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Chair

Mr. James Maloney

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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● (1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for joining us. It's good to see some of you back at the committee.

We have three sets of witnesses today.

We have Raylene Whitford from Canative Energy. Hopefully, you can hear and see us by video conference. Judging by your smile, I think the answer is yes. Great.

We have from the Indian Resource Council, Stephen Buffalo, Wallace Fox and Chief Delbert Wapass. Thank you all for joining us.

We're also expecting Mr. Beamish from Anokasan Capital. I understand he is stuck on a train. He's delayed and may not make it at all, or we may possibly bring him in by FaceTime or something else. We'll play that one by ear.

Let's get started.

Ladies and gentlemen, each group will be given up to 10 minutes for your presentation. Once all presentations are finished, we will open the floor to questions for you.

My job is to keep the time, so I may have to interrupt you at some point and politely ask you to finish quickly, or, in some cases, to stop. I apologize in advance.

Gentlemen, you're here with us. Why don't we start with one of you or whomever you designate as your speaker?

Mr. Wallace Fox (Chairman, Indian Resource Council): Good afternoon.

[*Witness spoke in Cree*]

[*English*]

I was taught this way to address people no matter where I travel. In our language, I am acknowledging everyone here in the name of the Creator.

Good afternoon, and thank you, chairpersons and members of the committee, for inviting us to appear before you today. I understand you want us to share some best practices from the energy sector that could be helpful to other indigenous people internationally. We are happy to do so.

I am here on behalf of the Indian Resource Council, along with our president and CEO, Mr. Stephen Buffalo; and our vice-chair, Delbert Wapass. All of us come from first nation territories that have been involved in the oil and gas business for a long, long time.

In my case, I come from Onion Lake, Treaty No. 6 first nation, in central Saskatchewan, on the Alberta border. I've been in leadership for 30 years. I have since retired, last summer in June, as chief. I did not seek re-election to pursue other interests.

Our community is north of Lloydminster. It's probably the biggest heavy oil producer on Indian land in western Canada. We're producing about 12,000 barrels of heavy oil a day, of heavy crude in the middle of the oil formations.

I've been in council leadership since I was 21 years old. I became chief when I was 25. As I've said, I've retired to pursue other interests.

During my tenure as chief we were able to pursue significant benefits from the oil and gas by creating our own energy company, Onion Lake Energy. I don't know if you're familiar with Indian Oil and Gas Canada, an arm of Indian and Northern Affairs. The status quo is that they negotiate on behalf of first nations people. After they negotiate with the oil companies surface rights, exploration rights, royalty payments, etc., they come to first nations. Then they tell us to sign here. Well, I'm not one of those people who you tell what to do, especially government, Indian Affairs.

We created our own company back in 1990. Then we farmed out all the energy exploration rights to our energy company on our land, which is about 150,000 acres of land. It straddles the border of Saskatchewan and Alberta, north of Lloydminster. Then we told Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, through IOGC, here's the permit. We need the permit now. We've negotiated an oil deal, which is a joint venture in the working interests of first nations, our community. We basically run everything midstream, downstream and upstream in our community. We've entered into negotiations in a partnership with BlackPearl Resources out of Calgary. CNRL was producing on our land for many years.

We've since created many other business opportunities as a result of our joint venture in our community within the oil and gas sector. We have pressure trucks, service rigs, vacuum fluid haulers. We have different companies that basically provide service on a competitive rate with industry, with our partners.

Stephen Buffalo, the president, is from Maskwacis, which has also been a long-standing oil producer for many years, since the mid-seventies and eighties.

The Indian Resource Council is a national advocacy association that represents approximately 130 oil- and gas-producing first nations, mostly in western Canada. There are representatives from Ontario and within B.C. About 60 of these first nations have active production on their lands. The rest have either shut in production or have the potential to produce when the oil industry picks up.

Our main mandate is to ensure that our members are actively involved in this important industry and that they receive a fair return on oil and gas resources.

We have come a long way since that era, back in the seventies and eighties, of government paternalism, with indigenous people only being seen and not heard. I believe that in our community we've broken that pattern and blazed a trail in many of the different sectors...of what the government has told us.

● (1540)

As I said, I've been here since 1982, in leadership. I've seen the change in government and the paternalistic “policies” regarding indigenous people. I've always taken the position that we can do just the same as what mainstream industry is doing.

As a result, today in our administration and community we have more than 800 employees. Many of the senior management in all of our sectors are from our own membership. We've shipped them off to university, and they come back and work for us. My job at the time as chief was to create that opportunity for them, through the sector and industry. We reinvested our own resources back into our human resources and our community. If that's not a success story, then I don't know what is.

Our population is 6,500. Almost 4,000 live on first nations—in our community it's about 3,800.

IRC's mandate, again, is to assist and to be the vocal centre representing the industry and advocating, through IOGC—Indian Oil and Gas Canada, the sub-arm of the department—to ensure that the royalties are there, that the lease agreements are intact and that they support first nations. Many of our communities don't have that support system. Fortunately for us, we've been able to do that in our community. Many other communities have done that, also.

IRC has been instrumental in changing this mindset over the course of the last 30-plus years that it's been in operation. We've worked hard in succeeding and building very good relationships with industry over the years. We now consider industry as our partners and allies, and not adversaries. We have made many gains through joint ventures, equity ownership and capacity and employment programs, as I mentioned earlier.

We are constantly reminded by governments that partnerships with private industry are the key to the growth of our economies. We agree and have worked hard to achieve this goal. We have many success stories, such as the Blood Tribe, our community of Onion Lake, Frog Lake Energy, Fort MacKay and many others.

There is no first nation today that will agree to a lease arrangement that does not provide benefits over and above royalties, such as equity ownership, joint ventures, employment and so on. We have been successful in asserting our rights to resource ownership based on our aboriginal and treaty rights. Our modus operandi is based on a notion that economic and financial sovereignty of our nations go hand in hand with resource development, which is an important component of this equation.

The key to success is building our capacity, so training and education is an absolute requirement. Today, as I said earlier, many young people are completing college, university and technical programs. They did not have that opportunity a few years ago.

We have been very vocal in supporting the oil and gas industry in matters such as its opposition to Bill C-69, which threatens to take away the benefits and gains we have made.

