



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

RNNR • NUMBER 049 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, March 10, 2011

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Chair

Mr. Leon Benoit

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Good afternoon, everyone. We are here for our second meeting to deal with the motion pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) to carry on a study of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's decision regarding the transport of decommissioned steam generators to Sweden. We have two panels today.

Just before we get to our first panel, we have to approve a budget for witness expenses for this study. You have the budget before you for the two meetings that are scheduled. It comes to \$15,000. Are there any questions on the budget, or any discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): I know we have an uncertain couple of weeks coming, but where do we stand on the trip out to northern Alberta?

The Chair: That has nothing to do with this study. This is only for these two meetings.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: This is only the budget for just these two meetings? Okay.

The Chair: Yes.

Is the budget approved?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Now we will go straight to the two panels for today. We have witnesses with us. One witness is delayed due to air travel; that's no surprise today. We have as well one witness by video conference and one by teleconference. We will start with the presentations in their order on the agenda.

Actually, the first person on the agenda, Mr. Ullrich, isn't here yet, so we will take his presentation if he makes it on time. We will start, then, with Mike Smith, warden of Bruce County, and Mitch Twolan, mayor of Huron-Kinloss.

Go ahead, gentlemen, with your presentations, please.

Mr. Mike Smith (Mayor, Saugeen Shores, and Warden, Bruce County): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today and provide Bruce County council's perspective on the steam generator recycling project proposed by Bruce Power.

As you mentioned, I'm the mayor of Saugeen Shores and the Bruce County warden. With me is Mitch Twolan. He is the mayor of Huron-Kinloss and also a member of the Bruce County council.

We'd like to comment on a number of aspects of the project as it relates to the county and the lower-tiered communities in the county. We will first comment on our relationship with the proponent, Bruce Power, and our involvement specifically with this project; second, as a member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, we will discuss our input, or lack of input, to the position taken by the board and how that position was communicated to the CNSC.

Bruce Power provides information to our communities in various ways. A delegation appears monthly before Bruce County council to report on safety; environmental performance, on and off the site; production; major activities on site, like the current rehabilitation of the units; and community events that the company and staff may be involved in.

Bruce Power is also a member of the South Bruce Impact Advisory Committee, a committee that was formed during the construction of the site. The mandate is to identify issues and address impacts as they affect the health, safety, environment, and economic well-being of the adjacent communities. There are five communities on that committee. Along with Ontario Power Generation, Bruce Power is an active member of the impact committee. It reports monthly.

Specifically on the steam generator project, Bruce Power has hosted a number of well-advertised open houses in our community, and anyone could attend and get information or provide input to the project. There were a number of them throughout the county and the County of Grey.

Bruce County council became formally aware of the project at the May 6, 2010, session. We were informed that the generators were classified as low-level waste, and as a result of their size, Bruce Power intended to seek an approval for a special arrangement certificate from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. The plan was to transport the generators through our community in late September or early October.

The proposed route was to be over county-owned roads and bridges and through three or four of our lower-tier municipalities. An oversize permit was going to be needed to transport the generators over Bruce County roads. As the transport of the generators was going to take place on our roads and through our communities, county council wanted assurances that the project could be completed safely.

Bruce Power offered to provide detailed briefings and to work with our county engineer—who is our professional road and bridge authority—the Grey-Bruce Public Health Board, the medical officer of health, and the lower-tier communities on the transport route. After careful consideration, both the county engineer and the county medical officer of health—I know we're going to hear from her today—concluded that the project did not pose a public health hazard.

With this information, and given Bruce Power's commitment and proven performance in safety, the county council was confident that the proponent could complete the project as planned. It decided to advise the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission at the September public hearing and to do so in the form of an oral intervention.

Bruce County council continues to receive monthly briefings on the project, and Bruce Power officials continue to work closely with our county engineer on the transport route.

At the May 6 county council meeting, we were also informed that the objective of the project was to reduce the amount of material going into long-term storage and recycle the majority of the metal in the generators. Although this is something that the county has no jurisdiction over, we believe it is an environmentally responsible action to take. Upwards of 90% of the material in the generators would be safely recycled, and the remaining 10% would be returned, in approved packages, and stored at the western waste management facility in Bruce County.

I want to mention, again briefly, that both Mitch and I are members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and we obviously do not agree with the position they have taken at the CNSC. I say that because we weren't given an opportunity for input prior to that intervention in September. I'll leave that with the committee.

Finally, Bruce County council continues to believe that the project can be completed safely through our communities. We believe that Bruce Power has the ability to complete the project in a manner that will not pose a public or environmental health hazard.

Thank you.

• (1540)

The Chair: Mr. Smith, thank you very much for your presentation.

As I indicated, we will go through all of the presentations before we get to questions and comments.

We have now, by video conference from the Grey Bruce Health Unit, Dr. Hazel Lynn, medical health officer.

Ms. Lynn, as you're making your presentation, there won't be any problem; when questions are being asked later, you will see the questioner, but when you go to respond, you will be seeing an image of yourself. That's just so you're aware of that in advance.

Please go ahead with your presentation. You have up to seven minutes.

Dr. Hazel Lynn (Medical Officer of Health, Grey Bruce Health Unit): All right. Thank you very much.

As you said, I'm the medical officer of health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit. I'm a fellow in The College of Family Physicians of Canada and licensed to practise in Ontario. I also have a master's degree in epidemiology and community health from the University of Toronto in 2003.

As part of the course work for the master's, I completed a graduate-level course on radiological health offered at the school of industrial hygiene at U of T. This course covered both ionizing and non-ionizing radiation. Although I'm not an expert in this field, I certainly do understand units of measurement, measurement techniques, and relative exposure risks, and I have participated in various educational opportunities in this field to keep track of the new research and technology.

Public health practice in Ontario is mandated by the Health Protection and Promotion Act. It's defined by the Ontario Public Health Standards. Protection of our health is the cornerstone of the prevention of disease. The Health Protection and Promotion Act provides the legal authority for the medical officer of health to respond to a hazardous situation that threatens the health of the public. The Ontario Public Health Standards then provide the protocol to operationalize the risk assessment process.

The tool combines community surveillance and risk profile process, which is ongoing, and then a probability and consequence matrix that allows us to assign priority values to the identified hazard situations. Most of what we do in life has some hazard, but we have to have priorities in how we adjust our lives accordingly.

Considering the recycling of decommissioned boilers from Bruce Power, my jurisdiction and responsibility are limited to the health hazard assessment associated with the transport of the decommissioned boilers from the Bruce Power site to the port of Owen Sound and on to the ocean transport. More specifically, I need to determine the level of exposure risk and then the consequent health risk to the population of Grey and Bruce counties.

When the plan for transporting the decommissioned boilers was first proposed, the board of health requested information from Bruce Power. Representatives came and presented the project, answered questions, and addressed our concerns. A series of open houses were held, and an information website was set up and maintained. A radiation regulatory official and scientist from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission came to Owen Sound and presented to the city council and to the board of health.

The risk to human health from ionizing radiation exposure increases with the type and the magnitude of radiation and the duration of time the person is exposed. Based on the information provided by Bruce Power and the Nuclear Safety Commission, the type and magnitude of radiation released from the surface of the decommissioned boilers is very low, well below the regulatory limits for transport of such material. Our conclusion is that there is no increased radiological exposure risk related to these boilers if the population stays at least two metres away from them.

To ensure this protective distance is maintained, there will be continuous monitoring for emissions around the boilers. There is a contingency plan for transportation incidents on the roads. There is a police escort for the transport and security personnel at the harbour. These measures are in place to prevent inadvertent exposure to the public. With these measures in place, my conclusion is that the probability of radiation exposure to the population is, for all intents and purposes, practically zero.

The consequence of the exposure is the other side of the hazard matrix. Standing within one metre of the steam generator continuously for one hour would expose a person to a dose of about 80 microsieverts. This is an amount significantly less than a conventional chest X-ray, which is about 140 microsieverts. The consequence of this exposure is also very close to zero.

My conclusion, then, is that the probability of exposure and the consequence of exposure are both practically zero, so this proposal does not present a health hazard to the population of Grey and Bruce counties.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is the agency with the greatest expertise in the field of radiological health. I appreciate the board of health's willingness to provide information and consult with our community. We are strong supporters of recycling and reusing and we support the CNSC decision to provide the licence to transport these decommissioned boilers for recycling and reduction of the volume of radioactive material that requires long-term storage.

Thank you.

• (1545)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Lynn, for your presentation.

We go now to the next presenter on the first panel. By teleconference from the Town of Amqui in Quebec, we have Mayor Gaëtan Ruest.

Go ahead, please, Mayor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest (Mayor, Town of Amqui): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to all committee members.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Regroupement des municipalités du Québec pour un futur énergétique socialement responsable, I want to thank you for the invitation to come and testify before your committee today on Bruce Power's plan to import and export radioactive waste.

In our view, the current political situation should encourage Canadian and Quebec parliamentarians to take action to put an end to Bruce Power's plan to proceed with the import and export of its radioactive waste for metal recycling purposes. Here we will be outlining the reasons for our request.

