

# **THE ABORIGINAL COUNCIL OF MANITOBA**

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## **NUCLEAR WASTE DIALOGUE: HOW CAN WE BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION?**

### **FINAL MEETING SUMMARY**

Circle of Life Thunderbird House  
715 Main Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Saturday, September 24, 2005

**8:30 a.m. Conference Opening & Registration**

**9:00 a.m. Opening Prayer**

**9:10 a.m. Opening Remarks: Norman Meade, Facilitator**

**9:20 a.m. Introductions**

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**Norman Meade:** I want to thank you for the introductions. I want to say that as we went around the room, I could feel the knowledge and expertise and wisdom that we have among us here. You know its amazing what you have when you put us all together in a circle like this and how we can come together and share freely and openly about who we are and what we bring to this circle. I really feel good about that because the connection of us as Aboriginal people has to be there. We have to connect with other and everything that's out there. That's what environment is all about and that's why we're here to talk about the subject of nuclear waste and what should our involvement be.

One thing we know for sure is that this is not going to go away very soon, you know that and nuclear waste is going to stay for a very long, long, long time; longer than me and longer than you. We can go away, we can back off and say we don't want to be apart of it but we know it's not the answer to say we want to back off and not be involved. That's why I encourage you today to think about our involvement. We know haven't got the answers...*(inaudible)*...but we do know one thing and that's that we can have involvement in this process, we can be involved.

Dr. Edwards traveled from Montreal and he is going to show us some pictures here and give us a bit of background from his work and expertise in nuclear waste. He has been around the country and been apart of other Aboriginal discussions that went on. I am going to turn it over to Dr. Edwards, he may be asking us to get up and look at some of the pictures that he brought so you can get a better idea of where we're at. We'll do that up until 10:30 and have a break then. Feel relaxed and feel like this is you're home for the day. Thank you.

**9:30 a.m. Presentation**

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**Dr. Gordon Edwards (President, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility):**

Thank you once again for inviting me it's really good to be here. I graduated from the University of Toronto in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry back in 1961; where I got a gold medal in physics and mathematics. Since then I have gone on and become a professor of Mathematics and Science at Vanier College in Montreal. Around 1970, I found about this problem with nuclear waste from nuclear reactors and I was quite shocked because despite my scientific education, I didn't even know these wastes existed let alone what they were or how long they were dangerous or what makes them dangerous and etcetera. Around the same time, a few years later, India exploded its first atomic bomb, and that was another shock to a lot of Canadians because they used Canadian technology to do this. Up until that time I, along with most other Canadians, really believed that there was simply no connection between atoms for peace – nuclear power for peaceful purposes – and nuclear power for military purposes. So it turns our there are a lot of things that are not well understood by even scientists.

Around 1975, I was one of five founding members for the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility. Our mission is really to try and help people to understand these issues better because if you understand the problem, you can deal with it in a very sensible way. We have a website with a lot of information on it, you're welcome to have a look at it and it's really quite extensive, its <http://www.ccnr.org>. I am going to give you all a copy of a critique I have written on behalf of our organization of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) proposal.

I know that some of you are well aware of the NWMO and some of you may know very little about it so just briefly if I could give a very quick history. We started producing this waste material in 1945 in Canada, right after World War II. That's been produced continuously up until the present time but it wasn't until 32 years later, in 1977, that the government of Canada actually acknowledged that the waste was a serious problem and will be around for literally millions of years and remain toxic and dangerous. So it took a long time for the government of Canada to admit this was a serious problem.

The next year in 1978, there was an Ontario Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning, and because Ontario depends so much on nuclear power, a lot of their work dealt with nuclear power. So much so that they issued a special report on nuclear power in 1978 and it was called "*A Race Against Time*" and at that point they kind of through the gauntlet down on the nuclear industry because they said that if they can't really prove that they have safe method of managing this stuff, there shouldn't be anymore nuclear reactors built. In other words they recommended a moratorium on building of nuclear reactors unless this problem could be solved and they put a deadline of 1985, which of course is long since pasted.

So from that point forward, the nuclear industry realizes that at least getting the appearance of a solution, if not a real solution, is essential for the continuation of the industry and that gives a kind of urgency. In that same year of 1978, is when the government of Canada signed an agreement with the government of Ontario to go ahead and do the research to try and prove it, to prove that burying it in the Canadian Shield, which is their idea, and close it up again, to prove that this is safe. So they spent 15 years and the work was done right here in Manitoba, right up at Pinawa at the Whiteshell Nuclear Research establishment and as you've heard or as you know there was an underground research laboratory was excavated near the town of Lac du Bonnet, about 500 meters down in excavated chambers and there are photos of it over there. After 15 years of research and \$700 million dollars of expenses, they then put forward an environmental impact statement saying we think we've proved this was a safe method.

At that point, there was an independent environmental review panel which looked at all of this evidence and they spent 10 years looking at all the evidence and they're final verdict was that although the idea was interesting it was not yet proven safe in all respects. They made a lot of progress and established a lot of interesting results but they really hadn't achieved proof that this would be safe forever. They recommended at that time, this panel (called the Seaborn Panel), in 1998 now, that there should be an independent agency – that means independent of the nuclear industry – to look into what to do with the nuclear waste. They wanted it to be independent of the industry because they perceived a conflict of interest; the nuclear industry has a corporate interest in trying to present a solution so they can continue to operate their nuclear reactors and continue to build more.

As a matter of fact, what the Chrétien government did is establish a Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) 3 years ago, which is totally owned by the nuclear industry. The only board members on the Board of Directors of the NWMO are the people that produce

nuclear waste, namely Ontario Power Generation (about 20 reactors), Hydro Quebec (1 reactor) and New Brunswick Power (1 reactor). So this NWMO has been going around talking to people and saying what do you think we should be doing with this nuclear waste. This is kind of an odd thing when you think about it because why on earth would an industry go around asking people what they think they should be doing with their most toxic waste, you think they would have a plan and wouldn't have to go and ask people what they think. I believe the purpose of this is to achieve a kind of or at least an appearance of a consensus so that if you can then say well we listened to Canadians, this is what Canadians want and therefore when we go ahead and do it, we're only doing what the public wants. So from a certain more cynical point of view, you could say this could be seen as passing the buck a little bit, it's basically saying that this is what Canadians want us to do so heck we're going to do what they told us to do.

The one thing that became apparent however is that they don't ask a question that is often asked by people at these meetings, which is why are we producing this stuff and why are we continuing to produce this stuff. They say that's not in our mandate, our mandate is to simply look at where we should put it and not whether we should be producing it, that's not our job. So the funny situation arises where you're allowed to discuss where to put the stuff but not allowed to discuss whether we should have been producing the stuff in the first place or whether we should continue to produce it at this point in time.

Now the NWMO presented people with 3 main options - they said okay, do you choose A, B & C? A is lets leave the waste where the reactors are. For how long, a million years? Obviously that's not a very sensible thing, in fact that's just the status quo so why do they have to ask people about that? The second option is should we take it away from where the reactors are and put it in one central location? Whoops, that could be in your backyard, it could be somebody else's backyard, but it's bound to be in somebody's backyard right. And the third thing is should we leave it on the surface or should we put it deep down underground? Of course given that choice people will think its probably better underground than on the surface.

So what the NWMO did is published a draft report in the spring of this year and they're going to publish their final report in about a month. They got to finish a final report by November 15<sup>th</sup> and send it to the Minister of Natural Resources in Ottawa and then the government of Canada has to make a decision as to what direction Canada is going to go in with regard to these wastes. What they recommend is, is that you know what, those 3 options we talked about are really just 3 steps in one option, which is basically, leave at the reactor site for a period of time – which you have got to do anyway – then move it to a central location when you can – which you're going to have to do anyway if you want to bury it – and then finally, bury it. But they say let's just take our time and take 300 years to do this and it's going to cost 24.4 billion dollars. That's an enormous amount of money, when do you ever hear 24 billion dollars thrown around.

What I'd like to do and I know the main purpose of today is to get a lot of your views but however it may be helpful to get a little guided tour through the nuclear fuel chain, as we call it, to see where this stuff comes from, what it is, why its so problematic because in the NWMO report there is no history and you really don't get a sense either of what is the harmfulness of this stuff and it remains mystifying. With you're permission, I'd like to ask everybody to get up and come on a guided tour of these photographs, which were taken by one of my colleagues and board members of the CCNR, he's a prize winning photographer and has published some books, his name is Robert Del Tredici, and these are his photos.

#### **PHOTO TOUR:**

*NOTE: The entire 60 minute presentation is mostly inaudible; background noise and echo for the entire.*

Now, if you can see this picture, this is a monument built in Russia to a man that is considered to be the father of the Russian atomic bomb named Professor Igor Kurchatov. This model of uranium atoms is just at the moment its being split and you see these 2 hemispheres here, those semi-circles indicate or symbolize the amount of energy that is released when the atom splits. So when you split the atom, it doesn't disappear, there are still pieces of the atoms, as you see here, and it's these broken uranium atoms that constitute nuclear waste. It does not happen in nature, its man that splits these atoms and you can't put them back together again.

Now here we have a model from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. of the first atomic bombs. This bomb here, the Hiroshima bomb, has a name and is called "Little Boy" and this one is called "Fat Man" and it's the second one dropped on Nagasaki. They both started essentially from uranium but I'll show you that later on.

Now this is a picture of a man who... *(Inaudible: echo)*.

In this picture you see a bronze statue of Buddha just outside Hiroshima and just the heat from the bomb melted the bronze and you can see the intensity of that energy.