Turning to the honourable committee, on the one hand we have no recourse but to constantly fight the paternalistic, outdated policies of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. That's one challenge. On the other side, we've had to work and earn the right to sit in the boardrooms and create that opportunity with the oil and gas industry. We have done that in the last 30 to 40 years, but this legislation is now going to impede in some of those aspects and go backward instead of forward.

We also speak strongly in support of building pipelines such as TMX and others, so that we can get our products to the proper market and stop relying on just one customer, who is taking advantage of us.

We need and must take Canada back to the days when we were respected and seen as one of the best places to invest in business. That's why we've chosen to speak out in support of the oil and gas industry. When this industry hurts, as it does now, Alberta hurts, Canada hurts and indigenous people hurt even more.

● (1545)

If you can step into our shoes in that sector, you would see that we had nothing until 1979-80 when we started entering into oil and gas. In using that resource, on the one hand over here, the funding regime based on the policies of the government is never ever adequate for the populations and needs of first nations. What we've done is taken 60% of how we operate in our community and reinvested back from the resource sector into our own people, for roads, jobs, housing, education, while the Government of Canada is over here. As you may or may not be aware, we're the only community that stood up against Bill C-27, the transparency legislation. We won that in Federal Court.

It was not a matter—

The Chair: Mr. Fox, I'm going to have to ask you wrap up very quickly, please.

Mr. Wallace Fox: —of not disclosing anything. It's a matter of principle. The government...we agreed to an audit over here. This belongs to the nation's people, so we provided that information. We've also been approached by the indigenous people of Kenya. Stephen can speak to that.

In conclusion, there's a wealth of experience and expertise within indigenous communities in Canada in terms of energy and related sectors. We will be happy to share more information and answer questions if time permits.

Thank you again, honourable committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Whitford, we'll go to you.

Ms. Raylene Whitford (Director, Canative Energy): Thank you for this opportunity. I apologize that I have to join you from London. I have been working on a contract in the Middle East. I was due to travel back tomorrow and jumped at the chance to speak with you, but, unfortunately, I can only do so from London.

My name is Raylene Whitford. I'm Métis. I'm an oil and gas professional. I've been working abroad in the international energy sector for more than 10 years. I'm a chartered accountant. I have an MBA in oil and gas management, and I've spent the last 10 years working in finance in London.

In my career, I've worked on nearly every continent in the world, both in strategy and audit restructuring. I also have field experience. I took a sabbatical in 2015 to return to northern Alberta and work as a female roughneck on a drilling rig for Devon Energy for six months. I've also been a director of an oil and gas company listed on the London Stock Exchange.

As I said, I'm working in the Middle East at the moment, on a contract that is due to end this summer. My plan is to return to Canada to contribute to this really exciting dialogue that's ongoing with indigenous people in Canada. I'm also a Ph.D. student in indigenous studies at the University of Alberta, and I'm looking to research the factors and decisions that have contributed to indigenous communities becoming high performers in the energy sector in communities such as Fort McKay, Onion Lake, etc.

I'm getting a bit of audio feedback.

The Chair: It's clear on our side. If you can tolerate it, we're okay.

Ms. Raylene Whitford: That's great.

I am the founder of a social enterprise called Canative Energy. It was founded in 2016 when I was on a trip to Ecuador. I spent three years living in the Latin American country. I was down there for a four-month project and after two months, I absolutely fell in love with this tiny country in South America.

I was there working with a national oil company on a cost subsidization project, and it was very clear to me that the indigenous communities working with or who were affected by the energy companies' activities were receiving assets such as hotels, barges, coffee roasting machines, etc., learning how to use these assets, but weren't able to monetize or commercialize the assets.

Canative Energy met with 11 different communities in Ecuador and assisted them in commercializing some of their businesses.

I understand I'm unique. I'm female. I'm indigenous. I'm a professional in the oil and gas sector. I believe that I'm able to see both sides of the industry, having spent 10 years working internationally. I'm also the first in my family to go on to post-secondary education, and the first to leave Alberta. I appreciate that I am in a very privileged position in that, hopefully, throughout my career, I'll be able to be a bridge between the two stakeholders.

It's unfortunate, and not only in Canada, that in some people's views indigenous communities and the sector are naturally opposed. I feel as if most of the conversation around the industry and indigenous communities is very binary: it's either good or it's bad. And a lot of people think they are inherently pitted against each other. But as you heard from Mr. Fox, there are examples where industry and communities can work together and achieve something better than what was before.

I often hear that oil is bad. To me, the end product is not the issue. There have been many examples of the Dene, for example, using petroleum deposits found on the North Saskatchewan River to seal their canoes. As well, the Waorani, an Ecuadorian indigenous tribe, see oil as the product of the spirit people who live beneath the crust of the earth. So the product is not the issue; it's the political economies and the imbalances in power that this industry brings to indigenous people.

I'm maybe going to be a bit controversial and acknowledge some similarities between the industry and indigenous communities. From my perspective as somebody who's worked in the industry with indigenous people, and being indigenous myself, I see three main similarities. First is that a large number of stakeholders are involved, both in indigenous communities and in the energy sector. So you have a non-homogeneous opinion among a large group of individuals. You have different values, different objectives, and that in itself is very difficult to manage.

The second is that there are some very harsh stereotypes. When I worked on the drilling rig in northern Alberta, I faced more racism than I did sexism. As a female professional working as a rig hand, it was brought up more often than not that my last name was Whitford. So there are inherent stereotypes facing indigenous people, but also for the energy sector as well. There are individuals who think the energy sector is inherently bad and can't make any valuable contribution to the world. Both are facing that.

The third is that the future for both stakeholders is very uncertain. You have indigenous communities who have had a long history of trauma; they're still facing the same difficulties, and the future looks very uncertain for them and for us. It's the same for the energy industry. With the pace of change that we're seeing in technologies, the shifts on the world stage in terms of power and the energy change, it is very uncertain as well.

I think these three factors, if you bring them together, are potentially going to result in conflict. I think it's important for us to acknowledge those and to think of them when we are beginning this conversation.