Our organization includes some 300 municipalities that, by resolution, have expressed their intent to promote investment in energy conservation, energy efficiency, the modernization of demand management and, if necessary, the production of new forms of renewable energy within a decentralized perspective. As you will

understand, all energy production-related issues are a concern for us and nuclear energy production is no exception.

With respect to nuclear energy and the issue currently under review by the committee, the absence of any integrated nuclear waste management policy in Quebec and Canada is a concern for the members of our organization. In the circumstances, any project involving the production, transportation, categorization and permanent or temporary management of radioactive waste produced in Canada encourages us to get involved.

As a result, Bruce Power's plan has led us to notify the some 185 municipalities in Quebec most likely to be on the land path of the radioactive waste concerned. To date, 125 of those municipalities have endorsed a resolution submitted by our organization to oppose Bruce Power's project and to challenge the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's decision to facilitate its implementation. Those 125 municipalities represent nearly half a million citizens.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mayor, *excusez-moi*—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: In Quebec, our organization is mainly opposed to the non-essential transportation of radioactive waste or material contaminated by radioactivity resulting from the dismantling, rebuilding or ongoing operation of nuclear reactors. In the case before us—

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead with a point of order, Mr. Coderre.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Ruest, this is Denis Coderre, member of Parliament. With all due respect, smoke is rising from our interpreters: you are speaking too quickly. Slow down, please; we know where you come from.

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: Yes, but I heard that we had 10 minutes for our address. Since I only have seven minutes left, I have to pick up the pace.

Hon. Denis Coderre: It's like in golf: the person who makes the fewest strokes wins. You don't need to say too many words either.

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: Oh, all right.

In the case before us, the metals contaminated by radioactivity from Bruce Power would be transiting through Quebec on their way to Sweden. This explains our involvement in the Bruce Power plan and our decision to attend today's hearing and that organized by the CNSC where we were also represented.

Our organization must express its disappointment with the quality of the consultation process conducted by the CNSC in this case. Committee members should take note of the fact that we learned, to our great surprise, at the hearing that neither the project promoter nor the CNSC had had the courtesy to inform Quebec's political authorities about the nature of the project. The Quebec municipalities potentially concerned by the transportation of the proponent's radioactive waste were also kept in the dark. How then is it possible to explain why a plan to transport radioactive waste produced in Canada, involving the use of Quebec land, could be developed without the political authorities more specifically concerned being informed of the fact?

We were also disappointed by the lack of consideration shown by certain commission members at the hearing before the CNSC following the presentation of our brief. Certain comments suggested that the Quebec municipal councillors who had endorsed the resolution submitted to them had acted without the appropriate knowledge. Our resolution was even compared to a circular letter. When our brief was filed with the CNSC, 30 municipalities had endorsed the resolution at the time. Now there are 138 municipalities.

Allow me to reassure the members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. In Quebec, when resolutions are adopted by elected members, they are adopted upon careful reflection. We have appended the wording of the resolution to our presentation and you will be able to determine whether it is appropriate.

Further to the CNSC hearing, we sent a document to Mr. André Régimbald, engineer and director general of nuclear substance regulation at the CNSC, informing him that it would be useful for CNSC staff to read our resolution and that we would like CNSC staff to be able to inform us in a detailed manner of any factual error that it might contain. That request was sent to him on January 26. At that time, 113 Quebec municipalities had adopted the resolution. We are still awaiting a response.

I must note the vigilance of the municipal elected representatives of our organization. Without the alert issued by my colleagues, the plan secretly developed by the Ontario Bruce Power company to use the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence Seaway and Quebec's road system to transport this radioactive waste to Sweden would not have received all the attention it deserved from the Quebec public and their provincial and municipal elected representatives.

Bruce Power's conduct and the CNSC's attitude have shown Canadians and Quebecers the sad example of a private business and government agency utterly lacking the slightest respect for democratic rules that should actuate them in a matter with such obvious geopolitical implications.

The factual reasons for not authorizing the Bruce Power project for so-called metal recycling purposes are numerous. Even though they were stated by many stakeholders, the CNSC decided, in spite of everything, to support Bruce Power in its project.

In the circumstances, the members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources will have a historic role to play. They will have to set aside all partisan political considerations in order to overturn this decision by the CNSC. Based on our analysis of the situation, the

decision made by the CNSC has political consequences, and if carefully assessed by parliamentarians, they would want their direct intervention in this matter and the immediate withdrawal of the licence granted to Bruce Power.

In our view, the CNSC has exceeded the limits of its mandate by granting Bruce Power the licence. Did Mr. Binder do so in full knowledge of the facts? Did the CNSC take advantage of the absence of clearly defined policies to favour the nuclear industry to the detriment of the interests of the Canadian public?

One statement by Mr. Binder at the commission's public hearing leads us to believe that he was aware the decision he would have to make in fact exceeded his mandate. The evidence given at the hearing by Mr. Miles Goldstick, from the Swedish Environmental Movement's Nuclear Waste Secretariat illustrates this statement. During his remarks, Mr. Goldstick mentioned that the recycling project proposed by Bruce Power raised significant issues regarding the future management of nuclear waste on a global scale. President Binder called Mr. Goldstick to order, clearly stating that that aspect of the issue exceeded the mandate of the public hearings.

● (1550)

In fact, Mr. Binder should have adopted Mr. Goldstick's argument and added it to other policies in the matter to justify the decision to stay Bruce Power's application. The potential consequences of the interprovincial and international geopolitical issues involved are too serious for the members of this committee to remain silent on this matter.

Now I'm going to speak to the political reasons for withdrawing the CNSC's decision. The CNSC's decision to grant Bruce Power a licence to export and import radioactive waste for recycling purposes is utterly unacceptable from a political standpoint. A rigorous analysis of the situation should have led president Binder to inform the minister responsible for these activities that the political implications of a decision favourable to Bruce Power put it in a situation in which it exceeded its mandate.

In our view, this matter emphasizes the fact that the appropriate political authorities in Canada and Quebec should, on an urgent basis and in cooperation with the public, develop a policy clarifying, first, Canada's policy on the import and export of radioactive waste produced by nuclear reactors that are decommissioned or rebuilt. Second, that policy will have to clarify Canada's policy—

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Ruest—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: —on whether it is acceptable to use the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence—

[*English*]

The Chair: Monsieur—

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: —Seaway to transport radioactive waste or that has been rebuilt—

[English]

The Chair: We have to end your presentation there. You're over time by a couple of minutes already. We do have a transcript of your presentation. All members of the committee have a transcript, so they can read that, but we must get on to the next witnesses.

Thank you very much. There will be questions later on.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: Third, that policy will have to clarify Canada's policy on the terms of acceptance governing the transportation of waste...

Fourth, that policy will have to clarify Canada's official policy on the radioactive contamination of global scrap stocks as a result of their deliberate or accidental mixing with radioactive waste.

Fifth, that policy will also have to clarify Canada's policy on the classification of so-called low-intensity radioactive waste—

[English]

The Chair: We go now to our next group of witnesses, who are the first on the agenda for today's first panel. From the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, we have Mr. David Ullrich, executive director, and Mr. Denis Lapointe, chair and director. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for being here.

Go ahead with your presentation. You have up to seven minutes. Thank you for coming.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Lapointe (Chair and Director, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Distinguished members of the natural resources committee, my name is Denis Lapointe, and I am the mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, a town in Quebec, and chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. I am also chair of the environmental policy committee of the Union of Quebec Municipalities. With me is David Ullrich, our executive director, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

First, I would like to point out that, contrary to what may have been said, we are not associated with any anti-nuclear organization. Our interest in our presentations and efforts is the public health and safety of the people we represent.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are the largest body of surface fresh water in the world. They provide drinking water to about 40 million Canadian and United States citizens and are the foundation of the economy of our two provinces and eight states, which together is the second largest in the world. The Great Lakes basin is home to 98% of Ontarians and the St. Lawrence basin is home to over 90% of Quebecers, with over 50% along the shoreline of the St. Lawrence.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is an organization of over 70 local governments, two-thirds from Canada and one-third from the U.S., with over 13 million citizens. We provide a voice for local leaders on key issues relating to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and work together with other stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource with balanced economic, social and environmental progress.

We are very concerned about Bruce Power's proposed shipment of 16 decommissioned nuclear steam generators containing radioactive waste through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Our concerns are: there was not adequate consultation with other governments and stakeholders about the shipment; the shipment exceeds the International Atomic Agency's safety standards for total allowable radioactivity on a single ship; the environmental risk presented by the shipment was not characterized adequately; and the shipment sets a precedent for the future.

Concerning consultation about the shipment, we believe it has been inadequate with cities, the province of Quebec, first nations and the general public. Many of our members learned about this only from newspaper accounts or from our organization. Although there were some efforts to brief local officials once it became clear that the shipment was controversial, these were initially limited and selective. The decision to hold a hearing was announced only after the controversy developed.

We recommend in the future with a matter of this nature that there be public notice at the time an application is received, full disclosure of all the information that forms the basis of the application and proposed action on it, opportunity for consultation with the applicant and decision-makers, answers to questions raised by stakeholders, and a public hearing to raise concerns.

I will now ask Mr. David Ullrich to address our other concerns.

[English]

Mr. David Ullrich (Executive Director, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative): Thank you very much, Mayor Lapointe.

