

THE ISSUES: A REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

Philip Hogan

Councilor of the Heiltsuk First Nation, with a focus on resource issues.

I come from the Heiltsuk Nation, and I thank the Coast Salish people for allowing me to come into their territory. It is good that we get together to talk about some of these issues — there has been a lot of talk in the media. I am glad to be here to share the perspectives of my people

The Heiltsuk are located in the town of Bella Bella on the Central Coast. The Heiltsuk people are descendants of a number of tribal groups who share the same language group. Today we call ourselves the Heiltsuk, though we were once known as the Bella Bella Indians or tribe. We have been in the central coast since the beginning of time. Our oral traditions tell us that we were set down in that place by our creator, and we have always been there.

We have had, over time, extensive relations with all of our neighbours — I see some of my neighbours in this room today. We also have a history in recent times of a lot of problems. With the coming of Europeans we got involved with fur trade and different industries like that, and things haven't gone well. We are what they call in the media these days a coastal community.

We are only one now — we used to have a number of villages, over 80 at one time. Due to smallpox and other diseases and other problems, our populations dropped dramatically from well over 10,000, down to just more than 200, in less than 200 years. Now we are coming back up, with over 2000 now as Heiltsuk members. I'm not sure if you are aware, but the demographics of First Nations in general, and the Heiltsuk in specific, are increasing at nearly double the rate for average Canadians, so we anticipate having a great deal more members living in our territory in the future. That has a lot of implications for pressure on the resources, the need for jobs, and other things like that. Like many First Nations, especially coastal ones, we have been suffering in the last 100 years — we have seen a lot of our resources depleted and removed from us through government legislation and policy. Right now, we have a very high unemployment rate, estimated at 75%. Back in the 1960s we had full employment. It used to be that anyone who wanted a job could go fishing. So I understand when people say there are problems in coastal communities — we live it every day.

One of the things that we have done since time immemorial is harvest the resources from the land. We have a long history of established places where our people go on our land, which goes by family. This is some fairly basic information we call Quaqualat, which means to go out on your land and harvest your food. That is what has sustained us for thousands of years. We go get food, preserve it, and use it in the winter to eat, trade and give away in the Potlatch system. The area is outside of Bella Bella. I have to say too that we have never surrendered title; that has been ably discussed by some of the previous speakers. I am glad to have had Edward John here to talk about some of the legal and political background. The Heiltsuk are in treaty negotiations — we have been since the 1980s. Basically we got in as soon as we were able to after the comprehensive claims process. We have always been interested in this issue. We have had trouble since the 1800s over issues of jurisdiction and ownership. Before that there really was not much of an issue. People came in to trade and their interest was not our lands - it was to trade for our resources. That started to change around the 1870s and 1880s. We worked on that problem and we presented at the 1913 Royal Commission, and during those discussions our chiefs and elders told the commission that we own our land, and that we were glad to see them there to try to right the problems that we were living under at the time. And that commission told us we are not here to talk about that, not about title, but to talk about what use you make of reserves. So that really did not address our issues. I have some quotes from the people who talked there. One of them was Bob Anderson. He told the commission that we believe we own this land, every bit of it, and he later went on to say that he believed that the government was stealing our land. And that has been our position since that time. Between 1913 and now there was a time it was illegal to discuss this issue. Now we are in treaty negotiations. In 1981 we put our claim in under comprehensive claims. In 1993 the BC Treaty Commission opened its doors for the current treaty process, and we filed our claim as well in that process.

We are not very happy with the way things are going — the federal government came and told us that treaty is not about aboriginal title — and I am not sure if that is different from what we heard in 1913. So there are these issues of jurisdiction that we have. In case you do not know, Bella Bella is located on the Central Coast in what is being called the Queen Charlotte assessment area. The territory we have from the tribal groups I mentioned goes from around Butedale down to the mouth of Rivers Inlet. We have asserted title all the way out to international waters, so it includes directly a large portion of the area in question here. We have never surrendered our title to this land. Some feel that they have a free hand to do what they want to — I think it is clear that they do not.

I want to talk a little bit about the use that we put the land to, what we call the baqualage. Some of the richest grounds that we have are on the outside — the outside is Goose Island, up to around Price down around Calvert — it is very biologically diverse in terms of marine species. We have hundreds of species of creatures that we harvest for our food and many of them come from that area. Some are quite delicate — and we have done this for many centuries. Not the same thing as non-native people — we do not do this for sport or for a challenge or to prove something to someone - it is a way of life. It has spiritual values to it — it is part of who we are. It also has an economic value — we harvest a great deal of food in terms of quantities from these places — so they are very important to us and we are quite concerned about anything that may impact them. We fear that oil and gas exploration may harm this environment. If something goes wrong out there, they will be taking food away from our people. I mentioned before — we have a very high unemployment rate — one of the things we have left is harvesting food for sustenance.