Here is a man and he was a Panamanian and was on a ship anchored to observe one of these bombs go off at very close quarters. After the explosion, *(inaudible, echo)*...and he became very sick because all he had on was shorts and a t-shirt *(Inaudible, echo for 4 minutes)*.

So, this is, really, where the worlds first uranium mine is located, right here on the shore of... *(Inaudible)*.

That's the end of the presentation and thank you very much.

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### **10:45 a.m. Group Discussion**

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**Norman Meade:** Okay, now that we're back, if I could have everyone take their seats and we'll continue. After hearing Dr. Edwards' presentation, for those of us in here, and I'll ask this question again later, how many of you now are more knowledgeable than you were this morning when you came in about nuclear waste? Thank you. And how many of you know think that as an Aboriginal community, we should be involved in what to do? Thank you. And I wish to thank Dr. Gordon Edwards for that presentation; he apologizes for taking so long but we know there's lots of information and this is just the tip of the iceberg, we know that, and there's a lot more information that's out there yet that we don't have here but that we'll be hearing about over time. Just to let you know, this is just the beginning for us to be getting this information and I know for me, it really helps me to understand how this toxic substance works and the dangers of it.

As Dr. Edwards made his presentation, I was watching and listening to some of the comments and questions that were asked, and watching some of the young people that were responding, and the response from our young people here was very interesting. I think that all of you young folks are interested in the subject and I think that we have a lot more to find out about it. I understand Dr. Edwards is going to be around the balance of the day and if you want to talk to him personally, please feel free to do so.

I want to remind us that we're going to have a sweat lodge and I'm not sure when its going to be available, but around noon. Its 11:15 now so any of you – it's an optional thing – want to go to the sweat lodge, feel free to leave to use it.

**Mary:** Norm, for those people that didn't bring clothing, for the men we have trunks available for them, we have towels and for the women we have skirts and tops if you didn't bring anything with you.

**Norman:** Thank you Mary. I'm going to ask you now for your immediate response to what Dr. Edwards shared with us this morning. Does anyone care to just come up and use the microphone and share a little bit of what you heard this morning? If you want to write it down on a sheet of paper of how you feel about our involvement as Aboriginal people and Aboriginal community, please do that and give it to myself and we will make sure that what you say goes into the report. This make is available for you so please feel free.

## DISCUSSION:

**Female Speaker:** I just want to say thank you to all of you that are here, to Doug and Norman for organizing this and all your research and life's work and I just want to thank you for that. I really appreciate and I honour that. I also first want to say that I am absolutely shocked. The other thing was that it was a long time covered up and now its been exposed and take them a little while for our people to gather strength in numbers so we can pass this knowledge along and I know we can make a difference as the education and knowledge are spread further. Thank you.

**Mary:** Good morning again and I would just like to say that this is the third time we've had different people gathering to talk about nuclear waste and we went to Ottawa, there was about a hundred of us there, elders and youth, and the discussion really was on we know the effects of the nuclear waste and plutonium, that's what they call the smart bombs today. But also its not just used in that area, the nuclear power that is used in other provinces in Canada has the waste and that's what they don't know what to do with.

One of the things we as Aboriginal people have to be aware of is the fact that their looking for a place to store this nuclear waste and one of the concerns we have to have is we have to be knowledgeable enough about nuclear waste and its effects and I think we already have experienced it in our lives, the effects what these so called white scientists have, knowledge. Unfortunately they have abused the knowledge that they have been given by the Creator. The Creator has not put anything on Earth that is destructive. Uranium in its natural form provides heat, its part of Mother Nature. It is only when man started toying around with it that it became destructive and unfortunately that little man with the hair there, who didn't know how to tie his shoes, found out he could break the atom and he became a big hero because the Americans were in the process of war and they had the advantage over the Japanese and used the bomb on them. And so that was the first part of the destruction. And also they haven't respected Mother Earth and the scientists have not realized that the knowledge they have was given to them by the Creator and I bet they never thanked the Creator for that knowledge that they were given. They only used it for half of what they should have used, I mean how can you create it and not know how to get rid of it, that's crazy – and they tell us we're primitive, I don't know who's more primitive than whom.

To me it's a situation that exists, its growing, even if we stop nuclear waste in this country, on this side of the earth, all the other countries now have. When China and India start wanting to become consumers like we are, they are going to have a lot of nuclear waste. So, I think that for myself, and I heard this at the last gathering, is that Aboriginal people have to become scientists. I have no doubt in my mind that it will be an Aboriginal person who will finally resolve, you don't have to bury this waste, you don't have to put it in canisters and save it for 50 years or whatever. So I think its imperative as Aboriginal people, make sure our young people become scientists with the natural knowledge that we have and the connection we have to Mother Earth and the spiritual essence of who we are, we don't do anything halfway, we do things in a circle and we complete it. So when we become involved in science, we had that long before the Europeans came, and now they are trying to get us more involved because they know the answer is in our communities. It'll be one of our people that will come up with that idea of how that can be treated.

And that's one of the reasons why we are having the lodge because we're going to pray to our Creator to give us the guidance today on how we're going to talk about some of the ways that we could start getting involved and make things happen because the whole issue is what we're going to do about it, you're not going to stop it, it's going to go on, its been going on, there's other things going on as destructive as that and we don't even know about it. That is the way the government operates. Look at the environment issue. Canada is one of the greatest polluters, we don't stop using our cars so we're not going to change our way of life for environment and as more people...China and India will never achieve the standard of living that we have because they just won't have the power to do it and they will need nuclear power to get to half of where we are today.

**Suggestion** I just wanted to say that because we can get lost in the destructiveness of this, we have to think of the future and how do we think as Aboriginal people, we're going to be involved in this whole process and not just consultation but in an ongoing way. I have already recommended to Ottawa because this report that the NWMO, they have to have a report to go to Ottawa by November. They have already got ideas of where they are going to be going, and we were very adamant at that meeting in Ottawa that they already know where their going to bury that waste. Now they're just sort of letting us know because they got to do something. As a matter of fact one of the elders from Manitoba hauls that nuclear waste from New York to Ontario. We just have to keep focusing to the seventh generation for ourselves. I just wanted to share that with you. Thank you.

**Norman:** Thank you Mary. I just want to make sure that for the balance of the day and arrive where we want to by the end of the day, is that we are focusing on what Mary suggested about involvement, what should our involvement be and how best can we do that. That is what we want to focus on, that is what we need to come up with at the end of the day; how do we see ourselves involved.

**Female Speaker:** First of all I wanted to acknowledge the sacred herbs that are hanging here and the spirits that are with us, that are from Mother Earth. I'd like to say welcome and glad to be here with you. When we picked those sacred herbs that are hanging here, we ask for permission and put down tobacco in order to pick them so we can use them for the purposes that we do use them for.

I come from a generation that seen a lot of change already here on Mother Earth. I come from a territory where I remember when I was small, that we used to be able to fish, hunt, gather

herbs, to trap and I remember in the early 60's where I'm from, Saskatchewan - from Saskatchewan River – they built a hydro plant upstream from us and I remember there was also a pulp mill built not far from our traditional territories were. Because of those 2 things and the resulting pollution from those developments we were warned in the mid-sixties that we could no longer fish in those rivers. In my traditional territory today, there is another big change that is occurring and that is a diamond mine, an open pit diamond mine. I know having gone through that being a mother and a grandmother that we have a responsibility to not only be aware of the issues regarding Mother Earth but we have to think we have to think from a basic stand point about our own lifestyles and the kind of future that we want for our child, grandchildren, great grandchildren, into the seven generations into the future.

I am going to say a few things that may not be on the direct topic of nuclear power but it has to do with the way that we live today and what we have as responsibility as mothers, clan mothers, for our young people sitting around here, what we have to do about our lifestyles because this has to do with lifestyle. Essentially, the nuclear power that is being used is being used here in Canada for power and in some areas of the world it's still being used for smart bombs, etcetera. But I'm going to talk about power because that's what we're most familiar with here.

We heard about LA (Los Angeles) last year, there was a huge black-out because they were using too much power. I heard not too long again that they had another black-out but not as huge as the last one. I'm talking here, standing here before you as a consumer of that power. I am used to conveniences, we use the appliances, we use power for the light, and we use vehicles. I often wonder what our ancestors are thinking. In my territory – I come from a treaty territory - I remember the words of our ancestors, they used to tell us don't allow those hydro lines and gas lines to go through our territory. When I was that young I never used to think about the effects of those lines going through our territories that it was going to bring the conveniences we use today. I remember when I was small we never had power. I'm 52 today so I'm not that old and we used to use alternative fuel, we never used to have furnaces. I remember we used to live in a one room shack where there's no power, we used to have to use wood fuel and kerosene lamps or make sort of like a candle to burn.

I'm talking about this because it's important because if we're going to be standing here and talk about nuclear power and about the abuses of that power then we're going to have to take responsibility to as the consumers of the power. Because those are the kinds of things you've got to think about, when you're talking the talk you got to walk the walk. Sure it would be good for us to write a letter to the MP, to the Prime Minister or to the NWMO, and make a presentation regarding a position on nuclear power but we have to talk about the daily ways that we live. And I'm going to pass on some teachings here because I think it's important as a mother and as a grandmother.

**Teaching:** Grandmother Moon is responsible for the water. You as a woman are responsible for the water and for the pollution and the responsibility for the cleansing that water; the rivers, the creeks and there's ceremonies that you can do. I am also going to give you another teaching that has been passed on to me. There are prophecies from our people and some of those prophecies tell us about things that are going on now were prophesized by our ancestors. Some of the happenings that are going on in the world – the hurricanes, the tornadoes, the huge storms that are going to come, the flooding of large metropolises, cities – those are the prophecies of our people that these things are going to happen; and the major pollution that is going on.