Chair Benoit, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak today.

The second major concern we have is that the shipment exceeds the International Atomic Energy Agency safety standards for total amount of radioactivity allowed on a single ship. The CNSC's February 4, 2011, decision acknowledges the shipment would exceed the safety standards by a factor of six, which is why the special arrangements that include compensatory measures are necessary.

These IAEA standards are set for a reason—to protect public health and the environment. It is the large amount of radioactive waste exceeding the safety standards on a single ship that leads directly to our next concern.

We do not believe that the environmental review was adequate to characterize the risk presented by the shipment. The risk increases as the steam generators are moved from secure storage onto trucks, transported over land to a port, unloaded on a ship, and moved through three Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River, and a system of locks and narrow channels.

The risks to Canadian and U.S. citizens and waters are not adequately characterized, quantified, or differentiated, based on the various conditions present in open lakes, locks, flowing rivers, and channels. If there were an accident, the seriousness of the accident is not adequately quantified, except that an assumption—a very rosy assumption of 1% of the radioactive waste from one of the 16 generators—is made.

The next step in assessing the risk is to determine what happens to the released material. The review essentially concludes that there is so much water in the lakes, rivers, and channels that the problem can be diluted away. Our review indicates that a release as the result of an accident could exceed drinking water standards in Canada. Places with the smallest volume of water are the most vulnerable.

Our fourth concern is that the shipment sets a precedent that could lead to many more shipments. This shipment is not routine. To our knowledge, no shipment of this large a number of nuclear steam generators containing radioactive waste has ever occurred on the Great Lakes or the St. Lawrence. Yes, there are shipments of other hazardous materials, but those are beyond the scope of this matter.

With Bruce Power alone having 64 nuclear steam generators that may be shipped, and with the amount of additional radioactive waste from nuclear plants along the Great Lakes, the potential for many more shipments is very real. This shipment certainly should be viewed as precedent-setting.

To address the concerns we have raised, we recommend that a thorough, rigorous, comprehensive environmental review be performed of the entire proposed shipment, and be subjected to full public scrutiny and review. If that risk is above levels acceptable under Canadian law and policy, either the shipment should not be made or additional measures should be required to reduce the risks to acceptable levels.

Thank you very much again for this opportunity to speak.

•(1600)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ullrich and Monsieur Lapointe. I understand you had a fun day on airplanes in various places.

Mr. David Ullrich: It was an adventure down to Rochester, New York. Then the cab driver could not find number 1 Wellington Street and dropped me off way over on the other side. Even the RCMP didn't know where it was.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Well, thank you for being here.

Mr. David Ullrich: It's a pleasure to be here.

The Chair: We will start our questioning now. From the official opposition we have Mr. Scarpaleggia, and then Monsieur Coderre, if there is time left.

Go ahead, Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'll just preface my remarks by saying that my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis sits on the St. Lawrence. It covers the western tip of the island of Montreal. I'm pretty sure that any citizen of my riding who is aware of this plan to ship these radioactive boilers to Sweden through the St. Lawrence, passing in front of my riding, would almost certainly be against it.

I'm trying to sort out what seems to be contradictory testimony. On the one hand, Mr. Ullrich, you were saying that the amount being shipped is the largest amount ever to be shipped through the St. Lawrence or the Great Lakes. Is that correct?

•(1605)

Mr. David Ullrich: That is certainly our understanding.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It is six times what is recommended as a safe quantity to be shipped by the International Atomic Energy Association. Is that correct?

Mr. David Ullrich: Yes, it's at least that. Our calculations show that the exceedance is much larger. It goes to a question about the interpretation of the International Atomic Energy standards. We were assured that we would get a clarification of that at the September 28 hearing; we have never received that clarification.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That brings me to Dr. Lynn. You said in your testimony that the amount of radioactive substance is a great deal below what would be considered safe. Is that correct?

The Chair: Dr. Lynn, go ahead.

Dr. Hazel Lynn: Basically I'm talking about exposure that would be a surface contaminant to someone who was exposed to the boiler, which is well below what is transportable. The total amount of internal radiation is not going to expose the people who are watching the boilers go by.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: How do you square these two facts? In one case it's six times what is recommended by the International Atomic Energy Association, yet you're saying that one could stand next to one of these radioactive boilers for at least a couple of hours and it wouldn't be much different from getting a chest X-ray. As a non-scientific person, I'm trying to understand how one reconciles those two ideas.

Dr. Hazel Lynn: The boilers are encased in steel and then with an epoxy coating, which actually is a barrier to the radiation exposure. Judging by the amount of radiation on the external surface available to contaminate people from the exposure, it could be sent in a cardboard box. Inside the boilers there is more radiation, but it's not able to get through the steel.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: So under no circumstances would it be able to get through the steel.

Let's say there was a ship accident and the boiler wound up on the floor of the St. Lawrence River, corroding over time. Would there be no danger of a release that would be harmful to human health? Is that what you're saying?

Dr. Hazel Lynn: Basically, shielding is just that. We shield it, which we do all the time in X-rays and treating cancers; we shield the people we don't want exposed. The steel acts as a shield. If you breach it, of course, radioactivity will get out.

These are very safe as they are. You could go with what-ifs for many different things that might happen, but as the intact boiler is being shipped, there's very low-level waste.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'm also trying to understand the difference between Mr. Smith and Mr. Twolan's point of view and that of the 130-odd cities that are categorically against this.

Is it because your town or county deals with nuclear issues all the time because you have the Bruce power plant there? Do you just have a different perspective because it's part of daily life?

Mr. Mike Smith: I think that's part of it. We've been host to that nuclear facility for over 50 years. We have a very well-informed public. I believe there was polling done on it in Grey and Bruce counties to see what kind of support there was. There was very high support for the project.

A lot of people who live in our community work there. They come home safely every day. They're no different from any other industry. It's a big part of our community. With that comes a very good understanding of nuclear issues, because a big part of our community works in that huge facility.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'll give my time to Mr. Coderre.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you very much.

Mr. Lapointe, we spoke with the commission's representatives. I had a feeling that those people conducted a consultation after granting the licence.

Are you concerned because you don't have enough information? The president of the commission virtually said you were all anti-nuclear types and were being controlled like puppets. I know Denis Lapointe. Puppet and Lapointe are two words that don't go together.

What's the basis of the problem? Are your fears the result of a lack of information? If we reassured you on the matter, would that change the situation for you?

• (1610)

Mr. Denis Lapointe: In fact, the information started to be made public and we were able to review all the details of the project after the announcement was made, after citizens rose up or raised their hands to say that this would cause a problem and to ask how it would be possible to manage it. There's a lack of information, but it's starting to be given to us. I believe the hearings you're holding, and those that were held after people raised these issues, are making it possible to obtain a little more information. It's a little clearer now. The fact remains that the analyses or the review of the documentation that were made do not yet show that this shipment is without risk. We need to feel safer.

Hon. Denis Coderre: But your—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Coderre; your time is up.

Madame Brunelle, you have up to seven minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, madam. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

My name is Paule Brunelle, member for Trois-Rivières. The beautiful St. Lawrence flows in front of my house.

Mr. Ruest, are you still with us?

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: Of course, and I'm listening to you religiously.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Good afternoon. First, I want to congratulate you and all the municipal elected representatives for your vigilance. We're talking about 125 municipalities here that alerted us and signed a petition. That's important.

Congratulations to you as well, Mr. Lapointe.

Mr. Ruest, Mr. Binder told us two days ago that you had been influenced by environmentalist groups. Listening to him, we got the impression that these were anti-nuclear groups and that they had even drafted the petition for you. He told us something even more important, as president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and that's that this first shipment would take place and that there would be others. We at the Bloc Québécois are concerned about the precedent that is setting.

What do you say to those comments?

Mr. Gaëtan Ruest: As you saw in my presentation, which I was unfortunately unable to finish, we have no nuclear waste management policy. That's serious. In Bécancour, it's stored in silos. When the Ontario government owned nuclear power stations, it made a commitment not to change the situation until 2043. Then it assigned ownership to Bruce Power, and that's left the door wide open. The most beautiful country in the world will be giving the entire planet the opportunity to see its waste go back and forth between here and Sweden. No arrangements have yet been made. If we conducted a survey of the Canadian public, I'm convinced that a large percentage of citizens would say that the CNSC has made a mistake and that, if Canada really wants to set an example for the entire world, it should dispose of its waste properly. Furthermore, there are deficiencies that Canada must correct in the policy area.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: So you're suggesting that the licence be immediately withdrawn and that we adopt a policy.

I'm speaking to Mr. Lapointe and Mr. Ullrich. You're telling us that this might set a precedent. The Bruce Power station alone has 64 generators that will be decommissioned and that are likely to go the same way. You're telling us about an in-depth and rigorous environmental review.

In your view, is that a step that should be taken in advance? Is it important for you that we establish a policy, or is an environmental review enough?

