time with the 15-year economic development plan that William mentioned.

[1220]

As William mentioned earlier, a big part of that 15-year plan is the fisheries. I think there needs to be an opportunity for our nation to present our 15-year plan to the provincial government.

We took our 15-year plan, and we presented it to the federal board, but I think what we need to do here is.... In terms of your mandate and how you guys are going to come about making decisions, I think it's really important for you to hear and have a presentation of our vision of how we see our lands and our resources being managed. Whatever decision or recommendation you guys make to the House is going to have a definite effect on our planning.

Just sitting here listening to Keith. He talked about being uneducated. You know, there are a lot of people in Bella Bella that are like Keith. You can't say they're uneducated, because a good portion of all of their life they've spent on the water, and they know the marine ecosystem better than anybody. I think local knowledge is something that seriously has to be taken into consideration here.

How you guys present the report.... I've looked at the special committee and what you guys are doing here, and I was kind of disturbed that there was no native representation on this committee. I'm just sitting here, and I'm envisioning the kinds of comments that you must have heard in the other areas that you guys have gone. We've heard them too, whether it be through the summit or our interactions with other first nations, especially from the Kwagiulth.

A while back there was a report that came out, and they found that there was high blood pressure and diabetes on the rise on the north coast. I think it was even in the news. They said they directly linked that back to the traditional food that the people in that area were eating, and it was because of the chemicals in the seafood they were eating from the fish farms.

I think the writing is on the wall. I think most first nations in the province or on the outer coast are opposing what you guys are doing. When I sat on the tribal council, I was the tribal council representative on the Central Coast regional district, and they operated their office out of Bella Coola. I remember one day that we were in Bella Coola for a meeting, and right in the middle of the meeting we got a call from a gentleman by the name of Craig Widsten. Craig Widsten is a local businessman just across the way. He owns Shearwater Marine.

He phoned in, and he wanted the CCRD to intervene in the roadblock that was put up that day, that morning, by the Nuxalk. The Nuxalk actually built the fire right in the middle of the road where they were going to offload the farmed product from Kitasoo. The Nuxalk were protesting that they even wanted that stuff to go through, but prior to getting to Bella Coola, Craig tried the Kitimat route, and the people from Kitimat opposed that.

After a bit of a lengthy discussion, the CCRD made a decision, and they changed their position that very day from supporting fish farms because of the Nuxalk, Heiltsuk and Wuikinuxv position. They changed their mandate that very day. As far as I know, we still have their support today.

I sit and listen to all the concerns. My past position.... I was the herring-spawn-on-kelp coordinator for our nation, and we dealt directly with the federal government, with the Gladstone decision, in managing the herring fishery. The Supreme Court of Canada defined the doctrine of priority, which was never complied with, and it's always been a strong lobby on behalf of industry to get their foot in the door. Over the years we've watched our herring stocks depleted to the point where our commercial aboriginal fishery was affected. Not this past year but the year before we didn't get our quota.

I know that there is a strong lobby on behalf of the aquaculture industry. Being a part of the council and sitting down and going through the 15-year plan, one of the things that was mentioned was that we would proceed or work with industry that operate within our territory to have sign-off on individual protocol agreements. I think we signed off on one of them.

[1225]

We need you to know that as a member of this nation I will stand behind our elected leaders and our hereditary chiefs. It's been a resounding no. I know, like I said, that you guys probably went to other regions, and it's a resounding no.

The environmental impacts of having fish farms imposed on us is going to far outweigh the economic viability of this industry. As a coordinator for the herring-spawn-on-kelp, what we did was we protested against the commercial fishery. Our message was clear every year to the herring industry advisory board and to the integrated herring harvest planning committee: that as long as the government refused to negotiate or reconcile our rights with Heiltsuk peoples, there would never be a peaceful fishery again on the central coast. That's a position that we stand strongly on, and I think that for you to come in here....