We have not done any studies on this — we know anecdotally and from common sense and living there that a large percentage of our food comes from the land — salmon, herring seaweed, different groundfish and other species, and that the environment is already under stress. Right now there is a harvest ban on abalone. It is province wide, but certainly covers our entire territory. The species is in real trouble. It was mismanaged when there was a commercial fishery and there are ongoing troubles with poaching. The point is, they are not abundant enough for us to harvest. The species is at risk, and we cannot enjoy that food that we are used to having. Other species are in trouble: Rivers Inlet sockeye. Serious trouble. We've heard some members of DFO say that they do not know if sockeye will ever come back. Our relatives are in Rivers Inlet — another nation. Our family as well. We also harvest and intercept sockeye from there. And there is not a run of sockeye anywhere on the central coast that is not depressed or in trouble — our main food species. We need this food out there for our very survival. If there is no work, we have to rely on these foods to sustain us.

There are problems in coastal communities. The economy is in great trouble, both in fisheries and forestry. Right now, Heiltsuk in forestry have slightly more than 1% of the jobs in our territory. That is not acceptable. We have a very limited participation in any economic sector derived from the resources in our territory. We see that in fisheries; we have our own cannery we built that we are trying to maintain. Another species at risk in the offshore that we are really concerned about is the oolichan, a small smelt that sustained our people for thousands of years, and that is important socially. We have a real concern that those fish are going to go extinct; they are in that same offshore area. We believe the shrimp trawl fishery has impacted them, and other factors such as urban development and logging as well. There are some species out there that are really endangered. And we cannot afford to take risks with some of these things — they are too important to us. We are very concerned about the environment. Some people call this an inland area, and I realize that they use inland and offshore from the jurisdictional fight, but if you have ever been out there in a boat in the so-called inland portion you realize it is not really inland at all. There's very violent weather at times. Even inside in the so-called protected areas in the channels you get brutal weather — hurricane force winds every year — so it really is not inshore in terms of the weather. Some of those places you only go a few miles from our village and you are facing the open Pacific.

We are quite concerned about oil and gas exploration effects. We have a couple of court cases mentioned — Delgamuukw — within the Canadian legal system that recognizes the concept of aboriginal title. For the Heiltsuk, we also have the Gladstone case that recognizes the commercial aboriginal right to harvest herring roe on kelp. Herring also come into this area, and are quite important to us economically as one of the few things that are providing any employment recently. Herring has always been there for us. Some of these things are quite susceptible to harm. If there is an oil spill it could totally destroy some of these things we rely on like the herring. We do not see that it is worth taking the risk. Our people have been involved in these discussions since the 1980s. I have been told that our elders were involved since the 1970s. There have been a number of panels to discuss this issue — almost every 10 years we do this. Like Quebec we keep asking the question until they get the answer they want. It is clear to us that

if oil and gas exploration happens, we are not going to see the benefits. The benefits do not come to Bella Bella from any of these types of developments. We have a minimal share of forestry, fisheries and tourism, and I fail to see how this kind of exploration would offer any real employment to our people. The people who are asking for this thing are not from the area. They are from north and south of us, and yet the resource as usual is in our land, our waters. We have seen this over a long time — we call it colonization. Removing resources from our people and taking away our futures. And who benefits? Not us. I do not see how we can afford to allow this to happen. I do not see how this can happen before we have a treaty or some sort of resolution to aboriginal title and rights. It is not just a scientific discussion — it is a social one. We can look at the science and see what we think is out there — and yes it sounds like there is a valuable resource out there. It isn't clear who owns it to the courts — it is clear to me, clear to my people who owns it — it belongs to the Heiltsuk in our territories and to our neighbours in theirs. There is nowhere offshore that is not subject to aboriginal title discussions. This is clear to us.

To sum up, we have real concerns about environmental costs and impacts, some serious questions about if this were to go ahead, who would benefit, and the feeling is it would not be the people who live in the area, it would be people in urban centres and communities elsewhere. That would not help coastal communities — it would help other communities. The small coastal communities are the ones that are suffering. Some of the larger ones have had a lot of aid pumped into them. And finally, there is the jurisdiction and title issues that we see as unresolved — it would be unethical to give those away at the same time as trying to negotiate treaties with us — you cannot expect people to negotiate for something while you are at the same time giving away the thing that is being negotiated for. That is not good faith. And a final thought. When we talk about First Nations, people often say 'we consulted with the First Nations' — I think about that — people are almost saying like we consulted Indians. We are not the same — we are separate nations. We are not the same as Oweekeno, not as the Tsimshian. We are separate nations. We treat each other as such. Cannot go and talk to one or two nations and say its okay we have consulted First Nations now. You have to talk to the people who have aboriginal titles and rights.

John Backhouse

Northern Development Commissioner, Prince George, BC

<http://www.ndc.gov.bc.ca/>

This presentation will bring you up to date on the work that has been completed to date on behalf of my office and what our plans are for the near future. For those of you who are not familiar with the Office of the Northern Development Commissioner, the office addresses issues related to investment in the north. I coordinate with the activities of groups and organizations who are involved in economic development. I report to Minister Dan Miller who is the Minister of Mines and Energy and who is also responsible for Northern Development.

Following my appointment, and during my first visit to the Northwest coast, including Haida Gwaii, the subject of the moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration was raised at virtually every meeting that I attended including a meeting with the North Coast Oil and Gas Task Force. Many of the groups and individuals that I met with wanted the government to reconsider the offshore oil and gas exploration moratorium. However, I also met with many groups who were not of the same mind — and wanted the status quo to be retained.