So in your daily life as you go on and when we think about this issue of nuclear power because when I'm given information I think about it a lot and I do what is called reflective thinking, I reflect on the material that I have been given. As I grow older I don't take any rash decisions or actions, I think because we have to think of those future generations of our people. One of the things I have been told as a clan mother is that I have to prepare my young people for what is going to happen in the future and one of the things that are going to happen is that we're not going to have this power that we use today. We are not going to have the computers and the internet. I know how to use all those things, it's a convenience. We are not going to have that so one of the responsibilities that have before I go on to the spirit world is that I have to prepare the young people to learn how to survive the way we used to survive.

This summer I was part of a camp of maybe 50 young people and I remember things we used to enjoy doing when we were young, things like picking berries, like crushing berries, drying meat, preparing food over a fire, even a simple thing like learning how to start the fire without matches or a lighter. That kind of survival, young people have to learn. You have to learn how to survive in the wild. The longer term issue of nuclear power the only thing I can about that is that the Creator has ways of balancing what has been happening to our universe because we can not only talk about Mother Earth, she is part of the universe. There are the stars, the planets, the stars that they are talking about going to and maybe even shooting some of their refuse into – that's part of our universe, the Creator made that for us. So, that is what I have to say on that. Thank you.

**Norman:** Thank you for those words of wisdom. Reflective thinking, yes, that's exactly what we want to hear. I invite others to come to the mike and give us your thoughts.

**Male Speaker (Sakoieta Woodrick):** **Teaching** It's good to hear what Mary had to say and this lady here because the issue of nuclear power our creation stories talk about that, that at the time the Creator began to create the world, he created all these good things and then he had his brother, the left handed twin who was always mischievous and getting into trouble trying to create the same way the Creator did, created many of these things as well. Our elders tell us that there was a fight at the beginning of that time where the good twin wrestled and defeated the negative twin and he took all the things that he created and put them underground. We were instructed that should there ever come a time when we release these evil things, these serpents, placed underground that we were going to be facing catastrophic events.

Our elders knew about all of this, this nuclear power, that there are things there that shouldn't be touched, that there are things there that we should leave alone that were created naturally. This gentleman did a very good presentation on that. When I look at that as well through the years I've traveled around the United States and Canada with different groups, we're talking about problems with the Utes, the Navaho, and all of these other people have already faced because those have been areas where all of a sudden they - like the man and his wife in that picture there - they found that their children were getting sick, they found that their sheep were starting to bring forward malformed lambs, they found that the kids were developing sores on their bodies from playing in the waters and they all found out when they investigated a little bit more that it was coming from playing around these tailings that were left to lay.

One thing we know, and I don't want to point fingers but it always gets me angry when we find it, our non-Native brothers are very good at opening a can of worms, but they aren't good at the long term solutions that says if you have something you're going to do you always think about a solution at the end on how to deal with it; our people are good at that. Our elders taught us as well that with these things that were released by the human beings that were never supposed to

be brought above ground, that's why they tell us the thunder and lightning come in the spring and we should always give thanks when they come because they were given the task that should any of these start to come out, the thunder and lightning will drive them back underground and neutralize them. So we were taught that the Creator has a way, like this lady was just talking about, has a way to balance things out.

Our people have to understand that when we talk about what are we going to do and what should our involvement be we have to be involved because one of the places these governments are looking to dumping these things is our reservations and our reserves. It wasn't enough that they thought they had finished off the Indian by putting us on reservations and taking us away from our homelands, now their deciding that because of the extreme poverty most of our people live in their willing to offer us money if we will allow these things to come onto our reservations and our lands. What that means is, is that we're going to be the caretakers of all this radioactive slop and, like Mary was saying, if we don't have people that are trained to do that we are going to have some people that are going to open that because there is no other economic viabilities going on in those communities. Our people want to eat and live good lives and they are going to specifically be told a lot of misinformation about this so that those nuclear wastes can come in to our areas and I know that to be true because where I come from, we faced that for a long time. Our people already, the Mohawks of Akwesasne and Mohawks of New York state, we're toxic people from what the government has done already.

We recognize that and the one thing this is, is it's not only an Aboriginal issue, and it's a community issue, a community of people of the world. While we work at maintaining these things that may come into our communities we also have to work at keeping those people accountable for the production of this and its going to be more than one community that stands up to do that. If we do it, all it becomes again is that those Indians are just crying again about something here, something there, they're never satisfied, what does it take to satisfy them? Well deep down the government is saying that if we can dump this on them we'll eradicate the Indian problem little by little; kids will die out, women won't be able to breast feed their children anymore, we'll start having deformed babies, we'll have all the effects of these things going on in our communities.

I don't know what the answer is more than anybody else but all I know is that I live my life following the teachings of the Creator and I tend to believe that at some point in time, like was said here, that our people will come up with the answers on how to deal with this, how to work with it, but the main thing is not to stick our head in the sand and ignore it because we may find it's a pile of sand like those toxic pilings that are there. That's all I've got to say. Yo.

**Norman:** Thank you Terry. I invite anyone to come up to the mike, and you young people too, to share how you think we should be involved.

**Female Speaker:** I guess that all I have to say is that it's true they probably will try to dump it on us because we're expendable and we're not seen and that's what they did to the Americans like with Yuca Mountain and South Dakota, they tried to battle the government after the problem occurred and we kind of have an advantage because - other than Meadow Lake I don't really know where else its been proposed to be dumped. Suggestion I think this is something that we need to do for everything, its not just nuclear waste but for all the environmental problems we face like our communities need to develop their own environmental impact assessments based on our way of life and implement those policies and lobby the government to make sure that those things are respected because after the problem occurs and bombarded by all the issues that's when we begin to make change but I think if we try to tackle the problem before it

happens then maybe there needs to be a coalition or something across Canada, like a government watchdog for environmental impacts on Indigenous people.

I think that, like what the lady said there, we do have a responsibility because we do live those lives. I drive a car, like two vehicles. I come from Alberta and we have a lot of oil and gas and its destroying all of the lakes, medicines. Like what that oil spill that happened in Wabung Lake, that's where my mom's reserve is and it's totally wiped out the whole area, its contaminated. Now those people are struggling because they have no maps to tell these – corporations don't care or government what you have to say but if you show them data and tell them we had this here before you came and prove it to them but if you have no proof but you're memory or oral history then they don't listen.

**Recommendation** So I think we have to be smart about it and prepare for it in advance. When we signed treaties we didn't know English but we have an advantage today because we can read and write and we can understand and we can understand these issues. We really don't have an excuse if we get contaminated because we can prepare. **Question** So I think the question for me is how are we going to prepare? How are we going to be responsible? How are we going to step up to the plate and do what we always say, being guardians of the earth? So that's all I have to say.

**Norman:** Thank you. I think she leaves us a lot to talk about, a lot to think about. Are we going to step up to the plate? Are we going to be involved? I'm hearing yes, we need to be involved from elders and from youth. And again I can tell by the kind of response that we are getting here this morning that I think we need to be involved and we're probably going to be concluding later that we need to be but the question is how. I think our young people can give us a lot of good direction on this, how are we going to be involved. We will listen to our elders; listen to others as we get information. The question is going to be how we are going to be involved. The lodge is ready for those that want to attend.

**Male Speaker:** Hello, my name is Danny. I was listening to everything going on here and the biggest problem I always see is the biggest reason to everything and it's the greed of people. Yu know nobody seems to know how to share anymore. If you're going to make \$2 million dollars a year or whatever, how much of it would you give up? How much would you sacrifice? I mean, for example like if I was able to make \$2 million dollars a year I would keep like \$30,000, \$40,000 for myself and make the rest a contribution to humanity. How many of these corporations would do that. You know that's always the problem. If the government would step up and say "we're going to take your money from you" or whatever it is – Sweden, Morocco – it doesn't matter. If all these rich people in the world can give up something, why should money just be sitting in a bank just collecting interest? Shouldn't it be somewhere else doing some good for the people all over the world?

It's one of my dreams to be rich. It's not that I've forgotten it; it's just that I wish for them. I'd like to be able to do that but give something back. I think about my home community on my mom's side and there's always lots of problems like drugs and alcohol and what not, you know, and there's always somebody complaining that there's nothing to do. And it's true. Like even there I remember a time when you could go right down to the lake and grab a pail a water, that was less than 15 years ago, and you can't do that anymore. One of the reasons is that once Manitoba Hydro came through there they said they wouldn't leave their drums of oil or gasoline lying around and the next thing you know you see it floating in the water. You see big piles of brush burning for nothing. Other people could have used those things. The biggest thing is

greed that has always been the problem for centuries. If you bring back the civilization and know how to share, maybe we can get somewhere and be able to deal with these problems.

I was also sitting here thinking, you know, like cold fights heat and heat fights cold, either way, if this stuff is burning a 5000 degrees Fahrenheit then you get something at minus 10000 degrees Fahrenheit to counteract it. I don't know what they can do, I don't know if they have the money to do it but that's always a problem. That always seems to be the problem; we don't money to do this, don't have money to do that. You know if somebody can at least say to them – you know those people that can't hear my voice right now – say give up your money then maybe we can get somewhere. Thank you.

**Norman:** We know that greed or money drives a lot of things, many times in the wrong direction. We know that. It's been said that a possible solution to what we face will likely come or could come from our Aboriginal community and I agree with that. I think that we're people not always driven by greed and as keepers of Mother Earth, we will pray for that in the sweat lodge and that we will come up with that solution, that the Creator will give us that solution. Dr. Edwards wanted to make an apology and I'm going to invite him to the mike to make that apology.