I'm glad you're here, because I think you need to know where we stand with this. We do have a vision. We do have plans. Our plans are in line with the environment, and we think about our generations and my child and his child. You need to know that this is something we don't take lightly. I was pretty proud of my people a few years ago when we took a stand, and we actually went out and protested. I think that's something you guys are going to be forced to deal with if this is something that is ever imposed on us.

I just wanted to get up here and say that I'm here to stand with my elected leaders and our hereditary chiefs. They know what they're doing, and if you guys had the time to go through that 15-year plan, you would understand where we're coming from. I think that has to happen. I just want to thank you again for being here. That's where I stand on this issue.

**R. Austin (Chair):** Thank you very much, Reg.



We are running very late now, but we have one final speaker. His name is Michael Wilson.

**M. Wilson:** Mr. Chairman, committee members, I'm glad that you're here to hear out our opinion and our concerns regarding the salmon farm. I'd just like to elaborate on what I've heard and what I've read.

The first one is regarding the shoreworkers working on the salmon farm. I don't think it's good for your health when you're cleaning the salmon farm at the plant, when you break out with blisters and whatnot on your arms. I heard it from one of the old locals from Kitasoo, Klemtu.

Also, I'd like to elaborate on the southern portion. I was talking to a young fellow last night on the ferry, and he told me that their clam beach is wiped out. He said they had a shore there that was all sand and crystal-clear. You could see the bottom — that was before the fish pens went in — and you could see the marine life on the bottom, crabs and whatnot. As of today, it's not crystal-clear anymore; it's pitch black. The clams are no longer there. It's wiped out.

I've been reading — it comes out on the news — about the bird flu and mad cow disease. As soon as this hits anywhere, the government puts a stop to it. I'm wondering why our government gives permission to these salmon farmers. What is happening out there today? You guys are aware of what is taking place. The government is aware of what is taking place. There are studies being made, but today nothing has been done to see if a problem can be rectified.

[1230]

You know, I wouldn't even eat it myself. A friend of mine in Klemtu said he used it for bait. He couldn't even get crabs. They wouldn't even touch it.

These things have come up before. I'm glad the committee is listening, and I hope the opposition speaks loudly when you present your study to the government that gives permits out to these salmon farms.

You know, they talk about it being very expensive to have a closed business for the salmon farm on land, talking about hydro. But think what it's going to cost us. It's going to be very costly for us to lose all our resources that we depend on. It has been mentioned here what we depend on.

If the big companies in Europe can afford to have these, they can build them on land — maybe right in Vancouver. You guys will enjoy it. We don't enjoy it here. Maybe in Victoria, right on the lawn of the Parliament Buildings. Put it there and see what the people are going to say.

I oppose strongly. At one time I was for it, for economic reasons. But what I've read and what I've heard changed my mind pretty quick. Thank you very much.

**R. Austin (Chair):** You're welcome. Thank you, Michael.

On behalf of the committee I'd like to thank all the members who came here today to share their views. Thank you for taking the time and the trouble to come here today. And thanks to all the community members who have come here and witnessed these proceedings. It has been very instructive to all of us here.

We have thoroughly enjoyed the short visit that we have spent here in Bella Bella. I know I would love to come back again. As somebody said earlier, you only come here once, and you definitely want to come back.

Certainly, I think I can speak for everybody: we had a great time here. Thank you very much.

I'd like a motion to adjourn.

**W. Gladstone:** Robin, before you go, on behalf of the Hemas, the elders and our people, I'd like to really thank you for coming here today and for hearing our opinions. As you can see, they're very strong, and I'd like you to take that back to the Legislature and send a clear message to them. I think we're pretty adamant about our position. We'd like to see that in your report. We're looking forward to it when it comes out and you speak to the House.

Come back to our community with a different hat on, and see what my people are all about. It's nice for people like yourself to come to our community. It's not too often that we have government officials coming here to see our way of life. Our environment is pretty pristine, and we want to keep it that way. I think you heard that from our people.

If you want to help us, come here, sit down and talk about planning the future for my people. Thank you.

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

The committee adjourned at 12:34 p.m.



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