As part of my role as Northern Development Commissioner I am an advocate for northern economic development. I cannot presume that the only way to develop the economy of this region is through the lifting of the moratorium, as I am also charged in reporting to the Minister with having regard for the need to balance the interests of all parties in a fair and equitable manner through the understanding of the impact of any proposed recommendations. I should have learned after sixteen years on the Prince George city council, that I should not muse publicly about an issue such as this, but I did. In fact, I mentioned it to the media and immediately I had the two sides phoning me indicating, we want the moratorium lifted, or we don't want the moratorium lifted. I recognized then that I had a very sensitive, highly controversial issue on my hands. Therefore, I stepped back and spent some time talking to people about this quandary. Eventually I was introduced to John Sanderson and Frank Borowitz of the Conflict Managers Group who helped me understand that "special interest groups are becoming more powerful, disagreements are becoming more bitter and old methods no longer work". He explained to me that wherever we look these days, we see a rising tide of drawnout unresolved disputes, including labour management disputes, environmental controversies, shareholder rights disagreements, merger conflicts, native land claims and protracted government hearings.

He spoke about 'relationship restructuring' which could be adapted to meet the challenge that I faced, the objective being to produce positive results that will last. For example, relationship restructuring programs are known to have benefited, and in some cases transformed, workplaces and relationships between unions their members and employers. The first critical step is to meet and reach agreement to embark on a relationship restructuring program. Conducting a relationship audit is the first stage — a relationship audit assesses the kind and extent of disagreements. Then through information collection, identification and classification of problems and evaluation of the data, a plan can be devised.

I recognized then that with some modification this process could be adapted to the issues that I faced in the north. As a result, the Conflict Managers Group was asked to enter into discussions with north coast residents to assess the prospects of constructing an appropriate process surrounding the review of the existing offshore oil and gas exploration moratorium. Since my office serves a wide geographic range (from the Queen Charlottes to Valemount on the Alberta border, and from Quesnel up to the Yukon), I asked them to concentrate on the specific region of the northwest coast. The contract was announced in May of last year and consultation took place during the summer of 1999. I was seeking an opinion, not a detailed analysis. 140 face-to-face interviews were held. Our task was to determine whether there was sufficient will and ability within the northern communities to go forward into a consensus-based process that would consider the potential of lifting or keeping the current moratorium.

As a result of this work with the consultants the conclusion was that the answer to that question is in the affirmative. We are satisfied that there is significant community will, interest and desire to go forward into such a process with the important qualification that people must feel they can participate fully in the crafting of the process itself including its makeup, composition and procedures to enable northerners to play an effective role in making decisions. In a phrase, they want to be directly and meaningfully involved.

At the same time, it is important to keep this matter in perspective. For example, the concerns and expectations that motivate northerners must be considered in a provincial, if not national, context. To this point, we have had a number of discussions with persons and groups in the north. In our view, a similar process should be constructed to gauge the will and interest of industry and the people in the rest of the province before gauging the will of government. The report recommended that further consultation take the form of a replication and extension of the process that forms the basis of this report; that is, private focussed discussions with key elements of industry, various levels of government, including First Nations governments, and environmental groups to enlist their respective views. In short, we conclude that it would now be timely and important to broaden the focus and scope of the discussions. Therefore, in addition to these groups, I have asked the consultants to meet with representative groups from other jurisdictions where offshore drilling has already been undertaken to assess the impacts and issues in those areas. The experience of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the recent developments in Nova Scotia associated with Georges Bank, are important indicators of the potential issues and opportunities that could be raised in British Columbia. The consultants will also be talking to representatives of the government of Alaska and they are talking to the people involved in North Sea exploration.

As the result of this second phase of discussions I anticipate that the consultants will be able to provide a clear indication of those who are willing to participate in the public process to consider this issue, what information and expertise they can bring to the process, and some suggestions on how that process should be constructed. It is a long process and I personally make no apologies for that. I believe that it is such an important issue that it must be handled with caution, and it must be inclusive, and we cannot allow it to be derailed. I look forward to the findings of the Conflict Managers Group and being able to make a recommendation to government sometime in July of this year.

Rob Brown

Member of the Coast Mountain Group, Sierra Club of British Columbia

When I grew up on Burnaby Mountain my pals and I thought we lived in a wilderness paradise. We could be forgiven for thinking so, for we were surrounded by cultivated and uncultivated greenery. Bears and wolves and deer were still spotted crossing local streets, and spotting an eagle was not unusual. Hunters still shot ducks over the sprawling marshes surrounding Still Creek, Burnaby Lake, and the land now covered by the Trans Canada Highway. Anglers pulled steelhead and salmon from the Coquitlam River and from Brunett Creek. Cutthroat trout still ran in

the smaller creeks, and the mountains on the North Shore were always in sharp focus on a clear day.

In truth, we were growing up at a time of urban metastasis, an era of mall sprawl and the relentless spread of formulaic neighbourhoods. We were also growing up in the midst of the oil industry. In the absence of legislation to mask or remove it, the sour smell of refineries blew into our open bedroom windows as we slept. The local groceries and meat markets were giving way to supermarket chains whose store shelves were filled with products enshrouded in eternal plastic. Meanwhile, leaden emissions from high-powered engines that ran on octane gas were spewing out of the exhausts of big heavy Fords, Chevys, Oldsmobiles and Chryslers, then settling into ditches on lawns and into the sandlots where children played.