● (1550)

I'll give you a bit of background about Ecuador. Ecuador is a very small country in South America, with about 16 million people. It's located on the equator. It's a very cash poor country, so the country has very high levels of foreign debt. Twenty-one per cent of the country's population live in poverty and the majority of the indigenous population are within this 21%. There is a social benefit. It's a socialist country, so individuals, if they're registered with the government, may be eligible to receive a stipend of $70 a month. There are families who regularly live on less than a hundred dollars a month.

There is a high level of corruption in the country. The oil industry is very mature; they've been producing since 1970. The mining industry in Ecuador is beginning to develop, and it looks like it will be there for the long term, which is potentially good.

In my time at Canative working with the communities, getting to know the country, both the government and the individuals on the ground, I have gained three key learnings that I think translate to the Canadian context.

The first is the importance of diversification of income streams. Mr. Fox mentioned it, and I can't stress too strongly how important this is. I'll give you an example. We met with the Huataracu, a small community of about 500 individuals. They're located six hours from Quito, the capital city, and then another three hours by boat or by car.

I don't know how to say this in Canadian English, but they received what is called a “digger” in London English. They received a piece of heavy machinery from Petrobras 20 years ago and used it to gain contracts with the national oil company. They reinvested those proceeds and grew the one digger to a fleet of 11 pieces of heavy machinery. This small indigenous community was sitting on an investment of about half a million dollars, which was absolutely admirable.

The issue is that they relied solely on government contracts for road maintenance. So even though they were able to have this income stream, as soon as the oil price crashed in 2014, that activity stopped and they were left without income. That was a very big issue for them. They were left having to maintain the machinery, etc., and they really had no other way to support their people.

I was able to see communities like that, and then right next door to see other communities that not only had—sorry, the online feedback is really bad—

● (1555)

The Chair: I'm going to have to ask you to conclude fairly quickly too, maybe in about 30 seconds.

Ms. Raylene Whitford: I'll mention the last two points. One is building capabilities. This was mentioned before. This is very important for the community, not only on the technical side and post-secondary further education side, but also just for basic business knowledge.

The third point is having a long-term plan. Often industry is very short-termist. If you look at the average life of an oil well, it's potentially 10 years, or less than 10 years. Often what we see is that communities may align with this short-term view as well, but it's very important for both industry and communities to have a long-term plan that is aligned, if they are to be able to move forward.

Hopefully you didn't have as much audio feedback as I did. It's a pleasure to speak with you all and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you. The feedback will come shortly.

I think we have Mr. Beamish on the phone.

Can you hear us, sir?

Mr. Robert Beamish (Director, Anokasan Capital): Yes, I'm on the phone.

The Chair: Thanks for joining us. I understand you're stranded at the train station still, but you were kind enough to phone in.

If you're still able to participate, the process we're following is that you will be given up to 10 minutes to do a presentation, and then there would be some questions afterwards, but given where you are, and without knowing what your physical surroundings are like, I'll leave that to you.

● (1600)

Mr. Robert Beamish: I just got into an Uber, and I'm on my way to Parliament Hill, but I don't know if I'll make it. I may make it before 5 p.m., but I'm still ready to do the presentation. I have my notes in front of me and, hopefully, you have the same notes.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead. If the Uber driver's okay with it, we're okay with it.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Robert Beamish: Excellent. That sounds good to me.

Thank you very much for accommodating this, and thank you for asking me to speak. My name is Robert Beamish, and I'm of Métis ancestry. My father is Algonquin Métis and Irish, and my mother is Arawak—which is the name of the indigenous people of Jamaica—and African Jamaican from Ghana.

My business partner Evan Wilcox, who is also Métis, and I started Anokasan Capital, which is a specialized brokerage firm that specializes in securing capital from east Asia—investors in China, Hong Kong and Japan—for projects that are owned by Canadian indigenous communities. We bring a bit of a different background, in that most of the work we do is with Canadian indigenous communities but from the international perspective of bringing in investors from Asia—China, Hong Kong and Japan—and managing the cultural differences and relationship-building process from that [*Inaudible—Editor*].

Here's a little bit specifically about how we started. Evan and I were actually working together at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. After a great year of business, we looked back and started asking different questions of our constituents. We started to ask how much of the capital flowing to Canada reached indigenous communities and how many of those businesses that we helped expand to Hong Kong were indigenous. The answer was a resounding zero. We set out to change that by starting this entity, Anokasan Capital. Anokasan means eagle in the Cree language.

Some of the best practices that we've learned over time have come from failure, which is a great way to learn. I don't always recommend it, but if it does come up, I definitely seize the learning opportunities in that. We will be speaking from some of our failures as well as some of our successes.

Our first point is to start with understanding. Seek to know before seeking to grow. Put the community needs and community understanding before going into proposals. Before drawing up contracts or agreements, go in and understand not only the economic priorities of the community but also the social priorities, and whether the social priorities and issues can be addressed by a project. Next—I believe Raylene spoke of this—discover an alignment between project officials, community leaders and the actual community members, because there can be so many voices at the table, and sometimes it's easy to speak on behalf of an entire group when that might not be the case.

In terms of communication alignment, provide the platform for concerns to be voiced, or create one. Have regular intervals for communication. Encourage positive and negative feedback. Encouraging negative feedback—because there will always be some—allows concerns to be addressed upfront in the planning process of a project and the relationship building stages, rather than having them remedied in the later stages of a project, resulting in longer delays. Having regular intervals for communication can be really effective, as well as having avenues for dispute resolution and allowing for voices of all levels to be heard regarding the project, because projects often affect all levels of the community. Although some levels may be onside, others may not. Knowing this upfront provides an avenue to address disputes prior to shovels hitting the ground.

The next point is cultural alignment. Our differences can only bring us together once we understand how they separate us. We do a practice of actively becoming aware of our own cultural biases, which affect how we do business, because we work between two very different cultures when working with investors in east Asia and working with local indigenous communities. We see how the cultures that they operate in affect how they do business and how they build relationships. We're also very aware of how our culture affects how we're doing that. We determine our own biases, how they affect our decision-making process and how we go about doing business, and we ask our partners to do the same.

● (1605)

As well, being proactive when it comes to understanding protocol just shows that you're a good partner in building these relationships and understanding the protocols related to the land, the community and the relationships with elders. These protocols are fundamental to culture, community and way of life. Any kind of partnership with the community affects so many levels, and these protocols should be understood and adhered to at every level with technical partners as well as with project delegates.