[English]

Mr. David Ullrich: Absolutely. That is at the heart of the matter. The difficulty is not when the radioactive waste is in the steel containers, where I agree there is great protection. The real problem here is the true risk that is presented. As soon as you take it out of secure storage and put it into transportation, the risk goes up significantly, and that has not been quantified. I didn't see a single number that characterized the likelihood of an accident. The only number that was put in the record as to the seriousness of the accident was 1% of one of the 16 generators, with only 13.2% of the material actually being available. I think that is so optimistic an assessment that it simply does not have credibility in terms of the likelihood of an accident and then how serious the release is and then beyond that what happens to it.

The assumption that was built in is strictly that it is diluted in a large amount of water. That is not how we solve environmental problems. There is discussion about public health, but there is not a single bit of evidence that I have been able to see that addresses exposure to micro-organisms, plant life, or fish life in the Great Lakes or the St. Lawrence. There is much talk about environmental review; I was not able to find anything in the record.

At the outset, Bruce Nuclear said there was zero risk, that no risk was presented. I am not aware of anything in life in which there is no risk, so from start to finish, in terms of the assessment of the risk presented, I simply do not think that the job was done. Suggestions that somehow or other environmental activists have been feeding Mayor Lapointe and our other leadership are simply not true, and I don't think they respect the people who are in office and really care about the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence.

•(1615)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Lapointe: With your permission, I'd like to go back to the policy idea. There's no nuclear waste management policy in Canada. I believe that, with regard to sustainable development, it is the responsibility of the producers of that waste in Canada to put in place the necessary tools to manage, within our borders, the waste we produce rather than ship it elsewhere.

Under responsible management, we would take charge of our own waste, as we do now in the regions and ultimately in the communities.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Thank you. One comment concerning the quantity of waste troubled me. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission said that it was not possible to assess the quantity of waste that there actually was in the generators because they couldn't access them. So we really wonder.

Ms. Lynn, you're telling us that, at two metres from the generators, there's no problem; we're talking about radiation, but not contamination of drinking water. Have you assessed the potential consequences this could have for drinking water in the event of an incident during shipment? In my constituency, some citizens get alarmed simply because there's fluoride in the water they drink. We should really be reassured.

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Dr. Lynn.

Dr. Hazel Lynn: When we actually did the assessment for risk of transport, we found that these boilers have been transported across Canada when they came in and also when the new ones came in, and there has never been an accident in their transport. They are transported in their own vehicles and so on, so the actual risk during land transportation of the boiler is pretty low.

The amount of naturally occurring radiation that's in the Great Lakes is about 6 becquerels per litre on average. Even if all of this material was released into the Great Lake—and we're looking at Lake Huron, because that's what we're on here—that would not change anything, and it would still be 6 becquerels per litre. In the big picture of radiation, we are all exposed every day to radiation. We're all exposed medically, we're all exposed from the sun, and although we don't want it in the environment and I think the plan is safe, if the entire load did inadvertently end up in the lake, it wouldn't even change the total amount. It's a very small amount of radiation in total.

The Chair: Thank you, Doctor.

Merci, Madame Brunelle.

Mr. Cullen, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses.

I suppose there are three components to the question we have in front of us. One is the proposal itself to ship radioactive waste through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. The second is the process that was used by the federal government to get permission to do this. The third is this question of influence that has now been put out by the regulator, assuming and saying, and I'm quoting, "...this is not about safety. This is about anti-nuclear. There is a professional anti-nuclear organization who are preying off the fear of nuclear".

I don't think I've ever heard a regulator go so far beyond the bounds of their own mandate to cast aspersions on anyone who raised questions about this proposal as has been put forward by Bruce Power.

Dr. Lynn, you folks did a formal risk assessment. In your comments earlier you said you assumed no breach in the shield and therefore no accident in that formal risk assessment. Have you published and allowed the public to look at this formal risk assessment?

•(1620)

Dr. Hazel Lynn: Yes, we had one at Owen Sound. The city was concerned because the harbour where the generators would be loaded onto the ocean transporters is right there. Basically, there has never been an accident before. It starts to make your probability of an accident go down.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Have you released this document publicly? Can you make this document available to the committee, the formal risk assessment that you did?

Dr. Hazel Lynn: I did send it to you.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay.

Mr. Smith, do you feel that Mr. Lapointe is, as is suggested by the CNSC, under the influence of professional anti-nuclear organizations?

Mr. Mike Smith: I think Mr. Lapointe can speak to that better than I can, but no, I don't think so. I disagreed with the position they've taken and was very disturbed that as a host community, where the biggest part of the project was going to take place, we didn't get an opportunity to give input to the board before they made their decision and intervention.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Although I could almost see the proponent going out and accusing anyone throwing up roadblocks of being under undue influence from some quarter, it seems strange that the so-called watchdog would be out trumpeting for the industry and saying that anyone who raises a concern is being influenced.

[Translation]

Mr. Lapointe, the president of the CNSC said that everyone who has concerns about the transportation of the steam generators has been manipulated for the purpose of taking part in anti-nuclear activities. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Denis Lapointe: The answer is no. I believe that, as responsible communities, we have a right to ask questions.

Reference was also made to management. That subject has been addressed on a number of occasions by the mayors who belong to management. We adopted our position based on the information obtained by each of us and on that forwarded by the commission, not under pressure from anyone. We have no links to those organizations.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I have a question for you concerning the current process.

Under the act, it is not enough for a single official to approve shipment. It was only in response to public pressure that the CNSC resolved to hold two brief public meetings. The act permits a single, unelected individual to make the decision.

In those conditions, can the public viewpoint be respected?

Mr. Denis Lapointe: That's one of our major concerns.

As I said earlier, when I made my presentation, the information started spreading and the communication started to be established once questions were raised. I believe that all the consultation work should have been done before the process was triggered so that we could follow the development of this project rather than find ourselves in the situation we're currently in.

Now that the entire process has been completed and the decision made, we find ourselves appearing before a committee. Other organizations are also appearing before a committee to express their views, to express their disagreement or their concerns, in certain cases.

I believe that the public health and safety concerns are entirely legitimate. It's curious to find ourselves in this situation now that the decisions have been made. All this work should have been done in advance.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen: We've heard from Bruce Power that there's no rush, no timeline that they must do this by such-and-such a date. You're asking the government to put a pause on the project and do a more comprehensive study. I imagine you also want better consultation than the lack of consultation you experienced the first time. As the law stands right now, from our understanding, it's one person within CNSC who's able to sign a paper and allow this to happen. There is no discussion with any of the communities along the route. I want to understand your request to committee.

•(1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Lapointe: Earlier Ms. Brunelle said that her constituents were concerned. Another member also said that his were concerned. They're concerned because not all the information on this shipment was provided. Citizens don't have a genuine understanding of this entire process, of this entire project, as it relates to the management of nuclear materials. Obviously, the imagination can become very fertile when it comes to nuclear issues. So it's important for information to be provided before the process is triggered and before any decisions are made. It is important to provide citizens with this information and for it to be assimilated by the population as a whole. Lastly, if this is the only solution that can be adopted, let's put very concrete measures in place—and show the public that this has been done—to ensure as far as possible that there will not be any problems along the way. An additional effort should be made in that direction.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

We will go now to the government side and Mrs. Davidson, who will be followed by others if time permits.

Go ahead, please.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks very much to each of our presenters here this afternoon.

I'm the member of Parliament for Sarnia—Lambton. My riding is on the route that this shipment will be going on.

Dr. Lynn, I have a couple of questions for you, if I might. I am sure you are well aware there are questions in my community. How would you answer those questions? How would you assure people that this is safe? You talked a bit about the transportation and so on, but could you elaborate on that for me, please?

Dr. Hazel Lynn: When you look at a risk and a hazard, you need to look at the probability of the event happening and then the consequence of the exposure.

The probability of something going wrong once the boilers are loaded and transported down to Sarnia is very low. When was the last time a boat sank? When was the last time a boat of this sort had an accident? There isn't any history of that.

Then on the consequences, what would happen if it did sink, and how quickly could they get the boilers back out? What is the thought on damage? For all these things, if you've read the CNSC proposal, some of this has been dealt with. The risk of exposure is very low, and the consequence is also very low.

To me, this is not a huge human health risk. If you consider the risk due to a motor vehicle accident or to the results of smoking and so on, those increase the risks to humans far more. Even on the amount of radiation, the amount of radiation that is shipped every day to hospitals doing cancer therapy is orders of magnitude higher than this, and it is shipped without anybody's knowledge.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: We heard on Tuesday there was no threat to drinking water, to municipalities that take their water from the Great Lakes system. Do you agree with that?

Dr. Hazel Lynn: Absolutely. Especially if there has been no injury or accident, there will be no increased radiation exposure.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Okay. I just have one further question for you and then I'm going to pass it over to my colleague Mr. Lobb.

In your opinion, should this decision be made based on science, or should we be considering political pressure?

Dr. Hazel Lynn: We have three things. We have the science, and it is fairly clear to me as a scientist that this is safe. There is the political involvement, and there is also the personal involvement. People in my area are used to having nuclear power. We're used to having it transported. We're comfortable with it, but most people are not, so we need to understand that and be able to explain it safely and clearly to them. That could have been done better, probably, over the whole range of this project.

The political system of whether or not we want nuclear power or other power and who looks after it and how they look after it is completely out of my jurisdiction, and it sounds to me, from hearing these proceedings, as though probably some work needs to be done on that.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

I'll now turn it over to Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you.