The small pond we called a lake and loved to swim in was nestled in among the giant green oil storage tanks of the tank farm sunk into the side of Burnaby Mountain. On our way to Burrard Inlet we passed the Shellburn Refinery which, with its lights and towers, its sprawling tanks, its labyrinth of twisted pipes, its parapets and blazing chimneys, looked like a walled mysterious middle eastern city in some distant exotic caliphate to us readers of kids' books.

That trail to the inlet ran along the fence line of Shellburn down the eastern side of Capitol Hill. We would follow the path into a forest that had hardened after sixty years of second growth. There were red, rotting stumps of Doug Fir covered with Oregon grape and still bearing the spring board scars put there by the men who dropped them with long saws and double headed axes. Our descent ended at the train tracks where we emerged from the damp shade into the open seascape where the air was filled with salt and creosote. From there we made our way to the beach hoping for low tide when the strands were covered in riches like sprawling purple, orange and red starfish, bullwhips, the dark green slippery seaweed that made walking treacherous, and Hermit crabs clambering like spiders over the shallow pools carpeted in mussels.

We crunched over the crust of these beaches past the sandy spots where clams spouted, sloshing through the tidal pools probing for bait. At first we pried mussels free of their beds and fastened them to our murderous hooks. Mussels, we soon found out, worked well, as did a chunk of flesh or an eye from the fish we caught with them. After mussels we came to prefer razor clams, not because they worked any better, really, but because there was more to fasten a hook onto inside their radial shells, because bigger to kids is almost always better, and because, even though we were embryonic sportsmen, we were learning that the chase was as big a part of the event as the kill and we reveled in the tunneling. There was better bait though. We learned this from an old man, one of the squatters probably. He waved to us to come close. We looked at each other then carefully moved to within earshot. "Sea worms", the old fellow said, you need sea worms. We looked at each other, puzzled. "Where do we get them"? one of us asked. The old man came closer. We resisted the urge to run. When he was near he explained the working of worms, how they were quick; how we were to turn over the barnacled rocks crisply and dig quickly, and how were to be careful because the worms bit.

Kids are skilled predators. We soon found the worms and came to some conclusions about the size and locale of rocks that covered the lairs. We flipped the stones sending crowds of startled crab larvae rattling like thrown dice toward the tide mark in a feverish rush for refuge. Then we dug, pulling the gray, segmented salt water centipedes from the sandy mud, dodging their pincers, then dropping them into some kind of lidded container we'd scavenged en route to the fishing. When our jars crawled with worms, we carried them to the loading piers. Our favourite pier had walkways below the platform. In summer it had shade, on wet fall days, shelter. We peered down into the green prisms and watched fish that frequented the upper levels flicker through the shafts of light. There were palm sized shiners, and a radiant species we called sea bass that, amazingly, gave birth to their young live like whales do. There were other, other fish with the same shape that pulled hard on our hardware and were easily transformed into a pair of delectable filets at home.

Closer to the bottom we caught Tommy cod and greenling. On the bottom floor we hooked mottled sculpin; drab olive coloured bullheads; spiny rock cod with large, black, protuberant eyes; picassoesque flounders and sole. Also a large flat fish with sand papery skin; with black and yellow banded fins that, thinking back on it, may have been small halibut. As predicted by the old squatter, the sea worm had an irresistible allure for all of them. We hunted crab too. The seabed swarmed with them. To trap crab we wired a bullhead or two to a bicycle wheel, attached an appropriate length of rope and hurled the whole works into the brine and watched it disappear in shower of bubbles. After leaving the wheel below for as long as we could stand it, we pulled it up as rapidly as strength permitted. On

most hauls crabs spilled over the rim of the spoked wheel like broth over the lip of a soup pot.

Our fishing in Burrard Inlet lasted about eight years. Over the course of that time we were literally up to our elbows in its fore shore environment. We took it personally when a favoured bait ground turned black, as more and more spots did over the course of those few years. It was sad thing when a sea worm hot spot stopped squirting. When a place that teemed with sand fleas and crustaceans stopped smelling of sea salt; and acquired the stale, artificial smell of man made chemicals; the rainbow sheen of oil; and went as dead as a sack of cement.

I moved north. Some thirty years later I returned to our former wildlife paradise at the foot of Shellburn. I took a walk along the beach. I turned a few rocks and exposed the black sand and pools slick oil water underneath them. Absent was the rattle of crab larvae, and almost everything else save for a few hardy barnacles and a few empty mussel shells, black and blue like the oil around them. One of our old fishing platforms was still there. The decking was rotting. I peered down into the water near the pilings and saw no flickering fish. At the far end of the pier a man was crabbing. He had one undersized crab in possession. "You better watch that huge crab doesn't take your arm off", I said. "No big crabs anymore", he complained, "hardly any crabs at all. The Chinamen come and took them all".

