



la Convention  
de la Baie-James  
et du Nord québécois

Comité consultatif  
pour l'environnement  
de la Baie-James

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MINUTES OF THE 61<sup>st</sup> MEETING  
OF THE JAMES BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ON THE ENVIRONMENT

ADOPTED

DATE: March 21, 1991

LOCATION: Institut national de la recherche  
scientifique  
2635 Hochelaga, 6th floor  
Sainte-Foy, Québec

PRESENT: Hubert Marcotte, Chairman, Canada  
Jean-Guy Charest, Canada  
Louis-Edmond Hamelin, Canada  
Pierre Marchand, Canada  
Robert Daigneault, Québec  
Gilles Frisque, Québec  
Alain Soucy, Québec  
Alan Penn, CRA (in the afternoon)  
Paul Wilkinson, CRA  
Hervé Chatagnier, Secretary

ABSENT: Marie Lessard, Québec  
James Bobbish, CRA  
Willie Iserhoff, CRA

PARTICIPANTS: Raymond Houle, MENVIQ  
Normand Courtemanche, MENVIQ (item)  
Ginette St-Onge, MENVIQ (item)

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1. PRELIMINARIES AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. and the following agenda was moved by Paul Wilkinson, seconded by Jean-Guy Charest and unanimously adopted:

1. Preliminaries and adoption of the agenda
2. Adoption of the minutes of the 60th meeting
3. Québec forum on sustainable development; Committee comments, if applicable
4. Establishment of a James Bay Northern Environmental Research Institute; proposal of Thomas Kierans of the Grand Canal Company Limited
5. La Grande complex environmental monitoring program
6. The Green Plan: Committee reactions
7. The "Northern Road" project
8. Follow-up of the meeting with the Conseil de la conservation et de l'environnement
9. Internal Committee management:
  - 9.1 Chairmanship and vice-chairmanship 1991-1992
  - 9.2 Annual report 1990-1991
  - 9.3 Annual report 1986-1987
  - 9.4 Budget 1991-1992
  - 9.5 Committee operation
10. Amendments to the Act respecting Ecological reserves; participation of Ginette St-Onge and Normand Courtemanche of MENVIQ
11. Five-year forest development plans; the sub-committee's proposal for the analysis of the last three years of the plans
12. Public hearings on the forest protection strategy
13. Feedback on the effectiveness of the Committee's actions in the Great Whale issue
14. Date and location of the next meeting

2. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 60TH MEETING

Since the minutes were not available, this item was added to the next meeting's agenda.

3. QUEBEC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; COMMITTEE COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

On December 7, the Chairman received from Pierre Paradis, Minister of the Environment, a document prepared for the Québec forum on sustainable development held in 1989. The Minister asked the Committee for comments regarding the principles developed for drawing up an action plan for sustainable development in Québec. This action plan would be presented to the Prime Minister by the Québec Round Table on Environment and Economy.

After discussion, it was decided to inform the Minister of the Committee's general concerns regarding the concept of sustainable development. This would primarily involve commenting on the need to consider the Native and northern context in the meaning of the term "sustainable development". It was noted that Mrs. Brundtland seems to have neglected these two elements in her report. Paul Wilkinson was asked to draft a letter in this regard for adoption during the next meeting.

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A JAMES BAY NORTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE; PROPOSAL OF THOMAS KIERANS OF THE GRAND CANAL COMPANY LIMITED

On February 6, the Committee received a copy of a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Québec by Tom Kierans, President and CEO of the Grand Canal Company Limited, regarding a proposal aimed at establishing a James Bay Northern Environmental Research Institute. A presentation of the "Grand Canal" project was enclosed. This documentation was sent to the Committee by the Québec Minister of the Environment, who asked the Committee to inform him of its comments in this regard.

The Committee questioned the relationship between the establishment of a James Bay Institute and the Grand Canal project. After discussion, it was agreed to write the Minister to inform him that the Committee believed that existing northern research centres should be bolstered rather than a new centre

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established. The Committee would also inform the Minister of its concern regarding Mr. Kierans' proposal to create the Grand Canal. The Secretary was asked to draft a letter in this regard.

5. LA GRANDE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING PROGRAM

The Secretary informed the Committee that a task force would be set up within the next few days to review the various elements of existing or upcoming environmental monitoring programs for the La Grande complex. This group would be mandated to develop an environmental, biophysical and human monitoring framework program for phases I and II of the La Grande complex by late June 1991. The Committee would be invited to appoint a member to sit on this task force, which would also consist of representatives from MENVIQ, COMEX and Hydro-Québec.