We're now moving forward to the four Es. Sustainable communities start with sustainable development. The four Es that we look to integrate are employment, equity, environment and education. These are now looked for and integrated into a lot of different projects. We look to integrate them upfront after we do that knowledge and understanding phase.

After we take that knowledge of the community, we look for ways to integrate these four Es into proposals that are meaningful and impactful to that community and their specific needs. We don't want to leave these as two concessions made in a project proposal, but by integrating them upfront it shows that we are committed to not only this project but to the community, because these are long projects that require long relationships with partners.

The last point, in terms of what are best practices for us, would be informational alignment, which comes down to what gets measured gets delivered. Just as projects are measured in regular intervals, the development of projects is measured as well as goals and certain signposts of development. Those measurements should also be had for community initiatives as they relate to employment and education, for a twofold reason. One, they show that these initiatives are being delivered upon and that certain aspects that were agreed upon in proposals are being met.

The second point is that this information is critical to a lot of communities, where statistical information is lacking in many of them. To be able to provide numbers and statistics can help policy-makers generate policies that can be impactful once they know certain trends and demographics within their own community.

Those are our best practices.

There are also some common pitfalls that we've hit. The first one is that being unresponsive doesn't necessarily mean being uninterested. So many people wear different hats within the community and timelines can get stretched. What is a timeline for us may not be a timeline for them. We don't know everything that's happening within the community, the protocols they have to go through or the people they have to speak with to get approval. Sometimes no response doesn't mean that interest in the project is lost. That's the first one.

I'd also point out that there's a concentration risk in relationships. We had a case where we were working with a community in northern B.C., and our entire relationship was with a specific economic developer. Sadly, that economic developer's wife passed away and he was unable to continue his work and stepped down from his role. All of our negotiations up until that point were with that one person, and the project development and understanding as it related to that community was with that one person, and everything fell through at that point.

It's important to note that and to loop in more people to account for that.

The Chair: Mr. Beamish, I'm going to ask you to wrap up, if you could, please.

Mr. Robert Beamish: Absolutely.

The last two pitfalls would be turnover in elected governments and understanding the legal structure of the community. Finally, the most important point would be to apply old knowledge to a new situation and treat every situation as fresh. Although you can learn from experiences in the past, each community should be looked at with fresh eyes.

That would be everything.

Thank you very much for your time. I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person. I'm just coming up to West Block now. I'll see if I can make it through security to join you guys inside.

● (1610)

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Mr. Hehr, you're up first.

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for your very forthright presentations.

It's great to have indigenous voices here to guide us on international best practices and how we move forward on having better resource development.

I was listening very intently, and it seemed that your suggestion is that early engagement with the community is very important to successful resource development, and understanding, from both the resource company as well as the people on the land, what is going to work among all parties. Have you undertaken a lot of the work in seeing a successful energy project move forward?

Mr. Robert Beamish: Early engagement is fundamental. Engagement is going to happen regardless, so the earlier you start this conversation the more you show not only your investment in that relationship but also in that community and its mutual success.

Hon. Kent Hehr: Ms. Whitford, from your work in Ecuador and around the world, what best practices have you seen, undertaken or learned that we could implement in Canada to have a successful project move forward?

Ms. Raylene Whitford: I think that's a very valid and big question. To reiterate, I have learned three keys in Ecuador.

First is diversifying income streams, making sure the community is not wholly dependent on the energy industry and the income gained from that industry.

Second is making sure they have capabilities, not just the individual technical people who are being trained, but that in the community as a whole, everyone from the younger members, five years old, up to the elders are learning more about business and are able to grow that source of knowledge. That will help the community as a whole.

Third is making sure we have something sustainable. There needs to be a long-term plan in place. One of my advisers for Canative Energy says that you need to be in it for the long run. This is not a short-term project. You may be looking at a short-term business model, but you need to be looking 50, 70, 100 years ahead. In my experience in the energy industry, that doesn't normally happen, so that's changing a way of thinking.

The last point, which I didn't get to mention, would be not to ignore the young voices in the industry. There is a lot of sexism, a lot of racism and a lot of ageism. One of the exciting things for me, in returning to Canada, is engaging with my indigenous peer group, who are doing very exciting things and have a very different view of the world. Yes, we look forward to being heard.

Hon. Kent Hehr: I hear your comments, Ms. Whitford. Would you say representing these mutual benefits and community benefit agreements should focus on capacity-building for the community, and not just economic results, so that we see some of those social impacts also being incorporated into what you're trying to build between the two organizations?

Ms. Raylene Whitford: Yes, absolutely. I think building capacity should account for a significant amount, but you can also not ignore the economic impact and the environmental impact. It's a delicate balance, absolutely, but I often feel.... At least in my experience in Ecuador, building capacity was the gap that Canative was looking to fill. Often, these communities would be given assets such as hotels or barges and would be taught how to use them, but they couldn't monetize them simply because they didn't have that knowledge.

It's not as simple as how to use an accounting system. It's understanding cash flows and understanding taxes. We had a community on the border with Colombia. The women of the community decided to grow and sell chickens to the local catering company. Instead of the chickens coming from Quito and travelling 12 hours by boat up the river, they were grown in the community and sold right then and there. However, the women didn't realize that they were going to have to pay tax, and at the end of the year they were slapped with a $20,000 tax bill they couldn't afford to pay.

It's developing this knowledge of practical business elements that is really important. It shouldn't be just for a small group of people who are running the business that is engaging with the energy industry. It should be for the community as a whole.

● (1615)

Hon. Kent Hehr: To my friends at the Indian Resource Council from Treaty No. 6 and Onion Lake and Lloydminster, I actually had the privilege of playing hockey up in Lloydminster in 1987-88, and I worked at the Lloydminster upgrader. I know a bit about the area, and it's an honour to have you gentlemen here.

My question for you is around early engagement, on having that process whereby you're really fully integrated into the community. Do you think this would lead to more success? Should it be incorporated into our best practices to ensure that we have that communication dialogue that leads to a win-win situation?

Chief Delbert Wapass (Board Member, Indian Resource Council): For all who are here, good afternoon. It's Delbert Wapass here.