I don't know that I've seen a richer marine ecosystem than Burrard Inlet was. It's ineffably sad to see it now, ailing and dying; it's like visiting a friend wasting away from cancer. I'm not saying that the wretched state of a large part of the Inlet is due to oil pollution alone. I don't even know if the excrement from the oil refineries and ships are the largest source of marine pollution there. Even when we were kids condoms floated around in the water like jellyfish suggesting that sewage was probably a large polluter. Still, the fate and state of Burrard Inlet can help us appreciate the anthropogenic impact on the hydrosphere and the variety and complexity of the problems flowing from it. First, we need to appreciate that the ecological riches of the sea are not evenly distributed. The continental shelves, are to the sea what littoral zones are to lakes: the edgy places where life is generated and concentrated, and the place where natural resources are abundant and most easily exploited.

As Dr. Stanislav Patin points out, this zone *and the narrow strip of land adjoining it have been the focus of activities that have, to a large extent, ensured the emergence and progress of the world's economy and, in a broader context, the origin and development of civilization itself. At present, about 80% of the Earth's population and 50% of all large cities are located in the coastal area.* Pollution is the leading factor when it comes to hardships man inflicts upon the sea, but its not the only one and it can, as Dr. Stanislav Patin points out, only be fully assessed within the framework of *all* other impacts of human activity on the hydrosphere.

Underestimation, says Patin, of the striking complexity of anthropogenic impact on the water ecosystems and the use of a single factorial approach to analyze their state, focusing on some single aspect of human activity, generally leads to a distorted picture of the consequences of such activity. It is important to take into consideration that simultaneous impacts of several factors can cause synergetic effects. That is, the consequences can exceed the mere sum of the effects caused by each factor separately. Such situations are quite possible, for example, when radioactive, chemical and thermal impacts are combined. (Patin, 1999)

In Burrard Inlet there is oil, there is sewage, there is a thermal plant, as well as many other industries. We need to examine the impacts on the hydrosphere in a holistic way. After doing this we have to appreciate that the effects of these activities is greater along the shelf zone and greatest in the bays and a sheltered coastal area, like Burrard Inlet.

At present, the anthropogenic disturbances of the shelf zone are found on a global scale. In many areas they have reached critical limits. *This is the prize, writes Patin, for the unjustifiably, rapid economic growth and short sighted environmental policy rather than its absence. The first obvious symptoms of anthropogenic press on the coastal zone and continental shelf appeared about 50 to 60 years ago. By now, anthropogenic impact has become so intense, diverse, and dynamic that the decision-makers at last seem to realize its danger. Offshore oil and gas production is part of this heterogeneous mosaic of human activities presently occurring in the shelf zone. (Patin, 1999).* Clearly the latter activity can't be separated from the rest of a monolithic, corporate driven industry to which it belongs, and whose impact on the biosphere is global.

Oil spills and well blowouts, as devastating as they are, are not the most devastating spin-off of the oil and gas industry. Burrard Inlet has, as far as I can tell, never been a victim of a large oil spill, but has been and is being

contaminated by the slow relentless drip of oil, oil byproducts and other pollutants. Crude oil is a shape changer built of a complex suite of chemicals that assaults from all angles and manifests itself to us all kinds of forms.

I understand that the focus of this conference is on the impacts of oil exploration and the fate of the moratorium presently in force on this coast. I understand that the byproducts of exploration, (drilling muds, drill cuttings, seismic explorations, physical impact of fisheries, vast suite of chemicals and gases released into the environment in the exploratory process) have their greatest impact on site. And, in many cases rapidly dissipate (though a significant amount of recent research is disputing widely held notions about the reach of these impacts and suggests there is still not enough research into the question). It is a grave mistake to examine any aspect of the oil industry in isolation.

Man made systems are caricatures of natural systems. We accept that everything in the natural world is interconnected in an infinitely complex fabric whose subtle weave we are just starting to appreciate. Manmade systems share that same quality of interconnectedness. The oil industry is large, unwieldy and complex, and it is all of a piece. You can no more examine hydrocarbon exploration in Hecate Strait in isolation of the oil industry and all its manifestations, any more than you can try to understand the working of the little finger without knowing anything of the neuromuscular system.

When you lift the moratorium and entertain the idea of oil exploration, you are courting and continuing to encourage the oil industry, and all the things attached to it. From the inevitable spills, to tar balls and plastic bottles that wash up on the beaches, to completing the construction of the global greenhouse. The only acceptable economic initiatives are the conservative ones that will sustain future generations, and have less impact on natural systems. Allowing oil development to proceed on our north coast will further burden the troubled fishing industry, an industry which can be restructured and retooled to operate more comfortably within natural systems.

Places like Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound, and the coast lines that define them are rarer now and will be rarer in the future as more and more of the world oceans are subject to exploitation, As a result, their tourism potential will increase. Oil platforms and the other accouterments of the oil industry are inimical to any saleable wilderness experience. Opting for the oil and gas development amounts to choosing a non renewable resource with a high negative environmental impact over one a renewable natural resource.

To shift into the exploratory mode and proceed with gas and oil development in advance of the settlement of First Nations' entitlement is morally indefensible. Implicit in our constitution is the idea that this society can no longer be blind to the needs of indigenous peoples as we exploit the land and the sea. We are obliged to see that the last "t" is crossed on the last treaty agreement before we entertain the notion of hydrocarbon exploitation on this rugged coast.