**Dr. Edwards:** Thank you very much. I just wanted to apologize for the length of my presentation this morning, I didn't mean to be disrespectful and I apologize very much to any who were discomforted by that. I also have brought with me the critique I have written of the NWMO report. Please feel free to take one.

I just wanted to mention because it's important to know, there hasn't been a single nuclear reactor built or ordered in North America since 1978. It's not a thriving industry. In Europe, there's countries which are phasing out of nuclear power, for example, Germany, which has 17 nuclear reactors, has decided to phase out of nuclear power. They built 13,000 megawatts of wind power and have already shut down 2 reactors and they have a schedule for shutting down the other reactors one after the other until they are all gone. Sweden is on the same path, they've already shut down 2 reactors and they are also turning to renewable energy. In Western Europe, nuclear power is at a stand still. The only place where nuclear reactors are being sold is in Eastern Europe and in Asia. This is a debatable thing, people have different views on it but it's important to know that it's by no means an open and shut case. Many people in fact do think that nuclear power may be necessary as a future energy source but there are others, even nuclear physicists, who believe the opposite, and who believe that the future is not in nuclear energy but in renewable energy.

It's just important to aware that this is much an alive debate. In Sweden, the reason they are phasing out of nuclear power is because they did have a referendum for the whole population to vote on whether they wanted nuclear or not and they voted not. Similarly in Austria, they voted not to have nuclear and their phasing out also. Thank you very much for inviting me and I really enjoy being part of this and appreciate very much the wisdom of some of the things said this morning.

**Norman:** Thank you Dr. Edwards. Mr. Houle.

**Male Speaker:** Good morning again, I think we have 5 minutes left. I wish I had 6 days. I have so many questions to ask the scientists and you brothers and sisters. As far as I'm concerned we are all equal and nobody above anybody. As an elder, I think the word is opportunity and – as the last guy that spoke said here – greed, and the way I heard the power being used here is

similar or totally different than I know what the power is. Power of electricity, power of governments, I think that's what affects us all here. I see about 40 or 50 people around the circle here, there's so much wisdom around this circle, if we can tap into that wisdom and how are we going to tap that wisdom? To be heard, you are a cross-cultural community, all different walks, all different regions, you are affected the same way as I am. I said this morning I was homeless and from the elder point of view I really am homeless, I do have a home, I pay taxes on, I paid cash for this home, I have travels and all of that but I don't have home.

Where I was born I'm alienated from that community. Tried to get back in the community for 4 years now and it seems like the government says I can't go because the Chief and Council over there have to have a meeting on my behalf. The whole community wants me there but I can't because of bureaucratic legal things I have to go through. Therefore I am homeless. That's what I said from the present day point of view.

Now, what I want to say is that I admire that sister came up and also Mary and all those people that shared. I made a conclusion based on that opportunity and based on that power and greed, I call this place my home now, no matter where I am on Mother Earth I call that my home. Will I be recognized by that same power that we are discussing as calling that place my home. The Creator has given me Mother Earth to look after, wherever I am that's what I do. I just came from up north and spent 3 hours up there to talk to our children. It seems like that where I went to talk, to talk about respect, they don't know what that is simply because as an elder of my home, that principal in that school said my teachings. All our Aboriginal teachings are irrelevant. I'm not happy with that. If I went to go against that principal as a person who deprived me, the Lord and him, I'd have what we call a union to go up against. I'm liable because I harassed this very important individual who called me irrelevant. That's where I'm coming from.

We got to get up and stand powerful. I've been sober now from that total poison called alcohol and drugs. Right about here it used to be called the Patricia Hotel and I used to be kicked out of that place just about every weekend but that's all gone now. This is where I am and I've been sober now for 28 years alcohol and drug free and I want applause for that please. You see what we have to do rather than for you to listen to me I have to tell you to applaud me and did you also know that I am the best looking guy up in front of the mike here, because I said so. That the power we have within, you should not be told what to do, you are a God-given human being. You were put here as a gift, a gift to your mother, father, sisters, brothers, your children. You're responsible for that, you're uniqueness. You see here I really admire the scientist who spoke to us – you're a physicist, mathematician and all that sir – I like that, this is very scientific. There's a few questions I have to ask you, and I know you haven't got the answers, based on those similar questions, the same scientists who are asking us for advice or to be involved in their discussions, we never have been involved and I don't think I'll ever be because it took Norman to get me to come and speak up here. I've been going to these meetings for about 40 years brothers and sisters and it seems like every time I get in I get an agenda and it's the same damn agenda for 40 years now, the same thing. What are we doing talking about the same thing? It seems like everywhere I look our society is getting worse. So it's time to stand up and I'll be with you, rather than to work for the system, which I'm doing now. I would like to work with the system, I'd like to participate in those discussions but do they ever ask me - I'm going to put that nuclear waste behind your back door? They never did. Did they ever ask me their going to put the hydro power to destroy all the northern communities up there for this power, the convenience of this power? No, they never ask me.

What that system calls development, progress I call that total destruction because, I see some friends from Tadoule Lake or somewhere up there, and their livelihood is gone. Where I used to hunt, I am a very good hunter, I don't even have to carry a gun anymore, my hunting grounds today is the IGA, Superstore, or Safeway. If I don't have this, that's all I have by the way, but I'm rich and whoever said they were poor, we are the richest person in the world. Money is the most destructive thing in the world. You take a look at the natural disasters that have been happening; our elders have predicted this. Our world axis shift has taken place because of mankind causing imbalance with what they call progress. What I mean about that is that the natural disasters, the hurricanes, the volcanoes, the earthquakes, that's Mother Nature's way of cleansing itself and we are a part of that. I'm sorry to say that I was a part of that pollution because I didn't get an opportunity to voice my mind within that development.

I was an archeologist for about 15 years in my lifetime to cause environmental impact assessments to enable the government to go ahead and develop what they call development. I quit that once I saw the pollution that was caused up north – the Churchill River diversion. This lady just talked about a hydro dam built upstream, I know all about that. Years ago I was asked by Mayor Hauser – these are a group that causes environmental protection programs across Canada – they're going to develop Dreighton Valley in Alberta and they ask me to go and identify all our herbs and put it in a report so they wouldn't have to destroy or at least have knowledge of the destruction they're doing and they would prevent some of these medicines that we have to collect. My report was instead of wasting all my time to go and search for all these herbs, our teachers, our forefathers, our Aboriginal people, rate all that environment as our medicines and should not destroy all this environment in your development. I don't think too many elders in here will disagree with me that all of those vegetations are our medicines, natural medicines.

Now, with this nuclear waste, and I saw this paper, and I have been involved in a lot of these meetings talking about – what I said nuclear, well that's exactly what it is, I have no clear mind as to what should happen. Who am I to say that report I read, that gave us 3 scenarios, I think Professor over there told us about it, next to the nuclear reactors, centralize is another one where they are going to bring everything together and bring all the nuclear waste to Canada, and deep into the ground was the last one. I don't think we can prevent any of this stuff from happening if we're just going to sit around and wait for things to happen around us. I encourage you brothers and sisters, I want you all to come with us not in a rally, I don't like demonstrations, and we have to do things in a positive happy manner. We need to talk to those people that don't understand what they really are doing to the environment in a loving and kind way. If you talk to those government officials, bureaucrats that you love them they are going to put you into an asylum. You see what's happening here? I think this is what we have to express, our Aboriginal way of life. This sister said exactly what I'm talking about.

You take a look over here - a couple of bears were caught in a tree just a couple blocks from here – this is a big major centre and the pollution that has been caused by that development has toxic poisoned that bear who is disoriented right now so when he gets hungry he smells – McDonalds you see. So he doesn't care who he steps on, who he attacks, you see the write ups in the paper just lately. The bear wants to eat so if you go against him he'll tear you apart.

**Question:** I want to invite all of you how are we going to do it, are we going to do it together? Let's all work together. The question I ask the presenter or Norman Meade, within that system, what authority do we have? Do we have a voice? Will they listen to what we recommend to that power? This is what we have to establish, is do we have a voice or do we have to go get

incorporated again before we get recognized? We have joy as people, we need to stand together, not as politicians but as a community – I don't care where you come from, we have to stand together. I have 20 cents to start a process here, so now I'm broke. Any knowledge that I have is yours for your benefit.

My last comment is going to be, an elder a long time ago said that "when all the water is poisoned, all the fish are dead, when all the trees are polluted and the vegetation, only at that time will we recognize that we can't eat money". Thank you. (TAPE ENDS)

**Norman:** (TAPE BEGINS) Thank you Lawrence. We are going to be breaking for lunch but just before we do there's one thing I want to ask you to do. Those of you that may want to put in a recommendation of how we should be involved, please feel free to write it down on a sheet of paper and say this is how we see our involvement. One youth I spoke to before yesterday said why don't we know more about his and why isn't it taught in schools. Good recommendation. Why are young people kept in the dark about some of these things? I think that that's the kind of recommendations we want to see us come up with from these kinds of discussions. Thanks Lawrence for your comments and direction on these things.

I'd like to ask an elder to please come up and bless the food. (TAPE ENDS)

**Male Speaker:** Teaching (TAPE BEGINS) A long time ago when I started going to ceremonies and listening to the elders, they used to talk about this beautiful place to where we live and the used to tell us our people knew how important Mother Earth was, how precious Mother Earth was so they used to only live in a place for a little while then they'd move so that that place could re-grow. They were always moving then they could go down to that river and drink water, they knew how important that water was, how precious Mother Earth was. When another race came here and seen all the beauty, they started taking everything from Mother Earth. And today, our people, we are the ones that suffer most because of greed, progress. And they divided us. Quite a few years I was to a ceremony and there was a leader there, a young guy was voted as Chief and he wanted to know what's the best thing he can do for his people, his community. In that ceremony, after the spirits came, he was told the only way our Mother Earth will come back is when the original people of this land come back together and be one, be united. Once we're united, no other race will be able to divide us again because we learned from that, we know we understand. We'll understand how important we are as human beings, as the original people of this land.