That is a very important question. It is very important because when you're working with first nations it's not about money, right? It's about relationships. It's about trust. It's about understanding: understanding the environment and understanding that the economy and environment don't need to be at opposite ends. When you understand each other.... We went through this when the Husky Energy oil spill happened in July of 2016. We could have taken the position of fighting Husky on it and milking it for everything we could, but our elders and our community took the position of working together and understanding and building from that to something that is better.

If we hadn't had that prior relationship where we understood each other, where we got along with each other, where they understood our community.... They understand that in our community as first nations people we have been trained to become gold medalists in administering poverty. We need—

The Chair: I'm going to have to interrupt—

Chief Delbert Wapass: —to now train ourselves to get out of that and become gold medalists in administering wealth, and you aren't going to get there without an established relationship. That understanding and early engagement will provide that.

The Chair: Thanks.

Mr. Genuis, you're up.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Thank you so much to all of you. This is such powerful and important testimony, and I hope many Canadians will have the opportunity to hear what you've said today and to hear all of you in the future. One of my frustrations is with the politicians who talk about listening to indigenous people but then only want to reflect those indigenous people whose voices agree exactly with them on everything. It's very important that you, as indigenous leaders, have this opportunity to speak for yourself and your experience, and that we listen.

I just want to bring greetings and share the regrets of our shadow minister for natural resources, Shannon Stubbs, who I know is a great fan of all of you. She wishes she could be here today. I have the honour of subbing for her.

I wanted to ask about the requirement to consult when governments bring in anti-energy, anti-development policies. We recently had public servants before the committee who told us clearly that their understanding is that there is a legal duty to consult on any decision that impacts indigenous communities. In this context, that includes not only decisions to develop a resource but also decisions to impose restrictions on the development of the resource. In other words, when you have the imposition of a policy for a tanker exclusion zone that prohibits the export of natural resources off the northern coast of B.C., there is a duty to consult with indigenous peoples before imposing that policy. Prior to the imposition of the off-shore drilling ban in the Arctic, there was a legal duty to consult.

What we also heard at that time from those public servants was that they had no information about any consultation having taken place with any indigenous communities before the imposition of those policies.

Let's start, in particular, with the representatives of the Indian Resource Council. Do you agree there is a duty to consult when anti-energy, anti-development policies are imposed? Was there any meaningful consultation undertaken by the government in these areas? What kind of recourse do you have if it is the case that the government is running roughshod over your rights and your opportunities?

● (1620)

The Chair: I'm sorry.

Mr. Hehr.

Hon. Kent Hehr: This study is supposed to be about international best practices and how we can learn from those experiences and incorporate them going forward. I don't believe my friend is following along with questioning that adds to the study or moves it forward.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, on that point of order, it's clear that my colleague who's supposed to be representing Calgary in this place is uncomfortable with the line of questioning, but I think it very clearly springs from the testimony that was given. The witnesses spoke directly about their concerns about anti-energy policies imposed by this government and the negative impact it has on them. I'd be very interested in hearing their response.

The Chair: Our colleague from Calgary, and I include you in that —

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I'm not from Calgary. I'm from Sherwood Park.

The Chair: I was referring to Mr. Hehr, who you said was your colleague. In any event, thank you for that.

His point is well taken in my opinion. This study is about international best practices. His point was that your question does not address anything related to international best practices. I think it was an appropriate point of order to make, so I would ask that you keep that in mind going forward and tailor your questions accordingly.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Does the imposition of anti-energy, anti-development policies by this government without consultation with indigenous communities reflect international best practices?

Mr. Wallace Fox: Does it affect...? I was curious. I went like this. Government has selective hearing. Nobody has consulted us about any legislation that is being drafted and going through the process in government—nobody.

They have a process already established. I say “they”, meaning the government and AFN, who does not speak on behalf of the individual sovereign nations. This is where the problem is.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you very much. That's an important point.

Have you as rights holders, as leaders of indigenous communities, as leaders of nations that are supposed to have that nation-to-nation relationship with the federal government—your information is so important—had an opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, to meet with the Minister of Natural Resources?

Mr. Wallace Fox: I haven't personally, but perhaps they have.

Chief Delbert Wapass: When it comes to consultation, I think there's been a lot of interference. I think the process set out by this government means well, but when you're having interference from the AFN and others who are saying that this is how it's supposed to be, affecting the relationship between government and the first nations, it can be problematic. When it comes to engagement and consultation, how people who are advising government decide what is meaningful consultation versus how the first nations themselves want to be consulted may be at conflicting ends—but they may be on the same side as well. It all depends on how you're reaching out to that first nation.

I can go back to this government. I can go back to the previous government. I can go back to...and we get it back home as well, as first nations chiefs: "You have not consulted us. You're asking government to consult with you, yet you're not even doing an effective job of consulting us, and we're your members." You'll always be guilty of that. The challenge is to ensure that there is that openness and that willingness to tweak whatever you have to, when it comes to consultation, to meet whatever standard is required within that community. Just going once is not the answer. Even for us, in our own first nations community, we have to go back more than once to get a yes or to continue getting a no. At least we've consulted. It's important that the communication, that the engagement, is proper.

● (1625)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Very clearly, then, your expectation would be to be consulted not just before a project moves forward but also before policies are put in place that will block projects. If I'm understanding correctly what you're saying, your view is that there is an absolute requirement to do that consultation not only before you say yes but also before you put in place those barriers like we're seeing in Bill C-48 and Bill C-69.

Chief Delbert Wapass: I think it's important that we understand what is being proposed. We do get that information, but having the means to go through that information and having the resources to go through that information is another question. How are you defining "meaningful"? Through which lens are you defining it?

The Chair: Chief, I have to stop you there. We're beyond our time. Thank you.

Mr. Cannings.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Thank you to all of you for being here; somebody is still on their way, I guess. I really appreciate your testimony. It's been very interesting.

I will start with you, Ms. Whitford, because I want to hear more about your experiences in Ecuador. I have been to Ecuador a few times, although only a few days or weeks at a time. I spent some time in Oriente. When I first went there in the late eighties it seemed to me like northern Canada, despite the fact it was a steaming jungle. It was this vast wilderness area where people felt that a lot of the resources and wealth were being produced for Ecuador, and yet a lot of the benefits were not seen there. There were, at that time, some negative interactions between indigenous populations and resource companies, even some Canadian companies. I think there is even ongoing litigation along those lines.