But most importantly, isn't it time we attempted to slow down the hydrocarbon express? Choosing the path of exploration and development in the turbulent seas on this coast is choosing to continue the ride; it does nothing to further cleaner, alternate forms of transport capable of taking us safely into the future.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean--roll!
exclaimed Byron.
*Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin--his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all they deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd,
and unknown,
His steps are not upon thy paths,--thy fields
Are not spoil for him, --thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields...*

(Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Cantos CLXXIX and CLXXX)

Byron would be shocked to see how far beyond the shore the industrial exertions of man now extend, how heavily trod upon those ocean paths have been since he set down those words in 1812. Man can and does affect the ocean, very profoundly, it appears, and from every angle, and one of the ways he affects it most are the myriad manifestations of the oil and gas industry. Dr. Patin defines the contours of the problem: *Humankind*, he writes, *already dealt with the alarming lessons from ignoring gradual and inconspicuous alternations in nature. For example, possible global climatic changes and disturbances of the ozone layer that may occur in the near future have emerged and developed as a result of the combined impacts of local sources. Each of them too weak, insignificant, and hardly noticeable to be taken into serious consideration. Combined together as time passed (only about a hundred years), these local changes are causing a global effect. Compared with the atmosphere, the World Ocean is certainly more conservative and slow to respond. It has a longer latent period before revealing non-obvious (subtle) effects. The complexity and potential tragedy of the situation lie with the fact that when the global changes in the hydrosphere do happen, it will be too late or impossible to do anything.* (p.336)

Civilization crawled out of the sea. It appears now that the fate of civilization hinges on what happens on her continental shelves. The sea is the mother of us all. Electing the exploitive course in one of the few remaining unexploited coastal areas in the World Ocean is treating her the same way we have treated her for the last century.

Steve Smith
Businessman, Owner Crest Hotel, Prince Rupert, BC

When preparing this presentation I reflected on how I could address the social and economic effects of oil and gas development in my community of Prince Rupert in just twenty minutes. A picture is worth 1000 words. I will show you a few pictures (not included here).

This is a coastal community that is in trouble. Although we are the second city in BC to have rail access from Eastern Canada, that being the CN Rail system that goes into Prince Rupert, a better track, a lower grade than going into Vancouver and three days closer to the orient — our major industries are all suffering from the lack of use of this corridor. We have a highway system as good as most down south but it is underutilized.

This is a typical highway that most coastal communities use — most of you see this picture and say that is a cruise ship — but to most of the communities on the north coast that is our highway system. A system of transportation that we have to move goods and services to places like Bella Bella, Ocean Falls and Prince Rupert and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Many of the smaller communities don't even have a vessel of that size to bring their goods. For example, Port Simpson, twenty miles north of Prince Rupert on the mainland, has a ferry system that can take about ten cars and they only get service three times a week, a vast improvement over the service they had three years ago, when it was a passenger only ferry carrying 40 passengers and you put your refrigerator or your chesterfield on and strapped it on an open deck exposed to the weather. And that community is on the mainland of BC, not on an island. This is our wonderful coal terminal, that was built by the Alberta government, province of BC and the federal government — used to 40% capacity. This is our grain terminal next to the coal terminal — used at 60% capacity even though it is three days closer sailing time to the orient — even though ships sit in Vancouver paying demurrage for days and weeks. These services are underutilized in the north. This is the general cargo dock in Prince Rupert. It is totally underutilized, and their sales are probably down 50% in the last three years because the amount of lumber is not being shipped out of BC. Some lumber is being shipped down south through containerization.

Saddest of all is our fishing industry. An industry that developed the North Coast, gave people pride and it was family industries and all individual little businesses that succeeded in developing the small communities on the coast of BC — private businesses, each one with its own identity — employing their family and friends. Now they are decimated by the policies of the federal and provincial governments and the fact that our fish resources are depleted. We used to see this — and we saw opportunity — now most of our groundfish are being shipped into the United States to be processed — not being processed in the local communities where it was caught. Even our tourism industry has been subjected to the economic downturn in the economy. Not the least of which was the Alaska blockade where fishermen from the Fraser River blocked the ferry in Prince Rupert because they were not getting their share of the catch for the northern licences (salmon) that they bought. It totally ruined the tourist industry for that season and the repercussions still continue.

The only thing missing from this picture are the people. And as the communities on the north coast get smaller, and less people come to visit them and less goods and services travel through, this is the biggest asset base that we have and we are losing it — the people that live in the north coast. And they are friendly people — proud of what they do and proud to share it with you. But we cannot eat and cannot exist on our culture alone. We need industry to develop and share our resources. Fishing is a seasonal industry — and this has been heavily impacted by the fact that the federal government has changed legislation regarding EI. Many of these people only work in the summer time and if they do not qualify for EI, they have no income, and no opportunities in the winter. This is not only relevant in large communities such as Prince Rupert; many of the workers that come to work in those fish plants come from the smaller villages, whether up the Nass River or smaller villages further up and down the coast. And they come to work in Prince Rupert in the summer time to focus their employment and to earn money and to return to their villages to sustain their own environment and their own way of life, in the winter.