After discussion, the Committee decided to appoint Alan Penn to the task force. Paul Wilkinson made the nomination, which was seconded by Gilles Frisque and unanimously adopted. The Secretary was asked to draft a letter which would emphasize the following points:

- the task force should retroactively assess the existing monitoring program;
- all new framework program proposals should be submitted to the Committee for consultation;
- the task force should have technical support.

6. THE GREEN PLAN: COMMITTEE REACTIONS

The Committee discussed the possibility of conveying its reactions to the Green Plan, made public by the Canadian Minister of the Environment on December 11. This five-year, \$3-billion plan contains well-thought-out measures aimed at creating a healthy environment.

It seems that Forestry Canada, in enforcing the Green Plan, would soon announce a program aimed at establishing model forests in Canada. Interested groups must meet certain eligibility criteria, including the support of the province concerned. This program may be of interest to the Cree of James Bay, especially Waswanipi village.

After discussion, the Committee decided that it would be appropriate to write to the Canadian Minister of the Environment to inform him of the Committee's intention to closely monitor the application of the initiatives proposed by the Green Plan and to comment on them as needed. The Secretary was asked to draft a letter in this regard.

7. THE " NORTHERN ROAD " PROJECT

The Committee was informed of the status of the above-mentioned project with regard to the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedure. The objective of this project is to build a road linking Chibougamau to Poste Albanel in the James Bay territory. The project's proponent seems to be the Cree Construction Company of Québec Ltd., which had received a "turnkey" mandate from the Ministère des Transports du Québec to carry it out. The project is currently being analyzed by COMEX, which is waiting for certain additional information. In summer 1990, COMEX held public consultations on this project in Nemaska, Mistassini and Oujé-Bougoumou.

Members wondered whether the populations affected by this project has been adequately consulted. After discussion, and upon request of the Committee's CRA members, it was agreed to suspend discussion of this project and add it to the next meeting's agenda.

8. FOLLOW-UP OF THE MEETING WITH THE CONSEIL DE LA CONSERVATION ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT (CCE)

The Committee discussed the follow-up action to be taken with regard to the January 17 meeting with the Chairman and some representatives of the CCE. During

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this meeting, both committees expressed their willingness to collaborate on certain issues of mutual interest.

It was decided to write to the current CCE Chairman to:

- 1) thank him for his interest in the Committee;
- 2) support the CCE's opinion regarding the necessity of having a single assessment of all project components;
- 3) to invite the CCE to collaborate with the Committee on drafting recommendations on sustainable development.

The Secretary was asked to draft a letter in this regard.

## 9. INTERNAL COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT

### 9.1 Chairmanship and vice-chairmanship 1991-1992

The CRA members informed the Committee that CRA would soon submit a resolution appointing the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 1991-1992.

### 9.2 Annual report 1990-1991

The Committee asked the Secretary to draft an annual report for 1990-1991 using the previous year's format.

### 9.3 Annual report 1986-1987

The Committee mandated Pierre Marchand and Alan Penn to review and finalize the draft annual report for 1986-1987. This report had never been adopted due to the Committee's long period of inactivity between May 1987 and December 1989.

9.4 Budget 1991-1992

The Committee discussed the response of the Canadian Minister of the Environment to the Committee's budget requests for 1991-1992. According to a letter from the Minister, dated January 14, his Department's contribution to the secretariat's financing would be \$60 000, the same amount awarded in the past.

It was decided to inform the Minister of the need to increase his contribution to the financing of the JBACE and COMEV secretariat. The Secretary was asked to draft a letter in this regard.

9.5 Committee operation

The discussion initiated during the last meeting on the means to increase the efficiency of the Committee's operation was continued. A consensus was reached on the following points:

- meeting agendas must be limited to Committee priorities, and a maximum amount of discussion time must be allotted in advance to each item;
- an executive sub-committee with maximum powers must be established;
- the Secretary should prepare a summary for each item listed on the agenda, specifying the objective to be met;
- the final versions of draft Committee recommendations should be adopted by all members.

10. AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT RESPECTING ECOLOGICAL RESERVES;  
PARTICIPATION OF GINETTE ST-ONGE AND NORMAND  
COURTEMANCHE OF MENVIQ

The Chairman welcomed Ginette St-Onge and Normand Courtemanche, who attended the meeting at the Committee's request to provide more detailed

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information on the draft amendments to the Act respecting Ecological reserves. They replaced Léopold Gaudreau, who was not available to attend this meeting.