Can you tell us just in general terms to start off, because obviously a lot of this happened before you went there, from your experience, what has changed in Ecuador that perhaps we could learn from here on this committee and in this government to better involve indigenous peoples in resource decisions and resource extraction?

Ms. Raylene Whitford: Let me be completely transparent. Equador is not a model of best practices for indigenous people and the energy industry. There are still a lot of problems. I cannot think of any country in the world where things are working perfectly and everybody is happy. I think you may have some future witnesses from New Zealand, which I see as a front-runner, but there are still many issues in that country as well.

I try not to get bogged down by the negativity of this interaction in the industry. I try to look for the non-critical elements and draw on that. Yes, there is a huge class action lawsuit that has been ongoing for 16 years and has not been settled. That is still an issue. Yes, there are still environmental concerns. There are many communities that are not happy with their relationship with the government and the national oil company and mining companies. It is not the perfect place, but what we are seeing, and what I'm seeing, are small elements of change.

In my interactions with the communities I met, it wasn't that the people did not want to engage with the industry, but that they didn't know how. Or, they were given tools, but they didn't know how to use them, they didn't know how to monetize them, and they got frustrated.

As an example, I had the fortunate opportunity to meet a young lawyer who went to Quito, got educated and returned home to his community. He was very open-minded and very embracing of the different potential opportunities the industry could bring, but he very quickly turned because he got frustrated. I think there are many different elements that contributed, but you are starting to see people pushing forward and things beginning to change. It's just a question of keeping that momentum up.

I've dedicated my career to this. My mission is to begin to contribute to the positive dialogue and positive outcomes for indigenous communities and the industry.

● (1630)

Mr. Richard Cannings: You talked about the importance of building capacity or capabilities within the communities. We've heard a lot about that, not just in this study at this committee but in other studies around the mining industry as well. How is that happening in Equador? What are some good examples you've seen, perhaps in Equador or in Canada, that you would point to as being important things that we can look at, whether it's just getting young people to educational facilities that train them in various things or whether it's to actually have on-the-job training and those sorts of things?

Ms. Raylene Whitford: I'm a testament to having education and scholarships, people in the community pushing you to pursue further education. I am very grateful for that. If I did not have the late Herb Belcourt, who supported me through my journey, I would not be here speaking to you right now. But I think it goes to very many different levels. You have the professional education. We want more indigenous doctors, lawyers and politicians, but we also want more indigenous tradespeople, we also want elders, we want school children to begin to think as entrepreneurs.

I think that indigenous people are inherently entrepreneurs. They're naturally hard workers from what I've seen around the world. It's not about forcing this, but providing the opportunity for different levels to learn different ways of doing things. From what I've seen, for example, with school children—and this is in El Oriente, where there are shared bathrooms, the homes don't even have their own toilets—you have these school children who are interested in learning about what is a business case, or how could I do this or what are other people doing? I think it's taking that interest and engaging with them and beginning to socialize these western concepts.

The Chair: Mr. Tan.

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being with us today.

Mr. Fox and your colleagues, I guess you're all chiefs representing your own communities. Have you ever had any difficulties communicating a message to your stakeholders, either the oil and gas company or your own community members? If so, what did you do to overcome this kind of communication gap so that your message was heard and accepted by the stakeholders?

● (1635)

Mr. Wallace Fox: In our particular case, we have technology, as we all have today. We have our newsletter. We have our notices posted up well in advance of community hearings and community forums.

Also, for our members who live in a couple of the major centres, Saskatoon and Edmonton, we have the opportunity to go and meet with the people to give them advance notice.

In terms of consultations—

Mr. Geng Tan: You're talking about the types of meetings. What I'm asking here is this. You probably have your own ideas and have made your own decisions. You want to communicate your decision to your stakeholders, and you want your stakeholders to accept your message, decision or position. Have you ever had any difficulties doing this? If so, what is your experience in solving this kind of scenario?

Mr. Wallace Fox: We do it by creating that awareness, understanding the processes from there to today and how we need to move forward collectively. You can never have 100% support, so you need to have that consensus to come together to provide that opportunity. That's the challenge over here, not ever having 100% complete support, so you go with this process of engagement, as was mentioned earlier. Those are the challenges we have.

Again, with industry, it's bringing them into the community and letting our people be heard, the concerns and the questions they may have or the clarification they need on certain things they may not have an understanding of. Those are the things we have to overcome internally.

Mr. Geng Tan: How would your communities differ today if your council had not formed 30-plus years ago? What would be different if there was no such council 30 years ago? What would be the difference between then and now? What's the function for you? How effective is your council?

Chief Delbert Wapass: Thirty years ago we had a council.

Mr. Geng Tan: Yes.

Chief Delbert Wapass: So we were just as effective then as we are now.

Mr. Geng Tan: I had assumed you didn't have that council 30 years ago. So what's the difference right now in your community?

Mr. Wallace Fox: Do you mean the Indian Resource Council?

Mr. Geng Tan: The Indian Resource Council, yes.

Chief Delbert Wapass: The Indian Resource Council.

Mr. Wallace Fox: Maybe you can speak to that council.

Mr. Stephen Buffalo (President and Chief Executive Officer, Indian Resource Council): Hi, everyone. Thanks for today.

The Indian Resource Council came about because of the need for advocacy, the need for our people to understand the industry and to build that capacity to where we are today. Obviously, through time, our people have learned to be active participants.

Even at that time, the environment was a concern and we did our best to protect the environment and have that balance, because it eventually led to economic development. The need for the IRC back at that time, 30 years ago, was very well thought out, and I'm glad the leaders back then came together to form it.

Mr. Geng Tan: You just mentioned capacity. In the presentation by Mr. Fox, what I heard was that 60% of your profits are being used to build capacity in your communities. What you have been able to build with these kinds of profits or funds?

Mr. Wallace Fox: Speaking just for Onion Lake, in my tenure as chief, we took this revenue from the royalties, from the partnerships and from the contracts, creating employment, purchasing a construction company, where people went from getting the social assistance norm of $150 a month to making $2,000 a week driving big machinery. We built roads, lease buildings and lagoons. We invested in a carpentry program. We built 400 to 500 homes with the resources—again, with jobs, drywalling training, for both men and women. We built our own school, our own training centre. We have our own care home. We're also looking at a private hospital now, in Leduc—which is $100 million.