Our First Nations people are a very important element of our communities. In Prince Rupert, 40 — 60% of our population is First Nations people. We have people from the Tsimshian, the Gitksan, the Haida Nations, and they are very involved in our community and in the fishing industry — perhaps 70% of those involved in gillnetting and trolling are First Nations people. These are people who have developed the resources in the north, and lived off those resources and we are proud of what they have done. We are smiling faces up north — we are proud of what we do — but we do have to have opportunity. We cannot continue to send all of our resources south and try to eke out little of what is left to make a living. We have to reinvest in the north and in the coastal communities so they can get a bigger share of the resources that are being extracted. Often times we feel like we are the used bottle depot. And I hear our First Nations friends talking about what is in it for us. I am a third generation Prince Rupert person myself. My grandfather came in 1906 and built the first home out of box and crates for my grandmother. We were hoping to have a viable community, a centre like Vancouver, a port for the Orient. Those things have not happened and a lot of this is due to politics.

I show you this because I want to impress on you the mode of transportation that we rely on. That looks like a very small plane — to many of you — but that is the method of transportation that Bob would be most familiar with in Hartley Bay because when you have to travel it is the only method of getting to Hartley Bay — by fish boat or by Beaver aircraft. And for most of the coastal communities this is our way of transportation. And these things (Beaver aircraft) are continually being rebuilt. This represents a road — we are proud of it — it goes to Lax Kw'alaams, a community of 1700 people on the mainland of BC which has ferry service three times a week. You have to travel this road, about fifteen miles, which takes 45 minutes. They have a fish plant there — it has gone broke three times. Perhaps the lack of infrastructure, they cannot move goods on roadways, is part of the reason they cannot make it. And that fish plant provided employment for all of the people that worked and lived in the community. And a fleet of vessels operated out of that community because they had a fish plant that could serve them. When the basic infrastructure is not there, and when the infrastructure that is there is composed of a ferry system that operates one day or three days a week, think about how it is possible to be efficient in business. Think about how efficient the Okanagan would be if the Coquahala was only open two days a week and if the weather was bad it was closed all the time. This is the reality on the north Coast, the reality for coastal communities. Our infrastructure is getting old, much of it is tired. We don't want to be a tourism mecca where people come to visit only two months of the year and the rest of the time we have no opportunity. We need to harvest our resources. Tourism is one of them. I am involved in that industry, but it is not the be all and end all for the coast of BC. We have to harvest our trees, minerals, and oceans. In the south you worry about transportation. In the northern communities we do not even have bus service — for example in Bob's community of Hartley Bay their system is an ATV (all terrain vehicle). The roads are made of wood — a community of 700 people — two hours by boat from Prince Rupert, depending on the speed of your boat.

We do not worry about leaking condominiums, we worry about buildings that are falling down because they have no people living in them. We are reminded constantly about what happened in the years past. This is an old cannery site along the Skeena River, where many people worked and had a livelihood and now it is just a series of rotten pilings with memories. Saddest of all is our fishing fleet. Once proud, we had over 700 gillnetters and trollers operating out of the north coast in the Prince Rupert area — now we are down to about 300. Each vessel belonged to a family — it was a way of life — people came from the Nass River — fished in the summer time. They were proud of what they did. Their parents worked with them — they taught their children about the sea and what they did and how they earned a living. That is gone, partly through licensing, not only because of the fish. The government changes

regulations and we are the by-product, unemployed people. We used to have 27 seine boats, and each boat had a five man crew, now we have twelve. Five times 30 vessels is 150 people, all working, making a good living, \$50 thousand per year for a crew member on a seine boat ten years ago. Now people are looking for other methods of employment, and it is not easy. Here is a cannery on the Skeena slough — the North Pacific Cannery. When I was a teenager anyone could get a job here. People came from the outlying native villages, housing was there for them in the summer time, friends came from universities and worked at North Pacific — hundreds of people were employed there — on pay day, on Fridays, it was a big thing. I was in the retail business at the time and you knew when it was payday in the canneries on the Skeena because everybody was uptown spending money. The economy was booming. Today it is a tourist site, the North Pacific Cannery village, and employs twelve people. We are happy it is still there, although it is pretty hard to equate twelve tourism jobs with hundreds of cannery workers who were working overtime seven days/week.

This has filtered down to our retail community. What was once a Third Avenue in Prince Rupert, where you couldn't rent a storefront for any price because they were all full, is now full of empty stores, stores for rent, for lease. There is a story behind these stores. This store here, Fashion Footwear, was started in 1930, and the family had it until 1999. And one of the members of that family was the chairman of our school board for twelve years. Those are the kind of businesses that promote the community and contribute to the community. This is the backbone of the small communities — small stores, small businesses. Here is another — started in 1932, ended in 1999. This restaurant open for twenty years in Prince Rupert — now closed. Here is a large furniture store, 1938 family business, closed in 1999. Businesses closed because they were losing opportunity — they could no longer justify the investments they had, the staff they were carrying, or the time and effort they were putting into a community that seemed to be dying. That saddens me because I live in Prince Rupert out of choice and I see the despair on peoples faces, and the lack of opportunity, mostly because we don't have the infrastructure. We do not have the share of the natural resources harvested in our areas, that we are entitled to.