In order to do these things to understand, we have to come together as the original people of this land, as Anishinabe people, because it was our ancestors that were put here. We were put here for a very special reason and that was taken away from us, through schooling and that, and I encourage all of you to go to university and everything but go back to the traditional ways to. Get involved in that because there's special things in there that that you need to know you have to do. We have to learn how to survive again, learn how to endure, even though we have endured a lot, we have to learn how to survive because something is going to happen. I've been hearing this so much lately, I've been talking to so many people that have had these dreams of big catastrophes that are going to happen. Lately, I've been talking to so many people that they are afraid of their dreams they dream it's really happening. So I understand that and I really get involved in our traditional way of life, it's so important and we have to do that. We have to know who we are and why this Turtle Island was put here for us and why everything is here and what we need to do for each other and our grandchildren, how important they are. (TAPE ENDS)

**LUNCH****1:10 p.m. Discussion on Aboriginal Involvement**

**Norman:** Thank you for coming back. We need to finish off some work this afternoon.

**Question** One of the things that came up over lunch was will we be heard, we as Aboriginal people be heard on this topic? **Information** Well, you know, under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act* of Ottawa, Aboriginal people must be heard and under the NWMO, that sort of heads up this whole area of study, they have been given instructions to meet with Aboriginal people and to hear them and to listen to them. We know that the government in Ottawa, in that legislation, has made it clear that we must be heard and we must be involved so really its up to us what that involvement is going to be. How much involvement do we want, how much do we need this.

The Provincial government, and I can't speak for them, but I did speak to one of the Deputy Ministers yesterday, and I asked him what the provincial position is on nuclear waste and the disposal of such, and he said that has not changed since legislation in the early 1980's, where they would not allow storage of the waste on provincial land in Manitoba. Other provinces have similar legislation but that's the position of the provincial government here that they will not allow the waste to be stored on provincial Crown land in Manitoba. Now that is not to say that if a First Nation community were approached that would exclude that, it could very well happen on reserve land, on First Nation territory because it is federal land. That is one of the concerns that I've heard about this whole scenario – what if they were to approach one of our communities that are looking at economic activity in their region, would they accept money to allow this kind of development to happen. We know that its millions of dollars if they were to make underground storage facilities in the Canadian Shield, where they find the best granite to be for storage. It could very well be and I just wanted to make sure that we were clear on that because both federal and provincial governments want to involve Aboriginal people in this, they must, they have to, it's by law and it's their legislation so I say let's take them up on that offer.

We talked of a number of things this morning of how we might be involved. I want us to continue talking and thinking about that, let's stay on that trend of thought of how we might be involved. We came up with a number of things this morning of that involvement; 1. Yes, we need to be involved, and 2. How do we be involved, how best do we be involved, how can we be heard. We have ways of being heard, we have our own media people now, on television and radio programs, and we have that available to us. We can attend meetings, like this meeting today, and others will follow I'm sure. We have to take that level of interest, it's a yes I am going to attend these meetings because I am concerned. We can write these submissions and present them, we can do that, not on your own but we can do it as groups. I think that there's ways of being involved but we must exercise that right to be involved. I really want to encourage young people especially, now that you've heard and know some of the information that was presented here this morning of how you might exercise your right. Many of you have good educations and you know how to write submissions. I think that we got to keep in contact with our grassroots organizations like the Aboriginal Council of Manitoba or Winnipeg, and we got to keep in contact with those organizations and let them know we are interested. Their offices are over here at the Aboriginal Centre. You can go over and see them, talk to them, let them you know that you want to be involved and that you're interested, that's very important.



I'm going to leave the mike open again for those that didn't have a chance before we broke for lunch to come up and speak, let us know how you want to be involved and I'll just leave that open now. Feel free.

**Male Speaker:** Hi, I'm Daniel. When I was growing up, my mother was always real strict – you're going to university, this and that, make sure you're on time, whatever. She would always put me in chemistry, physics, math, and reading these chemistry books, these books that are supposedly presented in a way that's completely neutral, its just knowledge that you can learn and understand and apply it to the world later on I guess when you become a scientists or engineer or whatever, what I'm doing now.

I found that after many years of reading these textbooks, these supposedly neutral books, I found that nuclear radiation was presented in a way that there were more benefits to it than a downside. Hydro electric dams, I think this is a very important media source for our young people, our older people. Like he was saying, we have TV programs, radio programs, and that's one thing I don't think we really looked at yet, our science textbooks. I think that a science textbook is presented to you in a very one sided way – I don't know what you'd call it but we as Native people think in a certain way, other races and other cultures think in another way, and we read these books, and its their media, a science textbook is still their media, their still teaching us and it's like being neutral but we're not; it's double speak.

It has 2 meanings and I think that is one of the main things we have to take advantage of or we have to start doing is writing in textbooks, like science books, I read those things like 6 hours a day and I really, really begin to notice that and I think that's one of the things we really have to change. Thank you.

**Male Speaker:** Question I just want to know that is everything here being said recorded and used?

**Norman:** Yes, it is. What we are hoping to come out of that is to formulate some recommendations of your involvement, which is what we're hoping and will make sure that whatever comes out of this meeting today will go into a submission and be given to the people that will involve us later or form here on. There has been some involvement already, as we heard from some elders earlier on, and it needs to be ongoing. So to answer your question, yes, this is being recorded and put this into a report. For those that have put their names in the report over there you'll get a copy of the report or at least a condensed version.

**Male Speaker:** I guess what I'm wondering is where our leaders stand, I know the elders are here today, how come we have no leaders here, where are our Chiefs? To me it all seems political and the only way we're going to change it is to become involved in the political process and get on the Chiefs back and I know there's lots of stuff going on in the communities its just to me it's a waste of time, even the way they elect each other and stuff like that. I'm not trying to...I shouldn't be apologizing for slamming what's going on in those reservations where the Chiefs are buying votes with alcohol and you know just taking advantage of the people. Our government, right up to the top, like all the things you see, the way the stores are set up now where you go into the stores and everything is being sold like non-biodegradable and all these things take energy to produce and why are they just allowed to carry on this way; like the old fashioned way where you would go to the butcher and he wrapped your meat in paper, how come we're not still doing this stuff. Like just a form of speak, like economics to me the word economy is just another form of the word greed. The way the rich people are like they want to live in a big house, I can't even fathom if I had millions and millions of dollars I wouldn't need a

big house. Why do they have these big houses, why do they have 2 cars in their parking lot that are written off by business, it just seems that the rich are getting richer and the poor getting poorer. This is being allowed by our government. **Question** I just think that our Chiefs need to stand up and that's my issue is where are our Chiefs today? Thanks.

**Norman:** I don't want to respond to his question in a way that would send a bad vibes out there but our Chiefs, as he questions, were not specifically invited today as the Aboriginal Council of Manitoba had organized this meeting here today of citizens and that's why they were not invited. We didn't want this to become a political thing right now, we wanted citizen participation here because we felt that that's where, at the grassroots level, that some of the ideas would have to come from and some of the information brought down to the community level and out of that some recommendations of involvement by the community, by you.

One of the things that have often been said, and I throw this out for you to think about, is consultation, what is it? Many times people say that they didn't consult with us, meaning them the government or them the NWMO or who ever it might be, they didn't consult with us. It's a fair argument for us to question what consultation is when it comes from them to us, we want you to be involved. We consulted with them what really does that mean? I think that its time for us as Aboriginal people, to come to something like this where we have a voice and are given the opportunity to raise that voice collectively, that we should be going to those organizations and taking them up on the offer and we go and let them know what our views are on this matter and not wait for them to come and consult with us because we have trouble with that. Did they consult with us; they came and had a meeting with us but did actually consult with us, what is that.

And I just will throw that out because I think the opportunity is here for us to say yes we are going to be involved in this issue and if we need to come to the table we will do that. So, lets just turn the table a bit and we will come and bring our views and knowledge to you, you don't have to come to us, we will come to you. The door is open. I'd like to see that.

**Male Speaker:** Hi, my name is Tyrone. Before today I wasn't too concerned about this issue, yesterday was the first time I actually was told about so I thought I'd check it out and here I am. A lot of times I like to think I know a lot of things and I saw this and I don't. You know the answer to what we're all here for is pretty clear. I think we need to raise awareness and try to increase participation. Like for me when I see an opportunity I jump on it, like if someone needs help or needs participation I just like to jump in there and try to help out.

**Recommendation** We need to find a way to make youth care about these issues and make them realize that in 20 years it's going to be their turn to look after these issues and to raise awareness like that. I like to think I've been involved quite a bit in the community in terms of groups and participation and things like that but I don't think that I've ever came across anybody whose main motive is what we're all here to talk about today. **Recommendation** I think it'd be good to note there needs to be a group willing to go to the community and go out and take a more direct approach but up until yesterday I never heard of the issue and you know its obviously an important issue because our land is going to be decomposing and what do we do after we don't have our land, we won't be able to survive or anything. I just think it's important for the organizers or the people that are making this their job – I can't remember the term. To find a way to get to the community to get them to come here but broaden the horizon to increase numbers and participation. That's all I really wanted to say. Thanks a lot.