My question is for the warden of Bruce County, Warden Smith.

I read through the document from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and in it I see several times that they want consultation. They are concerned about being consulted. In the riding of Huron—Bruce, at least eight mayors along the west side of Lake Huron would be associated.

Do you support the content of this document, and were you consulted, or was anybody else on Bruce County Council consulted about the contents of this document?

•(1630)

Mr. Mike Smith: From the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, no, we were not.

I first became aware that they were getting involved.... I think it was sometime in August that the chair sent a letter to Mr. Binder saying he had some concerns. At that time, I got hold of...I believe it was David. I wrote a letter to the chair saying that we had some

information we could provide, that this was important to our community, and that we wanted an opportunity to comment on it. I didn't get that.

We then came up to the hearing on September 23 and intervened. Then we had lunch with David and Sarah Rang. Again, Mitch and I talked to him about it. I asked for another opportunity, and I was included in a teleconference with three members of the board for 15 minutes.

There was a second filing on November 22, and I specifically asked David if I could see that filing and comment on it before he filed it with the CNSC. I got a copy of the filing 10 minutes after the filing date.

So, no, we were not consulted.

Mr. Ben Lobb: That's unfortunate. I'll turn my time to Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Ullrich, I understand the principles behind your concern. I think all of us who are elected here, whether they are elected at the municipal level or at the provincial or federal level, are obviously going to have concerns about the transportation here.

One of the things that the Great Lakes mayors were concerned about is being excluded from this process. What do you say to Mr. Smith? The very thing that you're here to complain about today is the very thing that you've done to someone in your own organization.

Mr. David Ullrich: What I said to Warden Smith, and I will say again today, is that I apologize for whatever consultation we did not provide. We did provide, very unusually, an opportunity for Warden Smith and Mayor Bradley to participate in one of our board of directors' calls. Warden Smith is correct that there were only three board members present, but very frequently the board members send their representatives.

We tried to have consultation. We are spread out from Thunder Bay and Duluth to Rimouski and Sept-Îles. To be able to consult on all of these matters.... It arose very quickly. We hadn't been informed of this until late July or early August. We had to make decisions in early September as to filing our comments.

As with many organizations, we have 16 mayors who are members of our board of directors, even if they are not all on a call at one time, they were included.

I have apologized to Warden Smith, and I am sorry that we did not have more consultation.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Do you find it ironic that the community that's impacted the most was excluded from the—

Mr. David Ullrich: I wouldn't necessarily agree that they were impacted the most, because the exposures are really occurring in the shipment. It appears that a policy decision has been made here as well as in the U.S. that the most secure place to keep it is on site.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: There's no policy decision that's been made here. I'm sure you're referring to the—

The Chair: Mr. Dykstra, your time is up.

Go ahead, Mr. Cullen, on a point of order.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Dr. Lynn, you talked about having submitted this risk assessment to the committee. I was checking with staff, and we have no transmission of that, so maybe you could email it again. We would very much appreciate getting that document.

Dr. Hazel Lynn: Okay.

The Chair: Go ahead, Dr. Lynn. You indicated you had sent it. We're not certain whether we have it or not. The clerk will be in touch with you if he doesn't have a copy of that. It will be distributed to all members of the committee.

Dr. Hazel Lynn: It was sent some days ago under a freedom of information request.

The Chair: That wouldn't be to the committee here, then. The clerk will contact you to get a copy of that, Dr. Lynn. Thank you.

Go ahead on a point of order, Mr. Coderre.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: We hear all kinds of things here and there. I'd like your association to submit to us the documents you relied on in making such and such a decision. We want to know whether there is a policy problem, whether there is a grey area. To prepare our recommendations, we'll have to compare viewpoints. In my opinion, there have been some sad statements by the president of the commission, and if we want to rely on science and facts, I'd like to know how you reached a decision.

Give us documents and provide us with appraisals, as we always ask in any case.

• (1635)

[English]

The Chair: Do you have anything further to that, Mr. Tonks?

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Just to clarify that, Mr. Ullrich, a few times you referred to your review. I think that's what Mr. Coderre is referring to.

Mr. David Ullrich: We would be very happy to provide that. We did submit extensive comments with technical background to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and we would be very happy to provide all of that to you as well.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Whether you're participating here, by teleconference, or by video conference, thank you to all of you.

I will suspend the meeting now as we change witnesses. We'll come back with the second panel in a couple of minutes.

• (1635)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: We're ready to start our second panel. This will be a bit of an abbreviated panel, so I would encourage everyone making a presentation to keep to the allotted time.

We have with us today, and we welcome, from the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, Gordon Edwards, president; from the Power Workers' Union, David Shier, assistant to the president; from the Union of Ontario Indians, Christopher Plain, southwest regional chief, Anishinaabek Nation territory, and Chief, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, along with Jody Kecheago; and, via video

conference from Owen Sound, Alan Barfoot, mayor, the Township of Georgian Bluffs.

We'll hear the presentations in the order in which they appear on the agenda, and we'll start with Mr. Edwards.

Go ahead, please, with your presentation.

• (1640)

Dr. Gordon Edwards (President, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I'd like to thank the committee for this opportunity to present to you. Thank you very much for the invitation; I appreciate it.

I believe we have to acknowledge that nuclear energy isn't what it used to be. Nuclear energy in Canada is going through a mid-life crisis. When we see the failures of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited in terms of the MAPLE reactors that turned out to be a fiasco, when we see the NRU reactor that has suffered some lamentable lapses, and when we see the cost overruns in the refurbishments that are going on, all of this shakes people's confidence in the ability of nuclear technology to solve all problems. The idea is that you have a problem and you just slap some technology on it, and that solves it. One has to realize that this is the situation we're in.

Also, I think that not only is there some degradation of confidence in AECL, for example, and therefore in nuclear technology, but also in nuclear regulation. The difficulty here, I think, is that while the CNSC does excellent work on technical matters, physical matters, engineering, geology, and various things, it really does not have much expertise in the biomedical field or in the human relations field, you might say, and the result is this.

We heard Mr. Binder the other day saying that basically this is just a new technology, that's all—a new technology for dealing with the steam generators. I think that's a very short-sighted view; it's more than just a new technology. There are millions of other people who are potentially concerned about knowing what this is going to do to their communities, even what kind of fears or anxieties might arise, so it's not just a question of switching technologies.

The idea that we don't need another environmental assessment because all it is doing is substituting one technology for another totally overlooks the fact that there is a whole other constituency—a much, much larger constituency—that would have had no reason to want to intervene in the original environmental assessment about the refurbishment when it was said that the steam generators would stay on site until the year 2043.

By the way, that facility already exists, and by the way, that's where the steam generators really are, and by the way, OPG had signed a contract with Bruce Power to build a segmentation facility to take those things apart. So there really is—and this, I think, is very important to realize—nothing consequential for the nuclear industry in sending these steam generators overseas or keeping them on site. Nothing. In no way does not shipping the steam generators.... We've talked about the consequences of shipping them. What about the consequences of not shipping them?

The consequences of not shipping them are zilch, except for the fact that shipping would save Bruce Power some money, and not shipping would reduce a lot of anxiety and perhaps not exacerbate the crisis of confidence that people are feeling in nuclear technology at the present time. Why stir up the pot when you don't have to? What is the advantage to Canada—or to Bruce Power, for that matter—in sending these things overseas?

Well, I've looked at the documents. I have the documents that were signed with OPG. All the prices are blotted out, but it seems quite clear that really, as you would expect with a private company, it is the bottom line. The company is trying to reduce its volume so that it can spend less money on long-term storage costs, and that's the advantage; that's the payoff for them.

There might be another payoff as well, which I won't speculate on, but it may be just simply that it wants to demonstrate that it can send this stuff whenever it wants, wherever it wants, without anybody really stopping it.

I would like to talk about the three precedents. I've given you a handout, which includes a copy of a letter I've sent to all members of Parliament. In our opinion, precedent one is that it will be the first time Canada has exported or imported radioactive waste from a refurbished or a decommissioned nuclear reactor. The concern is that this precedent will be followed by many other such shipments. In fact, we know for sure that Bruce Power is planning other such shipments, and I'm sure all the other nuclear operators in North America are watching to see what happens.

With regard to the comparisons, I understand the comparisons with the radiation levels, the isotope shipments, and the steam generator shipments, but people know the difference between goods and garbage. It's one thing to ship goods: you have a customer who actually wants to buy this stuff, you know what you're shipping, and you know the purpose of it. Then there's garbage, which nobody wants.

• (1645)

People may be willing to tolerate the risk of dangerous chemical goods coming through the communities and may draw the line when it comes to dangerous, toxic chemical garbage. I think trying to equate those two on a political level is wrong. Do we want to add another stream of nuclear garbage on top of the stream of nuclear goods? That's really the question.

My point here is that we want a political process, a democratic political process, to take stock of where we are in this country and what our policies should be. It's not up to Bruce Power to decide the right thing to do. It sounds as if Bruce Power is willing to do the right thing, even if you have to shove it down our throats. The point is that not everybody agrees that it's the right thing to do, obviously. What gives Bruce Power any special expertise in knowing what the right thing to do is?

What is it, in fact, they're planning to do? They're planning to send this stuff over to Sweden.