So, again, taking that investment, creating this physical infrastructure, there is no.... We bought land along the river, for example. I see stories and articles of our relatives in the northern part of Ontario, Manitoba, etc., having no water or infrastructure. We've accommodated that as a need. Our people gave us a mandate: jobs, housing and infrastructure, and that's what we try to produce.

● (1640)

Mr. Geng Tan: Maybe there are more young people who can get a higher education.

Mr. Wallace Fox: Exactly. Before, in the seventies and eighties, there were only teachers with post-secondary education in first nations. Now we have lawyers, doctors, dentists and architects. We have a diverse education all over the country where our people are going—not just Onion Lake, but first nations in general.

Mr. Stephen Buffalo: Can I add to that, Chair?

The Chair: Very quickly, yes.

Mr. Stephen Buffalo: One thing that Chief Fox has never mentioned that is very successful is taking their moneys from the Indian trust, the Indian moneys pool, and created their own revenue heritage trust, as well as the Samson Cree Nation and the Ermineskin Cree Nation. That's very innovative, because it's protected and it's there for a long time, as long as the investments keep working for us. It's very innovative and it's where Indian Oil and Gas Canada has fallen short in its fiduciary responsibility as a trustee for our people.

The Chair: Thank you. I have to move on, sorry.

Mr. Beamish, thank you for joining us.

Mr. Schmale, the floor is yours for five minutes.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the time.

Thank you, everyone, for joining us here today.

I think one of the common things we've heard in this presentation, from all of your testimony, is the opportunities that come with a strong economy within your nation. I was wondering—and anyone can take the floor: the friends from the IRC or Ms. Whitford—if maybe we can expand on that more often. When you are able to have the environment to create that growth, to create that economic growth, the strength of that turns into more spinoff jobs, better education, better opportunities. It just flourishes, the community as a whole. That just continues on.

I don't know who wants to talk first. I think Chief Wapass wants to; and then Ms. Whitford, we'll go to you next.

Chief Delbert Wapass: That is an excellent question. Thank you very much for that.

We were probably, back in the day, a have-not community. We started with nothing. Our financial situation was dire. We went from that to coming together as a community. So, what did we do? We then negotiated a treaty land entitlement; there was spinoff from that; and then specific claims; there was spinoff from that.

More recently, we got into other investments. We got oil and gas going. We got our farming operation going, and so on and so forth. But as we were getting these businesses going, we couldn't leave the community behind with regard to training, right? We weren't getting enough dollars with regard to training. You have to understand that many of our people, in our community specifically, have come from many generations of not working, because that was taken away from them. They worked on farms and on this and that, and so on and so forth; but you had the system of dependency. It was created, and our people became dependent on that, and that's the road they got. We went from that, we borrowed money and we made other investments. We made an $8-million investment in Westleaf Cannabis, which is now a $60-million business for Thunderchild First Nation specifically.

When it comes to employment and training, that's what the spinoffs create for Thunderchild First Nation.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: You're empowering your community.

Chief Delbert Wapass: Exactly.

Then we've created partnerships, because our financials prove that we are good money managers. We have other industries; other institutions are looking at us and saying they feel comfortable investing and partnering with us, so we partnered with the Calgary Academy on education to help us with our reading, writing and math while we develop other components within our education system.

That's what it's done for us. There is still a long way to go.

● (1645)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: I think that also goes to the point about how you have local control and you're able to make these decisions.

Chief Delbert Wapass: We do have local control, and we're able to make these decisions, but the Indian Act has impeded a lot of the decisions. In the Indian Act, we have to beg for our own money. When our money goes from what we collect from our leases and so on, it goes into a capital trust and we have to do a band council resolution and explain why we want our money.

Mainstream society says how come first nations' people aren't doing things on their own. The system does not allow us to do it unless we buy into the legislative regimes that are there, which is at the expense of treaty a lot of times. You're caught between a rock and a hard place, keeping your eye on the prize at the end of the day, which is to move your community from poverty to wealth.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Maybe we can also talk about that, as we're talking about opportunities created through this and through the consultation program.

When northern gateway was vetoed, about $2 billion dollars of potential wealth was lost for those 31 first nations communities.

The Chair: Mr. Schmale, Mr. Hehr has—

Hon. Kent Hehr: Again, I think we need to focus on what the report—

Mr. Jamie Schmale: We are. If we're talking about consultation and they were not consulted on that, and they're talking about wealth and opportunity, this ties in perfectly with what we're talking about.

Hon. Kent Hehr: We are talking about international best practices and how it worked—

Mr. Jamie Schmale: We're talking about international best practices as they relate to domestic practices, because we only control our borders. So I think this ties in perfectly.

The Chair: If the question is fact-specific to something that happened here, my view is that it's not dealing with international best practices.

If you can make a connection, Mr. Schmale, it's fine, but otherwise I think Mr. Hehr's point is correct.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: If we're talking about opportunities, and you mentioned some of them.... As potential pieces of legislation are debated, if you are not consulted, you risk losing potential opportunities.

Chief Delbert Wapass: When we look at the Trans Mountain pipeline as an example, never before have I heard a government give the opportunity to first nations to invest. We're excited as first nations' people that here is an opportunity to be a main player in a game. How do we bring that in and seize the moment without squandering that opportunity? Part of that is convincing our own people.

We are the stewards of the land. As stewards of the land, first and foremost is the environment: the water, the oceans, the streams, the salmon, and so on. That's who we are as Indian people. But for some reason there are people who believe that you can't balance that with the economy. Being a pipeline owner would then put you in the seat to determine the types of environmental standards and so on, and the type of consultation that would go into an engagement with those first nations that are affected on the line, and those that are not.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to have to stop you there. You went over time.

Mr. Serré, I believe you're next.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you to all the witnesses for your presentations and all the work you're doing. For the council, wow, I wish we could have a study to try to see how we can expand your model across the country.

When we look at best practices internationally and at a structure—and you mentioned the engagement and having a stake in Trans Mountain—how best do you feel, from what you've heard internationally, can the federal government...? You talked a bit earlier about 636 first nations and that the AFN doesn't represent you. What kind of relationship do you believe the federal government should have with you to do what our other witnesses have said on the economic development side because you're creating jobs and attracting capital?