**Norman:** Thank you for those comments. When you think about involvement and how to be involved, the first thing that comes to my mind is that we need to know some basic information on the subject, like we got this morning, that generates interest and you are interested, you are still here. Another phase is education, how do we get people up to date on what is happening? And what our involvement should look like. Education is very, very important to our people in terms of these kinds of issues; how do we educate our people at the grassroots level so that they are going to be able to get involved in a real way, in a way they feel good about being involved. So education is really important.

The other part of that is how do we, as people living in the communities, not only in Winnipeg but in northern communities, how we get that information out publicly to the people that we need to communicate with. Whether it's with the NWMO, whether it's our leaders or whomever, how do we get that information out there. That's important for us to think about, information gathering, but to respond to that information is also important, we have to be able to communicate and that's why I'm suggesting that we do have methods now with our own TV stations and programs now, we do have ways of communicating to the general public. We must use those systems that are there to be heard. That is a very important part of our involvement here. Now let's not just sit and wait for somebody to bring us something, let's just get involved. Let our view be known. Is there anyone else?

**Female Speaker:** My name is Golden Eagle Woman (*said in her language first*). I just moved to the city on September 1<sup>st</sup> hoping to better the life of my 4 children. So they could get a better education to because there's nothing at home for me. I just started learning about my culture and everything, we had an Aboriginal teachings class at Red River College; just being in that first class, I wanted to learn more about myself and about my people because we've suffered so many years, our people were wiped out by small pox the Europeans brought and so many diseases with them.

My mom was sent to residential school and I see a lot off our people suffering, our children not knowing who they are, where they belong. Some of them end up getting into these gangs and its Aboriginals killing each other and that's so sad to see because that wasn't our way of life. We were caring people, we shared with each other, we were ripped of our culture, our identity, our character and for me I now know that we are all put here for a reason and for myself my target is youth and I want to be able to give the youth the knowledge that I have but I am just on my path learning as well.

**Recommendation** It all has to start from us teaching our children our way of life, who we are, and being in that teachings class just made me proud of who I am and at least now I can say that I know where I'm coming from now, I know who I am, I know where I belong. On my journey I'd like to learn from my elders but we don't many of those at home like we do learn from our elders but I feel not many share with themselves because we lost our culture again. For myself, I am always honoured to hear from an elder and I would always like that because they teach you so much. Back home its not like that, where an elder will come and tell you about the ways like there's not much of that so everything is new to me but I bought my 6 year old daughter with me and I kind of thought that she's young too and I got to get her involved with our culture, our communities so that's the reason I brought her here. Even though she may not understand what's going on here, at least I can say I brought my daughter and she touched ground base with it anyway. I know what I have to do now.

I've always been wondering what I'm supposed to do because I know I'm here for a reason but what is that reason and for me what I want to do is help my people out more, as much as I can,

especially the children because those are the next generation and they need to know our culture, they need to know who we are as Aboriginal people. I know what my reason is now it's the youth and has to do a lot with the environment. Our children are just suffering so much, in today's world I don't see the children having respect, they don't respect anything, some do some don't, we've lost that and we need to teach our children our ways of life.

With this nuclear waste thing I think that it should be taught in our schools at a younger grade so they have a better understanding of what this world is coming to. It's so sad to see that this world is suffering in so many ways, we're abusing our land. It gets frustrating when you know that people know there's destruction to the land and nobody's doing anything about it and that's the frustrating part for me, where are our children going to be in the next 10, 15 or 20 years, are we going to let our children suffer more than we are suffering now? **Recommendation** So I just think that now is the time for us as Aboriginal people to stand up and take our knowledge back to our children. Thank you.

**Norman:** Thank you. You know that summed it up so well in such few words, of what is one of the things that we must do, and that is to educate our children. We must let them know what we know. That is why we involve elders and that is why we want to see elders become more involved. We can't always rely on our public education system, we have to rely more on ourselves. I have to go home and tell my children and grandchildren what I learned here today so that they are aware of what is in the future for them. The next time we have a forum like this that my granddaughter is sitting here beside me like this little girl is sitting with her mom. That is what we must do.

**Female Speaker:** I guess I just want to add to our traditional education from our elders is important. And reclaiming our lost teachings, knowledge, our healing, all that are important. I believe as a Nation we are still reeling from the effects of colonization, residential school abuse and its effect on the generations and there is a lot of dysfunction, a lot of pain, but there is also a lot of hope. I agree with Mohawk professor, Dr. Martin Hill, and I was at her presentation at the U of M, and her presentation was on the history of the impact of the residential school system on our children and people to the 4<sup>th</sup> generation. She said that at one time education from the non-Aboriginal side began as a positive thing but it actually did a lot of damage to our people. She went through all the negative impacts and things, then turned it around and said how education from the non-Aboriginal society can also be used to heal us. I believe its beginning to happen.

I also noticed like I'm here in Winnipeg and there's almost 80,000 Aboriginals here and yet we had an Aboriginal person run for Mayor, his name is Chris Henderson. The number of Aboriginal voters is great and we could have a major impact on who we elect and he said only about 2% of the Aboriginal population voted. So the other issue is we need to train our children and young people to encourage them....to the traditional forms of governance and need that knowledge of living and culture and have the autonomy to practice our spiritual beliefs. In the Aboriginal community there are all the different belief systems which are evident. I noticed with all this, I came to the conclusion that even encouraging our young people that they need the basics, need their education, their high school, participate in the election process, which, all in all, you know, I guess we think a lot of people have had negative experiences. There are corrupt people, corrupt leaders, and I'm not going to discount that but I want to give an example on the university. They had elections for the student council and it was done out in the open in a transparent way and we followed all the general guidelines of the main council and incorporated a bit of our own way.

Being transparent, we counted all the ballots in the middle of the circle and everybody witnessed it, all the numbers, all the count, so how can you have any dispute with the knowledge, truth and transparency. Then it would put away half the problem of rigged elections and dishonestly gain positions, you know all the negative things which a lot of us are familiar with and a lot of us are aware of. So I would suggest that, that we...and I guess I'm just speaking from a visionary sense, its going to take a little bit of time and also people who are willing to be transparent where there isn't any rigged elections, there isn't any nepotism, we work on the merits of who ever is qualified, on the merit principle. I believe that would be a beginning and that this year at the university, we're going to do it all again in the circle after a potluck, and who can dispute that, the decisions of the majority, the consensus. Thank you.

**Norman:** Thank you. If there's a will, there's a way and there is a will and there will be a way, so we will find that way, whether it's bringing people together in this kind of forum or using the resources available to us, we will find a way of letting people know. **Recommendation** One of the things and we have talked of things this morning, some recommendations of involvement, one of things I would like to see and push for is that this become part of our curriculum in the schools and actually have people that can talk with and study with and learn from, people like Dr. Edwards and others out there, that we can get some of our university and college people to feel good about going out to university groups and classes of teaching some of these things of nuclear waste and our involvement, that's what I'd really like to see. I would really like to see us promote that because it's really based on education and the education process, it is. What we do with that knowledge once we get it that matters. What do you do with it? If this mom would only keep that to herself and not bring the little one today, the little one can't learn from her unless she goes and tells her and fills her in, educates her, the same with you. That is the education I'm talking about, what we know shouldn't be kept up here, in here, it should be told, we should educate others about what we know and there's ways and means of doing that.

I think that if we go to the NWMO and government, and say look, this is how we see ourselves getting involved. Look we want to do it. Why we want to do it is because we know more from our elders sitting over here about the traditional values than they do out there, non-Aboriginal educators. Our elders know more of the traditional values and teachings than they do. **Suggestion** That's why I'm suggesting that we do it but do it from our educational backgrounds and values, not from there's; any response to that? Yes Dr. Edwards.

**Dr. Edwards:** Thank you. I certainly think education is a very important thing and I'd like to share with you before I leave, because I will have to leave around 3:30 to catch a plane back to Montreal, what I've tried to do is share some knowledge with you, basically some technical knowledge, some historical knowledge about the situation. I'd now like to share with you some views about what we as citizens can do.

In Ontario they had a process where they tried for 3 years, they tried to find a willing host community for radioactive waste, not radioactive fuel, what they call low-level radioactive waste, from Port Hope, Ontario, which has 800,000 tons of radioactive waste in ravines around Port Hope. For 3 years they looked for a willing community all over Ontario and what they did was, and I thought it was a very good thing, they made money directly available to the community to educate themselves about the issue so that they could bring in who ever it wanted, including myself and other people, to get a better understanding of what was going on so that's the kind of thing I think one can hope for is that resources should be made available directly to the communities so they can educate themselves in the way they want to.

Our organization is making a number of recommendations regarding this whole process, including one that says the NWMO should be scraped and a new organization independent of the nuclear industry should be formed. The original recommendation of the Seaborn Panel, which was in 1998, is that there should be an agency formed that is truly independent of the nuclear industry, this one (NWMO) is not and that agency should have on its board of directors, people that really care about the issue, including Aboriginal people and environmentalists and academic scientists that are not connected to the nuclear industry and who therefore don't have a conflict of interest. So, one of our recommendations is going to be that the government of Canada should change the law and get an organization that is truly independent. Such an organization is likely to help with our education goals about the nature of the problem.

Another thing that we're recommending is that we're going along with the recommendation made back in 1978 by the Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning and that is that this stuff shouldn't be moved, period. There is no reason to move it from point A to point B because we don't know if it's any safer at point B than at point A. And as long as they are still producing this radioactive waste, if you move it to a central location all you're doing is adding one more trouble spot; not to mention the transportation routes between them. Back in 1978, the Royal Commission asked them not to move the stuff until they were serious about shutting down the industry. Once they get serious about shutting down the industry then you can start talking about what we are going to do about all the waste that is left over but as long as they continue to produce it, then there doesn't seem to be any real advantage to moving it. By the way that's the position the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami took – their recommendations are on the internet you can read them if you like (<http://www.nwmo.ca/default.aspx?DN=1003,1139,1002,988,20,1,Documents>). They have also come to similar types of conclusions about that.