I show this photo because it represents a way of life. It is a gillnetter/troller combination boat — maybe from Hartley Bay, Oona River, Digby, Lax Kw'alaams, or Metlakatla. This boat which you could buy today for \$8,000, maybe in those days had a total of \$40,000 invested. This boat was a way of life, a family business, as important as that shoe store or clothing store. This boat represented business for that small community. And it had a set of family values and traditions that was passed down from generation to generation, it may have started off as a rowboat in the Skeena, evolved to a gas boat and into a diesel gillnetter. But through one piece of legislation the government said we will no longer have gillnetter/troller combination vessels, and you have to specify which one it will be, and even which area you will fish in. The heart and soul of these communities was the people, who may not have been the best salmon fishermen, but they made a living. They trolled, gillnetted, set crab traps, fished shrimp in November, and hand jigged some halibut and groundfish. At the end of the day maybe they made \$60,000 gross and after they paid their boat expenses, may have had \$30,000 left over for a family income. This by Vancouver or Toronto standards is not a lot of money, but if you live on a small native reserve or in a small coastal community, \$30,000 can go a long way. Most of all it gave the people pride and opportunity. And furthermore for centres like Prince Rupert people came to our areas to be serviced. Those 700 boats had to come in, get their oil changed, get fuel and groceries. Those opportunities are now gone.

(Referring to photos) Certified welding, secondary industry there to support the fish boats, is no longer there. This apartment complex — almost 100 apartments — 56% vacancy — the owner gave it back to the bank last year. We were building twenty houses/year — now we are building one or two — and private homes have dropped \$50 — 70,000 in value. In the south you may dream of gardens, up north we just have the refuge. You want to come and visit our streams as tourists and fishermen but they are our livelihood, and we cannot make it on three months of business. We are trying to rehabilitate streams like this to produce salmon. You see a pile of guts and fish offal, we see opportunity.

We doubled the workforce — we now have 1200 people working at this kraft mill — it doubled our city's tax base and we now had all kinds of amenities for our people. But in a few short years the trees starting dying and the fish left and the crabs weren't suitable to eat. And we said — we have made a mistake — because we had. We were polluting the very island we lived on. I can tell you today that we eat crab from Wainwright Basin — and the fish are coming back — and the trees are growing and from where I saw my first logging show when I was eight years old the trees are now twelve to fourteen feet high. We can repair the environment — yes we make mistakes from time to time,

sometimes even in our own backyard — but we don't do it on purpose. We can fix it and technology can give us the answers.

In closing, I want to share a slide with you — we all have a vision for the area where we live. A place that has employment, that is prosperous, has small business, and healthy industry. And yes we do have to get involved in resource extraction — we do cut trees, mine and harvest the fish and maybe we even harvest the offshore oil and gas. But at the end of the day, we have to have a community that has jobs for people and opportunity. What we see is an opportunity with north coast oil and gas — it will provide the infrastructure, the tax base, the amenities, the jobs that all the people on the north coast need and deserve. Do not tell us no, tell us how.

SYNOPSIS OF DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED THE REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION SESSION

Is there a need for jobs in the north and the central coast regions?

There was discussion about the need for jobs in the north and on the central coast. Philip Hogan noted that the fish are not coming back and they do need jobs. But he noted that the outside area is the breadbasket for the Heiltsuk Nation and they cannot afford to have it destroyed. He expressed his opinion that most of the benefits, should oil and gas development go ahead, would not go to the people of Bella Bella — that instead he believes that they will go to investors, and corporations, or maybe to Prince Rupert. He posed the question: Why should we go hungry for someone else on our own land? And he noted that the Heiltsuk people use that area — not just on the islands and the beaches but also the 'outside', Goose Island Banks; they have stories and names from out there and traditions that tell them how to navigate. He expressed the importance of protecting this area and stressed that it is not right that the benefits go to corporations, and even the province, before the question of who owns it is settled. He noted that the Heiltsuk Nation knows who owns it. He stressed that the government cannot be at a table negotiating treaties and at the same time be giving the rights away for oil and gas resources. He referred to a publication about the direct effects of oil and gas exploration on the environment on the website for the Heiltsuk Nation (www.heiltsuk.com).

What is the health of the fisheries in the north?

Steve Smith addressed a question regarding the health of the fisheries in the north. He noted that the salmon stocks of the Nass and Skeena Rivers are quite healthy and that in fact they are expecting record returns of sockeye on the Skeena River in summer 2000. He also noted that there were benefits coming to Prince Rupert from the free trade agreement; for example, Prince Rupert has the largest fish cannery in the world which employs about 2000 people work at the height of the season — significantly, at any time during the season, about between 65 and 70% of the fish being processed in the cannery comes from Southeast Alaska .

Are fishers in Prince Rupert supportive of offshore oil and gas exploration?

A participant referred to fishers in Sointula being opposed to offshore oil and gas drilling and said that they see it as another threat to their already threatened industry and so was surprised to hear from Steve Smith that the fishermen in Prince Rupert are looking at offshore oil and gas as an *opportunity*. Steve replied that although he couldn't speak for all the fishers in Prince Rupert he did believe they were positive and he noted that there are numerous examples of fishing co-existing with oil and gas development throughout the world. He discussed what some fishermen see as side benefits from the industry; for example, having a stable platform in Hecate Strait would mean that a doctor would be readily available, and weather reports and other services such as cell phones, would be more accessible. He emphasized that this has to be viewed as a whole, and part of that is an opportunity.