What structure do you believe the federal government should utilize with you to expand that ownership and that engagement in resource development even further than what we're doing now?

● (1650)

Mr. Wallace Fox: If I could answer that quickly, what the government needs to do is recognize that the one envelope doesn't fit everything. They need to first of all see that. They need to recognize the territories in which and the ways in which this policy or this legislation is going to have an impact. That goes back to this question of consultation. Also, they need to recognize those individual communities, because in the treaty we're all sovereign, and that's something that is never, ever talked about.

Just quickly on best practices, you need to have solid financial laws and policies, just as any other corporation does. Where else and who else in Canada has a $60-million line of credit with a financial bank as Onion Lake does? Internationally, people in Europe are willing to finance projects. The Asian market and people in Saudi Arabia want to invest in first nations in Canada. If this government is going to allow first nations to be at the participating table of economic vibrancy resurgence in Canada, we can bring that to the table. That's an international best practice, establishing that credibility internationally through solid financial and economic development partnerships.

Chief Delbert Wapass: Further to your question, there are a number of proponents out there that are positioning themselves in regard to this opportunity, which is the TMX. How do we define that? How do we bring people together?

Consultation has been taking place. The NEB is doing another round of consultations and so on and so forth. That's a great decision—all power to them. But how do we engage? How do we figure out how to engage with the first nations that are affected on the line and those that aren't? That's what we're developing. How inclusive is the process for us?

Project Reconciliation, which I founded, is saying, “We want an all-inclusive process”, an all-inclusive process recognizing those who are on the line and those who aren't. What might that mean? How much money are we looking at? Can it be financed? You have the haves and the have-nots in first nations communities, so how do we engage those who don't have money and those who do?

We've come up, I believe, with the answer, although we're still fleshing it out. It is is that every person, every first nation community, should have a stake in western Canada with regard to the play on Trans Mountain. If you don't have money, no worries. But then, what do we do from there? Is it per capita, per community, or do we reinvest that money to grow it and make it into something else—into the international markets?

We have many examples in first nations country of how they know how to make money, or they have money, but this is not about money. Project Reconciliation is not about money. It's about environment. It's about waters. It's about getting it right. It's about ensuring that we develop the best standards and the best policy that is required—whether it be about tankers coming in there, whether it be about how our lands are affected, or so on and so forth.

That comes from your engagement with those communities, to embrace the opportunity that this government has put forward.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Mr.—

The Chair: Sorry, we're already over a bit.

Mr. Van Kesteren, you're next.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): It's a fascinating discussion here. As I look around the table, I see that Mr. Eyking and I are the old men in the group here—he's not listening. We've been here the longest.

I remember when I came to this place. I said to my wife shortly thereafter that this is a difficult country to govern, with the first nations, the east, the west, the French, the English, and it goes on and on. It just gets tougher and tougher as we grow.

Then I heard the Prime Minister say it, and I thought I must be right. Then I found out the first prime minister said it. This is a difficult situation, but it seems to me that the problem we're talking about, and I believe you've really hit on this, is that there has to be a collective effort to move this country forward. This has never happened. I think we need to sit at the table with all levels of government, including first nations. We should be including industry, labour, academia.

As we plan for the future, I get excited about the very things I hear you talking about. The biggest problem that we have in this country is the cross-border trade. It affects you, too.

Like Mr. Eyking, I'm not going to be here in the next election. I look forward to the day we see that taking place. I see you as leaders in that capacity.

Would you agree that if we had the courage to take those steps, to decide as a nation that we can do this, and to include all peoples, that we could possibly get to some of these...rather than always having this top-down effort that we've adopted for a century now?

Do you want to comment on that maybe? I'd just like to get your inputs.

● (1655)

Chief Delbert Wapass: Thunderchild First Nation wasn't built only by Thunderchild First Nation members. It was built by farmers coming in to help us build it as we were displaced from our land in Delmas, by North Battleford. It's that type of relationship and partnership and understanding that breaks down the barriers to our just living and coexisting. But the answer is not having little Peter from a farm that is 15 minutes away from our community come to school there, but having to ride an hour and a half on a bus to go to Turtleford because the system doesn't allow us to charge those who are coming to our school.

If we were to come together for the right reason...and we're talking around the Indian problem rather than trying to deal with the Indian problem. But there's been a lot of interference with that from our own people as well, who are misrepresenting what they should be representing. We have politicians who misrepresent that as well.

How do we get through all of that stuff to what matters and create what has to be created? That's why when a collective comes together, it's not picking one off to the effect, “I like what this person is saying or this organization is saying”, but that “I'm going to side with them because they're going to get me a little further than where I want to get.”

Well, I can't support where you want to get if I don't understand where you're going.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Yes.

Chief Delbert Wapass: I'll leave my comments there and turn it over to Chief Fox.

Mr. Wallace Fox: What's the common denominator? I come from it as an elder, from a school of wonderful elders who have taught me the old ceremonial way. What's the common factor? We all have to live in Canada and will have to work together.

It's time today, in 2019, for government to stop telling first nations people what to do. That worked in the 1800s. That worked when nobody spoke English on our side. Today we have brilliant academic people all over in various walks of life and careers, but we can sit at the table, as Chief Wapass said, and co-habit and work as a collective.

What's the common factor here? For example, in government, the policies of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs didn't work as they thought. Perhaps I can say this respectfully: Do not tell us what to do anymore. The residential schools destroyed an era: the languages, the ceremonies, the identity of our people. There is intergenerational trauma.

Allow us; don't interfere through that policy regime. The Creator gave us a brain just like you.

● (1700)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Equal seats at the table.

Mr. Wallace Fox: Exactly. We all have to cohabit and live here. We need to have that understanding to move forward and learn from yesterday.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Unfortunately, we're out of time.

We are all very grateful to you for coming here, especially you, Mr. Beamish, with all the trouble you experienced. I hope your Uber driver enjoyed your presentation as much as we did.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Ms. Whitford, thank you for taking the time. I know that you're five hours ahead of us, so we're grateful that you made yourself available in the circumstances.

The meeting is adjourned.