Another thing that we're recommending is that the government of Canada pass a law, similar to one already in place in the United States, against the separation of plutonium so that there would be a law preventing the separation of plutonium because that makes the waste management problem a lot more dangerous and a lot more difficult for any community that finds itself with these wastes.

I'd like to say a couple of hopeful things here. People are quite understandably depressed about the nature of the subject because it's not exactly a very happy subject, there are however some good things. People are actually being asked their views, how many times has the government asked for your views on anything, let alone something that's a multi-billion dollar project. And it is written into the law that Aboriginal people must be consulted, that means that can't really ignore what Aboriginal people say on this issue.

Another really important thing to realize is that we're not talking about an isolated community facing this problem; we're talking about communities' right across Canada being pulled into this dialogue process and have an opportunity to speak with a kind of a more coherent amplified voice, because your voices are added to by voices right across the country from other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities – and that's another thing to think about.

There's still a 3<sup>rd</sup> thing I'd like to mention and that is that when it comes to – as many people have mentioned quite rightly – the lure of money is very powerful, especially when you have people unemployed and social problems in the community and really looking for economic development and to put money on the table, it is really very tempting. But I also wanted to mention here that it's not just up to one community because the waste has to be transported over miles and miles and miles of road and already there are communities right along the path

who are passing resolutions right now – there are already a dozen communities that have passed resolutions against the transportation of this stuff through their communities. The province of Manitoba has a law on the books right now that forbids the transportation of that irradiated fuel through the province for the purpose of burial and the reason that law is there is that a small handful of people from Lac Du Bonnet and elsewhere pushed to have the government of Manitoba put it in writing that there was going to be no nuclear going into that pit up near Lac Du Bonnet and sure enough there's a law on the books. Maybe that's one of the reasons why the NWMO didn't mention Manitoba as a possible place; they mention Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec. They also said that any community that wants it, of course, we'll be happy to listen to them, so Manitoba is not totally off the hook but what I'm saying is that a little citizen action really goes a long way. I think it's very important to remember that in this particular case, that it's not just one community facing this problem it's really a pan-Canadian problem and consequently you can take a lot of heart that you're going to have a lot of people on your side, both Native and non-Native, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, who are going to be very concerned about the outcome of this.

At any rate I just wanted to share those thoughts with you and once again I'd like to express how honoured I am to be here and I really appreciate it.

**Norman:** Thank you Dr. Edwards. You can see from what he has mentioned that you can put recommendations forth, can be anything from changing the law to educating to how the money flows – the money coming to the people in the community so that we can do it ourselves. It's a broad range of things that we can recommend here; I just want to make sure we know that. So when we're thinking of what recommendations can we make, it can be a broad range of things.

If you have a recommendation, and think it's too far out of the question like getting Canada to change a law, no, don't stop there, think that you can do it because if we pull together and we make enough noise together, we can have an impact on the laws of the country and the people that make the laws. We have MP's we can write to and speak to so don't think that we can't do it, wipe it from your mind if you can. We can do it. It has been said this morning that we can make a difference; a united voice can make a big difference. One person may not be heard but a lot of us will be heard. We also have to remember that we have a lot of organizations in our communities that we can use to channel these things through. Use your local organizations; use the people that you know that are elected to do certain things in your community, that's the way that you can do it. Every community has these organizations, not just Winnipeg, a Chief or Council or an organization that you can use.

Its 2:25 pm, so would anyone else like to make a comment.

**Female Speaker:** My name is Mary Wilson; my spirit name is Grandmother of Four Directions that Walks with Wolves. When this meeting started I decided to go with the others for the sweat lodge to ask for an answer from a spiritual place. While I was at the sweat lodge, I was given a very strong message on what needs to be done, how it can be done and how this can be resolved. What I was told is there's part of our beliefs with our teachings that there's sacred grandmothers and grandfathers and when we sit with those rocks we see things, we feel things and we hear the spirit that travels through that rock, well uranium is part of that rock. Recommendation And I don't know if someone has taken the time, or the scientists, like the young scientist we have, has taken that time to sit with that rock and ask what it needs to come back together again and what it needs to be honoured because of all the power it has given us.

So I questioned that in the lodge on how that could happen and from what I gather, from the fast pace of our world, radical changes, the young scientist that we have are in too much of a rush and haven't had time to sit with that rock and ask it what it needs. **Recommendation** They've lost their inspiration and what I was told is there are healers and very wise people that could sit with these scientists and give them what they need to find the inspiration and drive to hear the voices of that rock and bring it together and find a complete solution instead of a temporary place to dump the waste. And that's what I would like to see happen, that is what I was told. And if anybody needs any more information about that vision, which I think is possibly a prophecy, you are more than welcome to talk about it. Thank you.

**Norman:** Thanks Mary, I really appreciate that insight. I just wanted to say that what Mary has just brought to us is a powerful tool that we might not have thought of had she not gone to the sweat. I want to echo what Mary said that for those of us if we are looking for a recommendation to make to the scientist or a doctor, ask them to come with you to a sweat lodge, let's go on a fast for 4 days, come with me and I will show you what you might be able to gain from this. That may be a recommendation to make – let's get some of the policy makers to come with our people on our sacred ground, in our sweat lodges, on our land. Thanks Mary, I think that's really a good idea and I am really glad Mary shared that with us, her vision, her dream.

**Male Speaker (Lawrence Houle):** Here I am again. I've heard an awful lot of things here – sorry I have to leave shortly and meet my boss I call my wife. Anyway, I agree totally with that vision and there are differences here in our lives. There is such thing as natural laws that are created by our Creator and there are such things as manmade laws and I think those 2 differences we have to look at. There have been natural laws here for a long, long time, we have to go back and study those natural laws. Those manmade laws are the ones that's the reason why we're here today.

I agree with Dr. Edwards that those corporations that deal with nuclear waste will continue to hire scientists that continue to say that nuclear waste is safe but where I'm standing here today, I don't think it is and that is why I am making that comment about manmade laws. **Question** There are 3 or 4 things about these laws that were not accurately explained to me today and that is what are the consequences if they continue producing this stuff? The way I understand what Dr. Edwards is saying is that they will continue producing this stuff and it will be a lot more harmful to human beings and its not only here but a global issue that we need to be aware of. This is very powerful stuff and I think Mary and our sister over here really hit the nail on the head, they were right on, so I think the board of directors of these corporations, we need to recommend that Aboriginal people or such should be appointed into these board of directors positions so they can at least have a voice. For example, there's a government of Canada that have I don't know how many seats they have, something like 300 seats.

Just a couple of years ago, I read in the paper that after all of these years they allowed one Aboriginal person to sit in that government finally; what kind of chance do we have to voice when a situation like that happens? If we had a couple of Aboriginal people sitting on that board, it may be a little bit less or little more voice for us down here. Because it seems like, again, power comes up in the discussion today and as long as they keep making this powerful stuff they're going to create themselves a lot of money because they're able to sell this power to other countries. So their going to hire scientists – like Dr. Edwards said - to say that nuclear waste is safe. They will be able to say to the scientists that make this nuclear waste safe and they really didn't know how to make it safe, we've heard Dr. Edwards say that we can capture it in 50 years but what is beyond that.



Now, what I hear him saying is that let's put that nuclear waste over here for the time being until we figure out how to dispose of it. **Recommendations** I also agree with him on the word dispose – if you can't destroy nuclear waste how is it possible you're going to get rid of it somewhere? So that will be my recommendation and the other is to eliminate the production of the stuff while we are able to deal with the outcome, the consequences of what is happening now. So I invite you all to think about how, maybe making that recommendation to the board of the corporations who invented nuclear reactors.

Another comment I wanted to make is that a lot of times this progress – as one of the sisters said – the planners of our society here are planning so hard to make progress and make something unique and they spend an awful lot of money planning to succeed something and never ever thinking about what could happen to this success. They never talk about what might happen years from now.

Another comment I want to make is that the chemicals that they use to mass produce an awful lot of stuff, we are destroying our environment so fast. I spoke to Norman about his - I am not a university graduate because the only thing I want to learn of the university is to learn how to research; that's all I learnt and didn't do nothing else. Having said that, the research I went to learn there, I read a document one day that Lake Winnipeg is being depleted of its species of fish. Now the government blamed the cormorant for over harvesting these fish. Now I heard another elder say that for 1,000's and 1,000's of years, that these cormorant ate this fish and the fish were still there.

When I walked along the east side of Lake Winnipeg there were rivers feeding Lake Winnipeg of its natural process. When I went up river to make any kind of studies, I did find about 6 rivers that feed the natural environment. During my walk, I lived about 3 years in the bush, I found eight turtles and they were poisoned. Now what killed these sacred animals? I went up river and I found that development taking place. The forestry cut down the forest in the back there and what they do is go and spray chemicals in the under brush so they can get easy access to the timber back there so in spring time when the run off comes on, the run off in the form of chemical poison. When the fish go up to spawn, they meet this poison on the way up and they succumb to this poison. This is where the depletion of fish, this is my finding, and did you read that report anywhere? I submitted that report but never ever read it because this is the truth. Did those scientists ever go up there and walk in the bush in very rough terrain to go and find out what is really wrong there? Instead the convenience from the scientists is they blame the cormorant for over harvesting. You see that's what we are really talking about here, we are a part of that pollution if we don't say anything about our environment what is our kids going to do, we're the ones responsible to speak on their behalf and need to plan for them and need to plan now. Like she said already lets talk together and make a plan. Thank you. *(TAPE ENDS)*

**Norman:** *(TAPE BEGINS)* Our elder here makes an interesting recommendation and a sensible one, stop doing what you're doing. If you've got a problem making nuclear waste and don't know what to do with it, then stop doing it.