Unfortunately, I don't have time to go into this, but I'll ask you to look at the package of information I gave you. The main point is that in terms of safety, it's a very complex cocktail of radioactive substances, which are extraordinarily toxic. Plutonium amounts to

more than 90% of the radioactive content. Moreover, when this stuff is shipped over to Sweden, some of that material will end up in the waste stream. Although the Bruce Power spokesmen here said that there was no radioactivity and that this was clean metal, that is not true. If you look at the record, you will see that Studsvik has explicit limits on how much plutonium, how much cobalt-60, how much of this, and how much of that can end up in the metal according to their standards. The Studsvik representative also said explicitly that they have to blend it with 10 parts of non-contaminated metal so that—what? Does anybody want contaminated metal? No. It's so they can pass it off as if it's not contaminated.

I call that more of a scam than a business. In a sense, they're not recycling contaminated metal; they're contaminating recycled metal.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Edwards.

We go now to David Shier, assistant to the president of the Power Workers' Union.

Go ahead, please, sir, with your presentation.

Mr. David Shier (Assistant to the President, Power Workers' Union): Thank you, Mr. Chairperson and members of the committee. Thank you for taking the time to give us the opportunity to provide the views of the workers in the industry who are going to be involved with this project.

To start, I've provided a copy of my notes in English and French. Everybody should have copies of them.

The Power Workers' Union represents approximately 2,300 workers employed at the Bruce nuclear site. The PWU has been the bargaining agent for the majority of employees at Bruce Power since Bruce Power became the operator in 2000. Prior to that, the Power Workers' Union was a bargaining agent for the majority of employees of Ontario Power Generation, and before that with Ontario Hydro. We've been the bargaining unit for people in this industry in Ontario for more than 50 years.

We represent the front line of the day-to-day operations of this facility, as well as the workers at Ontario Power Generation's Pickering and Darlington nuclear power plants. We also have a bargaining unit at AECL's Chalk River facility.

Many of our members have experience working on these steam generators on maintenance, outages, and so on and so forth. The vast majority of PWU-represented employees at the Bruce site live with their families in the immediate and surrounding vicinity.

The PWU is also affiliated with the Canadian Nuclear Workers' Council. The CNWC is a council of unions that represent nuclear workers across Canada. The PWU is also affiliated with the International Nuclear Workers' Union Network, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is called INWUN. It is an organization similar to our Canadian council, and the Power Workers' Union has the role of coordinating that international network. The PWU is the source of information on nuclear power issues for the labour movement in Canada as well as internationally.

PWU members are very well aware of the situation around the transportation of the steam generators to Sweden. Their first choice, naturally, would be to have this work performed in Canada, but they understand that the technology is not currently available in Canada. That said, the Power Workers' Union is in full support of the CNSC's decision to allow Bruce Power to transport the 16 steam generators to Sweden.

The PWU has been briefed on the details of the proposed shipment and is satisfied that the steam boilers can be shipped safely. We also believe this is a true example of recycling and suggest that the majority of the public, when they know the true facts, will support this type of project.

The PWU is a stakeholder in the nuclear industry and actively participates in CNSC hearings on a regular basis. It should go without saying that we are very familiar with the nuclear industry. As previously mentioned, Power Workers' Union members live in communities in the vicinity of the Bruce site, along the proposed transportation route, and in Owen Sound. The PWU representatives have consulted with our members and have received no concerns at all in regard to this issue.

Our union has also contacted building trade unions on site that will be involved in transporting the steam generators to Owen Sound. We have also contacted the Canadian Nuclear Workers' Council and the Grey Bruce Labour Council. All of these labour groups are in full support of the transportation licence being issued to Bruce Power.

The Power Workers' Union has been having discussions with unions that will be involved with the transportation process, including the operators of the locks in the Great Lakes, the union that represents the workers on the ship that these vessels will be transported in, and the union at the facility in Sweden. All of these unions have indicated their support. The only concern we received was from the Seafarers' International Union, as they believe that a Canadian ship should be utilized instead of an offshore ship.

Our union has briefed other unions on the basics of this issue, and once they heard the facts, they were supportive and satisfied. As you are aware, the CNSC has given this project a very thorough review as per their mandate, in our opinion. As a union, we are naturally fully supportive of public consultation and open dialogue. We suggest that the public and the opposition groups have been more than fairly consulted on this issue to date. We believe, as has been suggested by others, that many groups have been spreading inaccurate information about this project. Most of these organizations, we suggest, are the same ones that oppose anything that is associated with the nuclear industry. We also suggest that true environmentalists should be applauding this project, as it meets their goals to recycle, reuse, reduce, etc. It is our belief that the high majority of Canadians have no concerns with this project.

We suggest it is time to move ahead and allow Bruce Power to begin the process of doing the correct environmental thing and transport these vessels to Sweden for recycling.

In conclusion, the PWU is in full support of this project, as are other unionized workers in the industry.

Thank you for your time. I will be very pleased to answer any questions that you may have in this regard.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Shier, for your presentation. It's very much appreciated.

We go now to the next group. From the Union of Ontario Indians, we have Mr. Plain and Mr. Kechego. Go ahead with your presentation; you have up to seven minutes.

Chief Christopher Plain (Southwest Regional Grand Chief, Anishinabek Nation Territory; Chief, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Union of Ontario Indians): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Christopher Plain, and I am the elected chief of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, which is just south of the city of Sarnia.

I am also the southwest regional grand chief representing my area, and my traditional territory stems from Walpole Island right up to Goderich at the Maitland River. I come from that perspective.

The Anishinabek nation, which I am here representing, consists of seven tribal groups. We are the original inhabitants of the Great Lakes region. We have lived in harmony with the environment and been self-sustaining as a result of this environment. The Anishinabek citizens understand and respect the delicate balance between the use and maintenance of the Great Lakes waters. These waters also provide a spiritual and maternal tie, as many of our teachings and our stories are behind these waters.

The Anishinabek nation incorporated into the Union of Ontario Indians in 1949 as a political advocate and secretariat to 39 first nations across Ontario that are all located within the Great Lakes Basin. The Union of Ontario Indians' mandate includes acting as a political advocate on behalf of the member first nations and coordinating our positions on a wide variety of issues. The Union of Ontario Indians also provides a policy analysis of legislation and policy of both federal and provincial governments.

This support includes the health and well-being of our Great Lakes and inland water, water management, and communicating the concerns and needs of our member first nations. The Anishinabek nation, as aboriginal people of Canada, opposes and disapproves of the Bruce Power plans and any other future plans to transport or ship any radioactive waste or radioactive contaminated equipment through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Anishinabek nation's reason for opposition is that the radioactive waste through the Great Lakes presents a great risk to our waters' environment and to aboriginal safety.

The Anishinabek nation has a long-standing use and occupation of the lands and waters in the Great Lakes Basin. This is seen through signed treaties. Some first nations did not sign treaties, and they still have rights that have yet to be extinguished. First nation treaty and inherent rights are protected as part of the highest law in Canada. Both treaty and inherent rights are constitutionally protected under section 35 of the Constitution of Canada.

The Badger case in 1996 states that:

...the honour of the Crown is always at stake in its dealing with Indian people. Interpretations of treaties and statutory provisions which have an impact upon treaty or aboriginal rights must be approached in a manner which maintains the integrity of the Crown. It is always assumed that the Crown intends to fulfil its promises. ...any ambiguities or doubtful expressions in the wording of the treaty or document must be resolved in favour of the Indians. A corollary to this principle is that any limitations which restrict the rights of Indians under treaties must be narrowly construed.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has failed to fulfill its constitutional duty to accommodate and consult with first nations on completed actions that may impact upon constitutionally protected treaty and aboriginal rights.

The Supreme Court of Canada's Taku and Haida decisions ruled that the crown has a legal duty to consult and where indicated to accommodate the concerns of aboriginal groups when the crown has knowledge of the potential existence of an aboriginal right and contemplates conduct that might adversely affect it.

The Supreme Court of Canada has also ruled in the Mikisew Cree case that the principle is also applicable to treaty rights. To date there has been no accommodation or consultation with the first nations that are located in the Great Lakes Basin.

The Union of Ontario Indians provided correspondence, a letter dated July 26, stating that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has failed to fulfill its constitutional duty to accommodate and consult with first nations. The UOI also requested a face-to-face meeting, but was never given that opportunity; in response, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission encouraged the Anishinabek nation to attend a public hearing on September 29. However, this forum was not consultation, nor did it allow for discussion, questions, or feedback.

The Union of Ontario Indians maintains that aboriginal and treaty rights and any first nation interest in its traditional territory cannot be abrogated, derogated, or infringed in any way. These rights are protected by section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. The Canadian government has a long history of neglecting first nation reserve lands that have been contaminated through the actions of others. First nations have been struggling for decades for remediation of their lands and waters. We do not want to see the Great Lakes or the St. Lawrence River contaminated or tainted with radioactive waste. The Anishinabek cannot accept assurances of safety or remediation in the event of an accident. The potential long-lived contamination to the environment and to all living entities is too great, and it is very real to our communities.