The MENVIQ representatives explained that the concept of "provisional reserves" contained in the draft amendments would likely be eliminated during the final amendments. This is because several groups consulted mentioned that the existing concept of "ecological sites" was sufficient to meet the target objectives. The concept of "ecological sites" would therefore likely be incorporated into the new Act in order to provide such areas with legal status and thereby ensure full protection of those sites which would eventually become ecological reserves.

The MENVIQ representatives were asked about the means of reconciling the concept of full protection in an ecological reserve with the rights of Native people to carry out their traditional activities on those sites as provided by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. MENVIQ explained that it did not intend to incorporate these rights into the new Act. It also expressed the opinion that the government would be reluctant to establish an ecological reserve on the territory unless agreements could be signed with the Native people in which they would waive these rights. Otherwise, a concept other than "ecological reserve" would have to be used to protect a site while enabling Native people to carry out their traditional activities. For example, this could involve combining the concepts of "ecological reserve" and "cultural reserve".

The following points were also made during the exchange between the Committee and the MENVIQ representatives:

. The surface area of the planned ecological reserves may seem much larger on the territory covered by the agreement than elsewhere in Québec because these plans are only preliminary. No detailed inventories have been carried out on any of these sites.

As regards the fact that there does not seem to be any planned reserves in areas where logging and hydroelectric projects are anticipated, the MENVIQ representatives explained that the factors linked to the territory's development are not considered when planned reserves are identified.

There are no ecological reserves on the territory, given the high cost of carrying out inventories there and the territory's cumbersome administrative structure.

The MENVIQ representatives would find out whether the Grand Council of the Crees would be consulted on the proposed amendments.

The objective of the proposed modifications was not to review the principle of full protection as perceived by the Committee. Rather, it involves ensuring greater administrative flexibility to facilitate establishment.

In closing, the MENVIQ representatives explained that the Committee would continue to be consulted during the next step of drafting the preliminary text of the Act.

The Chairman thanked the MENVIQ representatives for their time and informed them of the Committee's intention to submit comments as soon as possible.

After discussion, the Committee mandated Alan Penn to draft recommendations on the proposed amendments. The draft recommendations would be submitted for adoption during the next meeting.

11. FIVE-YEAR FOREST DEVELOPMENT PLANS; THE SUB-COMMITTEE'S PROPOSAL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE LAST THREE YEARS OF THE PLANS

Gilles Frisque, member of the forestry sub-committee, presented the report of the sub-committee's discussions on recommendations which the Committee could adopt regarding the last three years of the five-year plans for administrative region 08 and the

first two years of the plans for administrative region 02. These plans were submitted to the Committee for comments under section 144 of the Environment Quality Act. The Committee submitted its comments on the first three years of the five-year plans for administrative region 08 on February 27.

The CRA members tabled a draft letter which may be sent to the Minister for Forests regarding the five-year plans.

The Secretary explained to the Committee the contents of a COMEX decision on the analysis of several logging road projects. It seems that COMEX would have recommended that the Provincial Administrator delay authorization of these roads until the five-year plans of the proponents in question were commented on by the JBACE and adopted by MER. According to the Secretary, it is therefore important for the Committee to take clear action with the Minister for Forests regarding the five-year plans.

Following the sub-committee's suggestion, the Committee decided to take the following actions:

- To write to the Minister for Forests to reiterate the recommendations issued on February 27 for the last three years of the five-year plans for region 08 and the first two years of the plans for region 02;
- To meet with the Deputy Minister for Forests to discuss the above-mentioned recommendations;
- To obtain annual plan updates;
- To forward the plans to the Grand Council of the Crees to ensure this group's cooperation.

## 12. PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE FOREST PROTECTION STRATEGY

The Committee was informed of the forest protection strategy project. This strategy was developed by the Minister for Forests, and was submitted for public consultation conducted by the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE). Although the

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main topic discussed in the strategy concerns the use of pesticides, other topics would likely be discussed during hearings.

The Committee decided that it would be appropriate to submit a brief during the public hearings, and Alan Penn and the Secretary were mandated to prepare a draft in this regard based on the Committee's prior recommendations.

13. FEEDBACK ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIONS IN THE GREAT WHALE ISSUE

Due to a lack of time, this subject was added to the next meeting's agenda.

14. DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting would be held in Québec City on either May 2 or May 15, depending on the availability of those members absent from this meeting.

HERVÉ CHATAGNIER  
Secretary

June 5, 1992