•(1655)

Forty million people retrieve drinking water from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. In addition, many communities are currently battling invasive species, loss of traditional foods, contaminated sediments, decline in fisheries, decline in water levels, areas of concern, and the list goes on. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway cannot take any more impacts. The lack of protection for the environment has affected the way of life of our first nations citizens.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has also failed to recognize Anishinabek or first nations jurisdiction. We were never conquered nor were these lands uninhabited. The Great Lakes waters and lake beds were not ceded under any treaty.

In the Van der Peet decision, the Supreme Court of Canada indicated that section 35(1) of the Constitution Act protects aboriginal rights that extend to both land and water. Under the Badger decision, the onus of proving that aboriginal and treaty rights have been extinguished lies with the crown, and there must be "strict proof of extinguishment".

The Anishinabek nation has treaty rights with respect to the management of waters. Anishinabek lands occupy the Great Lakes shoreline; the Anishinabek nation maintains that they have title and inherent rights to those waters. As a result, the first nations have jurisdiction over them, and that should be respected.

The Anishinabek nation opposes any nuclear shipment or transport of radioactive waste or radioactive contaminated equipment.

Given the risk of harm to human health, to aquatic habitat, to species, and to the environment, and given that there is immense international concern in relation to Bruce Power's licence, the decision should enforce that the lakes be protected. The Anishinabek nation still should have been consulted and involved in the decision-making process of this initiative.

•(1700)

The Chair: Thank you, Chief Plain.

We go now to the last presenter on this panel. By videoconference from Owen Sound, Ontario, from the township of Georgian Bluffs, we have Mr. Alan Barfoot, mayor. Welcome, sir; go ahead with your presentation.

Mr. Alan Barfoot (Mayor, Township of Georgian Bluffs): Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Grey County is the adjoining municipality to Bruce County on the land route to Owen Sound, where the generators will be loaded onto the ship.

Bruce County spoke to all the affected municipalities and all the local councils, as well as to the highways committees and the health board. In addition, open houses were held, and all the opportunities were there for everyone to ask questions and to have them answered.

The following motion was endorsed by our council at Georgian Bluffs as well as the Grey County Council:

Whereas Bruce Power has provided detailed presentations about the proposed project to transport used steam generators to Sweden for recycling to Grey County Council, the transportation and public safety committee, and the municipalities that are on the proposed route;

and whereas Bruce Power has a proven track record for safe operation;

and whereas Bruce Power had a proven track record for responsible environmental performance;

and whereas the proposed project will significantly reduce the volume of material that will need to be managed in long-term storage;

and whereas the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is providing nuclear safety oversight to the project;

now therefore be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the County of Grey extends its full support of the proposed project to transport the used steam generators from Bruce Power to Sweden for recycling and the return of the residual low-level radioactive waste to the Western Waste Management facility.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation, Mayor. If it's agreeable to everyone, we can go beyond the time the bells start. We'll start with Monsieur Coderre from the official opposition, followed by Mr. Tonks. Go ahead, please.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, this is a bit frustrating because there are a lot of issues that we could have delved into further, but we can resolve that amongst ourselves later on.

[English]

Dr. Edwards, it seems that you're the master puppeteer. I'd like to know, straightforwardly, why do you think the commission delivered a permit.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: The commission is in the business of delivering permits. It has almost never denied a permit. Every time they're asked, they've given one. I don't recall any situation in which they have denied a reactor operator a permit. That's their business.

I don't think a licensing agency should be setting Canadian government policy. That is the job of elected officials and that is what I would like to see. I'd like to see a policy coming out.

In Quebec, for example, the René Lévesque government had a policy on nuclear reactors. That policy then governs what Hydro-Québec can do. Other provinces in this country have had policies on uranium mining, which govern what uranium mining companies can do. Where is the policy from the federal government or the provincial governments on all this radioactive waste? Are we just going to leave this to the proponents to manage?

Hon. Denis Coderre: I read the report. I read all your issues you sent.

The question is about safety too, right? Do you believe the commission did the right thing and had the proper expertise to say that it's safe? Do you believe this transportation will be safe?

• (1705)

Dr. Gordon Edwards: Those are two separate questions.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Do you have two answers, then?

Dr. Gordon Edwards: I don't think the commission did the right thing; they bent the rules. They themselves acknowledge that at least six times more than the maximum amount of radioactivity normally allowed on a single vessel has been exceeded, and they're not obliged to give a licence in that condition. They may give a licence. It is said they can make a special arrangement, but why should they, when there is no health or environmental reason to do so? In other words, there isn't a health or environmental justification for this project. Therefore, the CNSC is wrong to have made this decision.

It is also wrong that they act like a proponent. They have done more work in promoting this concept and selling it... They have even been using slogans from Bruce Power, such as "reducing our environmental footprint" and "it's the right thing to do". I think this is the wrong thing for a regulatory agency to be doing, and I think that for the Government of Canada, the difficulty here is lack of oversight. I believe the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has grown so close to the industry that there is no longer much separation between them, and that's not good for the future.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Basically you're saying it's not safe.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: No. As for safety, very likely this shipment would proceed without danger, I agree, but we're setting a trend here, and remember this: from the beginning of the nuclear age, people have been assured over and over again that nuclear waste will be isolated from the environment of living things. It will be sequestered. It will be stored securely. Now all of a sudden we're talking about recycling nuclear waste. This is very sudden. It wasn't so a few years ago. This is very alarming. We don't recycle bubonic plague, pardon the language. We don't recycle poison ivy. We should not be recycling radioactive waste.

According to Bruce Power:

For example scrap metals which are proven not to be radioactive are recycled. However, much of the waste, and particularly low and intermediate level waste containing radioactivity cannot be recycled for safety and environmental reasons.

That's from Bruce Power giving a presentation to the Saugeen First Nation.

Here is the CNSC in their screening report for the environmental assessment:

Some of the waste is directly recyclable; however, the largest waste quantities are associated with the pressure-tube/calandria tube replacement and the steam generator replacement, since the replaced components cannot be recycled and must be disposed of at the Western Waste Management Facility.

There has been no explanation of this very sharp U-turn in the policy of the CNSC and Bruce Power, and I don't believe the Government of Canada should sit by and let this—

Hon. Denis Coderre: I'm sorry; I have only five minutes, Dr. Edwards.

If we have a policy and you feel the safety is there, you don't have a problem.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: I don't believe it is safe in the long run. Bruce Power assured workers at the refurbishment site that they were perfectly safe to go in and work there without any protective equipment. As a result of this, almost 500 workers now have breathed plutonium dust into their lungs over the course of the weeks before it was detected, and those men will be carrying that radioactive material in their bodies for a long time to come.

By the way, nobody was fired. There were no fines. That's the kind of watchdog we have. It's more of a lapdog than a watchdog.

The problem here is that these assurances of safety are really not true. The same dust that contaminated those 500 workers is in those steam generators.

The Chair: Thank you.

We now go to the Bloc Québécois. Monsieur Pomerleau, you have up to five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Drummond, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm surprised and delighted to hear you, Mr. Edwards, for the simple reason that, of all the people I've heard, you're the only one who has asked the real question, the question that kills. Do we need to transport these generators? And the answer is no. There's no need to do that except to enable a company in Ontario to make more money. That's the basis of the matter. Is it safe? We can debate that for a long time. Is it risky for aboriginal people? Of course. We never take care of them; we never take care of their rights. Of course it's risky for them, but we don't need to carry out this project.

I'd like you to comment on the subject a little. You didn't have enough time to explain yourself, and your answers are of greater interest to me than my questions.

[*English*]

Dr. Gordon Edwards: In Canada, I think we need a broad consultation at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels on what we should be doing with the toxic radioactive waste, a consultation on whether we should be allowing it to be exported, imported, or transported over our precious lakes and rivers.

Also, the classification of the waste is ridiculous. Low-level waste is simply anything that isn't high-level waste, and high-level waste is simply irradiated fuel. Anything that isn't irradiated fuel is automatically low-level waste. That's ridiculous. It doesn't have any reality to it.

For example, with respect to the steam generators, we've heard the comparison with isotopes. Medical isotopes have a half-life of 66 hours, which means that in a matter of weeks, if there were an accident, the stuff would be gone. Plutonium has a half-life of 24,000 years. There's the comparison.

We have to classify our nuclear waste. The Americans have done this. When the Americans have plutonium-contaminated waste, they do not call it low-level waste; they call it TRU waste, transuranic waste, and it's treated just like high-level waste. It's treated very, very carefully; it's not treated casually. They have another category called Greater-Than-Class-C waste, which also can cover some of these toxic materials.

We have a very inadequate system of regulation of waste—even classification of waste—in this country. Unless the government, the elected officials, insist upon a review and a careful look at this, we're going to find ourselves in a difficult situation in a few years, because the danger mounts.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: So your position is similar to that of the people who came and told us earlier that we absolutely need a nuclear policy.

[*English*]

Dr. Gordon Edwards: Precisely.

I have my own personal view of what that policy might look like, but I'm just one individual. I'm not an elected official. My personal view is I would like to see a policy that says there is not permission to transport radioactive waste at all, unless it is for health and environmental reasons and can be proven to be so.

That is not the case with these steam generators. There's no health or environmental reason that justifies their transportation. I don't think we should be moving this stuff around for no reason.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: It also sets a precedent.

[*English*]

Dr. Gordon Edwards: *Oui.*

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: That's it. Okay.

[*Translation*]

I have all the answers I need.

[*English*]

The Chair: *Merci*, Monsieur Pomerleau.

Mr. Cullen, you have up to five minutes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thanks, gentlemen, for being here today.

Mr. Shier, I have a question on the unions. I don't have the specific arrangement, but are you similar to a part owner? What's the arrangement between you and Bruce in terms of the ownership of the facility?

Mr. David Shier: There is an equity interest with the Power Workers' Union as well as the Society of Energy Professionals.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay.

One of the things we tried to understand from Mr. Hawthorne yesterday was whether this was economics at play, because one questions the hassle. Bruce is going through a bunch of hassle now, and it's in the news, and so on. He also said it was very expensive to transport. He gave the impression to this committee and to the press that this was a wash in terms of costs: he said it would cost Bruce the same to keep it on site as it would to transport it and send it across to Sweden, but he wasn't able to provide us with any documents showing that.

As a part owner, as somebody with equity in the project, have you seen any economic analysis saying what it costs to keep it and what it costs to ship it to Sweden and ship it back?

Mr. David Shier: Personally, I have not seen it. We have people who are involved with that equity arrangement. Whether they have seen it or not, I don't know, but our information is that it is a wash. Cost-wise it's the same to ship it as it is to keep it, but keeping it creates all kinds of other issues as well, so you might as well recycle it.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: If you do come across something, it would be helpful for the committee to understand that. Otherwise, essentially we have to take the word of Bruce Power that it's a wash economically.

I have a question for you, Chief Plain—is it Grand Chief Plain, or Chief Plain?

Chief Christopher Plain: It's Chief Plain.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: With respect to section 35, I represent the area that is both Haida and Taku, so I'm familiar with the court decision. I was at the Supreme Court that day. This is not a small thing in terms of consultation and accommodation. There is an obligation of the federal government, the crown, to talk to you, and to consult and to accommodate if there's any need for accommodation. That's not an aside; it's embedded in the Constitution. It has also been decided all the way to the Supreme Court.

It seems that the CNSC hasn't consulted with you. It has broken a constitutional agreement and obligation. I'm trying to understand how this can be so lightly dismissed as part of this whole process in law.

Chief Christopher Plain: So are we. That's the short answer.

You're absolutely right. That's been our position all along; we've attempted to have the proponents come and provide consultation, but it hasn't been there.

What has transpired to this point—being invited to participate in today's activities, the prior meeting we attended, letter writing, and all that—can't be construed as consultation, and that's what we've been asking for right from the beginning.

• (1715)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Saying that a couple of letters was our consultation is not going to hold up in court. That's not going to survive any test of consultation.

Chief Christopher Plain: Absolutely not.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mayor Barfoot, I have a question. You sent us what you read out, which is the resolution from your council, but at the top of the page it says—and this is from you folks: A letter was received from Mr. Lamont from Bruce Power seeking Grey County's support in regard to the transporting of the steam generators to the Owen Sound harbour. A letter of support to Dr. Michael Binder at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission was sent on behalf of the Municipality of Georgian Bluffs.

It was suggested that a similar letter of support be drafted and sent by the Warden of Grey County with regard to...

I'm just trying to find the origin of this resolution and of these letters that you sent to the CNSC. Bruce Power had written you folks and said that it would be a good idea if they got a resolution from you and also a good idea if some of the other counties in the area sent a letter to CNSC in support. Is that right?

Mr. Alan Barfoot: That's correct. That's typical with most issues that come through. We get a draft and then we adjust it to the wording we would like. We were comfortable with the wording that was there.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Did you write it, or did Bruce Power write it?

Mr. Alan Barfoot: I cannot answer that question. I personally did not write it. I'm not sure if our staff had adjusted it or not.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: To you, Dr. Edwards—or is it Mr. Edwards? Excuse me; I don't know if you're a doctor or not.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: No, I am not.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Half the people we hear on this issue are doctors, and you can offend them easily.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: I'm not a real doctor.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Fair enough.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I think we heard from not a real doctor earlier.

I have a question around the public interest of this issue. That's what we're trying to get at. The risk implicated when you move the—

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I'm a little disappointed that Mr. Cullen is taking personal shots at our witnesses. I think he should apologize for that. That's ridiculous. This lady is well respected. She's a medical officer of health. Perhaps he should temper his remarks a bit on this.

The Chair: As you know, Mr. Anderson, unless it gets really aggressive, I allow the members to ask questions in the way they would like. I think the public are the judges of the way they behave at committee.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Chair, calling a medical officer of health for her own Grey Bruce Health Unit a fake doctor is a fairly serious charge.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: That's not what I said. Fascinating.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Cullen—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Any apologies—

The Chair: Actually, your time is up, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Will you allow me to apologize? If any committee members find offence in what I said, I apologize.

I was trying to ask a question before all that started. Is it possible that I can ask—

The Chair: Your time was up anyway, Mr. Cullen.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: Could I have one minute to answer that question? I think it is important to clarify something I said earlier.

The Chair: We have to go on to a new set of questions. The time is for the question and the answer.

We go to the government side, to Mr. Dykstra and then to Mr. Allen, if you're left some time.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chief Plain, in the report itself there are about four pages dedicated to aboriginal consultation. I listened closely to what you had to say and to your concern for lack of consultation. There's one area within the report that speaks directly to this point. Paragraph 152 states: *The Union of Ontario Indians Inc., in its intervention, raised a number of concerns, alleging that the "shipment of radioactive waste through the Great Lakes is a threat to, and violation of the Treaty and Aboriginal rights..."*

You said that you didn't get an opportunity to have an intervention. Is this document untrue?

Chief Christopher Plain: Well, the first thing we've done is... We've done everything that we've asked. We've petitioned with letters and lobby efforts and we've presented to the CNSC, only to be ignored, and our perspectives were not recognized. I'm not sure if that answers your question.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I suppose it does, a little bit.

I'm trying to be clear. You did state that you weren't consulted. You're saying that you were ignored. They are acknowledging that they heard your concerns. While I don't think they responded to those concerns in a way that you would have been satisfied with, they did in fact listen to what you had to say and researched what... Unless what you're saying is that this document is incorrect, they did respond in a way that obviously doesn't support your position, but they did listen to what you had to say.

• (1720)

Chief Christopher Plain: Okay. I agree.

May I turn it over to my assistant to provide the answer to the question?

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Kecheho.

Mr. Jody Kecheho (Senior Policy Analyst, Union of Ontario Indians): I was on the line that presented on September 28 to the CNSC. That was the only consultation the Anishinabek nation received: the opportunity to present to the CNSC. We were given two dates—September 28 and September 29—about two or three weeks prior to the presentation. From our perspective, that is not consultation. That is not accommodation.

Consultation, in our view, would be an ongoing dialogue, something to vet out this process. There was no vetting out of this process. We just gave a presentation as we were asked to do, under the process that was asked of us, a process that was unilaterally decided without Anishinabek nation input or anything like that, even though this is within our territories.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I appreciate the clarification.

Mr. Jody Kecheho: So it's not consultation.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Right. Your view of the consultation that you did have.... You did have consultation, but in your opinion it wasn't the consultation you deserved.

Mr. Jody Kecheho: It was not consultation, no.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Okay.

Chief, do you have members who work at the Bruce Power plant?

Chief Christopher Plain: Well, I have 2,100 members. I don't know all of them. I know about 2,050 of them—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Chief Christopher Plain: —so if there is anybody who works there, I wouldn't know. There are none that I'm aware of.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Okay. Well, I just wondered whether or not you did have any from—

Chief Christopher Plain: There are none that I'm aware of.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: All right.

Mr. Shier, do you know whether or not...?

Mr. David Shier: Yes, there are first nations people working there. I don't know how many. I'm sure Bruce Power could provide you with that information. There have been some programs to get local people involved, so there will be people there.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: From a first nations perspective—and obviously they are members of the union as well—did they express concerns similar to those Chief Plain has?

Mr. David Shier: Not to my knowledge. I'd suggest that if they work there, they'd understand what the situation is. If they had any concerns, there are lots of processes internally on safety. I mean, this is basically a safety issue. They have lots of processes internally to raise those safety issues, and nothing has been raised.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you.

Mr. Edwards, I have to ask you about this. You commented that a few years ago the recycling of the wastes that we're talking about didn't occur, and that it does now. Is that a bad thing?

Dr. Gordon Edwards: Yes, I think it is. For example, the United Nations, the Bureau of International Recycling, and the Steel Manufacturers Association have all expressed alarm and have condemned the practice. They've said that this is not a good thing, because we're not recycling: nobody wants radioactive metal and there's no market for it, so therefore there's a concern about contaminating recycled products.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I suppose the alternative is to leave it where it is, and that's what you'd like to see happen.

Dr. Gordon Edwards: That's what the plan was. That has been the plan with radioactive waste generally.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Okay.

The Chair: The time is virtually up. Thank you very much, Mr. Dykstra.

Thank you to all the witnesses on this panel for coming today and for sharing your knowledge and information with us. It is very much appreciated.

We have to go to a vote now.

The meeting is adjourned.

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