**Female Speaker:** I want to apologize for not being here over lunch, I had to go check out of the hotel, get my sons and go feed them and stuff like that so I apologize for not going to the sweat. I have a long experience in public policy and analysis for 25-30 years so I've analyzed a lot of documents, federal, provincial, I was part of the constitutional conference way back in the 1980's and sort of analyzing the effects of certain things.

**Concern** Just one comment, one of the things that I find that we shouldn't be doing and I find that we're starting to do it is getting pulled into public institutions, commissions, and get pulled into being a member with them and we become sort of tokens, and just because we have an Aboriginal on the committee or commission that's all the consultation we need to do regarding Aboriginal people. So just be careful of that, and sitting on these commissions and being a token Aboriginal because it's really true, you get pulled in and whatever recommendations are made out of that committee or commission, they will say the viewpoint of the Aboriginal is being heard. I don't believe in being part of, for example, we talk about what's happening across the country – like I came from Vancouver this past year, I was up there for about a year and I looked at the Aboriginal self-government initiatives that are going on up there and it's kind of like a committee format, they get a bunch of urban agencies and groups together and in the eyes of the government that's going to be the urban self-government for Aboriginal people, that's how they're looking at it (For example, there's a big Child and Family Services Initiative and they set up some urban authorities, groups in the greater Vancouver region, and they get a whole bunch of Aboriginal organizations together and they get to sit on these authorities and then you're pulled in and that's your urban self-government.

The only real comment I can make about that is they are elitist because they don't represent the grassroots. They get board members from these different organizations/authorities and they don't even have membership or elections for membership, these groups in the city, but they get to sit on these big committees and that's urban self-government. So I don't believe that if we get direct representation from our people, we get direct involvement from our people. I don't have any confidence in being part of a process where they're consulting you, say they represent you, and come up with a report and take it to a government and say this is the way that our people think. Be careful of that because that's going to happen and what's going to happen all across the country is they're going to follow up what's happening in Vancouver and take it out east.

About this particular issue, there's lots of ways we can deal with it. We don't have to necessarily have to be in support of the 3 options put before us – like to leave it where it is, put it in a centralized location or the 3<sup>rd</sup> option – we don't have to necessarily agree with those options that are there. What I'm going to do when I get back home is I'm going to first educate my family because family to me is important because if you don't educate your family and have responsibility for your family then what right do I have to go to another group and say this is how it is, you got to start from home. But I probably will have to talk to the professor who sent us from Brandon University and just give him the information we're reading, what happened, and maybe we will decide we want a meeting in Brandon on the issue and maybe have some recommendations from there but I can't stand here and say this is the recommendation I'm making to this particular organization because I have to go home and inform them.

I've been involved for a long time, ever since I was 17. I have been involved in different organizations, been involved in lobby activities, how to do that the best way and I have come to believe over the years that non-Indian institutions, we have to start educating our own people; our young people, our families, go to your leadership and write them a letter telling them this is what I believe about this issue. I took a stand with my Chief and Council on the developments that they were supporting back home; they were supporting diamond developments, hydro and I said don't. I said I can't go into the sweat lodge and say to Mother Earth that I supported something that is going to create pollution and harm Mother Earth. I can't do that to my Creator, I can't support these developments because this is what they do. So we have to start family, community then reach out because we have a responsibility to our communities to, not necessarily like we live in an urban area but I have family and clans back home and I've got to

make my viewpoint heard on the way that I feel about certain issues so we have to do that to. So thank you.

**Norman:** Thank you very much, well said. You know the point raised is that yes, we have to be very careful that when we get an open door of invitation that we don't jump at that invitation and put ourselves there on other ground with other people where we will be swayed, we must be careful, as she cautions us. The door is open but we must not just walk through and say we are here at your board table and we bring the views of our people here that can be the wrong way. I think she is right in saying that we must bring it back to our families, back to our communities, back to our grassroots communities and we must find a way of sending our voice forward not just one person sitting at that board table in Ottawa. Thank you. We will take a break and come back in fifteen minute and wrap up the afternoon.

### Break

**Norman:** We have 2 good ladies here that would like to say a few words. There are a couple of acknowledgements as well that we need to do before we end this afternoon. The reason that we were able to come together today is because the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) provided some funding for this purpose and it came through the Aboriginal Council of Manitoba (ACM) of Winnipeg and we want to acknowledge that to make sure that the people that deserve the credit get the credit basically. So CAP thank you for your contribution and allowing us to come together today. Mary, you had some things you wanted to say, I invite you up.

**Mary:** I just wanted to follow up on some of the things that the lady from Brandon was talking about on self-government. You know I don't think a lot of the Aboriginal people realize that we're being corralled by the federal and provincial government and the civic governments. We have the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Métis National Council (MNC), the Congress of Aboriginal People (CAP), the Inuit and the Native Women Association of Canada (NWAC). The federal government only recognizes the AFN, Inuit and MNC. Those are the 3 groups that when they meet about health in November sometime, well, they have already signed an accord regarding health so now their are supposed to be talking about how much money they will require. And so an organization like the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, which has been around for the last 30 years, was left out of a lot of political activity because we didn't have enough provincial association and so therefore we weren't part of any of the national groups as well because the Aboriginal Council recognizes all Aboriginal people, whether status or Métis or whatever; the membership includes that. And that was decided by 350 people here in Winnipeg, a long time ago.

ACW History: Anyway, I just want to give you a brief history of what's happening because it scares me because like I say we are being corralled and nobody is saying anything; everybody is afraid of everybody. When I was the President of the Aboriginal Council for 3 years that's when self-government was first talked about and it was called "*Gathering Strength*". So there was no urban governance so the Aboriginal Council got a 5 year contract to talk about what urban governance might look like and so we organized a meeting, the first meeting we organized there was 800 people at the meeting and we broke them into groups of twenty and the young people facilitated the meeting and so we had 400 tables. We started at 4:30 and ended at 7:30 so they could go to bingo [*crowd laughs*]. But never the less, what happened was, because as President of the Council I didn't really know what we would do as urban

Aboriginal political body, we're supposed to be representing all these people and, as the lady says "who are your members". So when we had the meeting it was designed so that everybody would have input and everybody was given an opportunity to express their point of view; nobody was right and nobody was wrong.

After the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, the priority was employment, so we already had employment agencies in Winnipeg so that was easy to make happen. The second time we had a meeting there was 500 people and we went through the same process – we provided child care, transportation, supper – we started at 5:30 and ended at 8:30. People liked coming because they knew what the result was from the previous meeting and what we were trying to achieve at that meeting. The next priority was education and so we worked on that and have the Aboriginal campus here on 181 Higgins and have been growing ever since. We now have early childhood all the way to grade 12, and now they will be going into some of the skill training.

So of all the meetings we had, we had 5 institutions that were identified, they were employment, education & training, health, justice and the spiritual/cultural side, and this was the last item that was on. So we signed that agreement and Mayor Susan Thompson at that time said I want to do something for the Aboriginal people so what should I do? I said give us respect, recognition and opportunity. So I came back to our Council meeting and they asked what I said so I told them what I said, and they said did you ask for money? So I said how much do I know to ask for? They wouldn't give me \$30 million dollars anyway. So that was how this building and land was gotten. The city built it; we didn't have any of the money. I asked for a copper roof and hardwood floors because we had to take the environment into consideration – there's no air conditioning in here or basement. We met with the elders and others, about 350 people when we discussed what should go on here. That's how Doug designed it, we met with him, told him how we thought it should be so then it's designed like a sun dance lodge, the 4 directions, everything in this building has some sacred significance to us.

So I just wanted to also mention this political agenda that the government has. Our leadership is being sucked into believing they are self-governing when they take over education, health, but are not really self-governing because they take money from the federal government to deliver a program that is under funded, that's all. They don't get all the money the government spends when they run a program. When we took over the friendship centre program they didn't give us – when each government department has at least 5 other departments to work with and they call that the desk - and all the money goes in there for administration. So when we take they don't give us money for administration they just give for the program. So then we have to take money for the administration from the program money and so we run short of money before we even get started. Like we just had childcare services transferred to over MMF and AMC. Well I used to sit on the board of child and family services and we were always \$6 million dollars short every year, we were in a deficit and they never increased that budget. They put an order in council and paid off the deficit because we were part of the government. I don't know what MMF is going to do when they run out of money, they are not part of the government, and they just deliver the service on behalf of the government.

To me, that's not self-government. Self-government to me means that all people at the community level should be voting. Who votes for the Grand Chief? We don't vote for the Grand Chief. I don't vote for the Métis National Council leadership, you know he has about 8 or 10 delegates at an annual meeting and gets elected. You know it's imperative for us as Aboriginal people to get involved. We can't question our national leadership, you guys will get your funding cut off. I can challenge the Prime Minister, he's not going to take it out on me, and he's not going to black ball me. I've been down in this community for 35 years and what's happening

to the Aboriginal community is there's getting to be – you know at one time, if somebody came here and said I'm stuck here and I want to get back to the reserve, we'd call Indian Affairs and they are taken home. Now, we have to call the Band office, and the Chiefs travel a lot and if he's not there, nobody's there to say you can do it. So when we were here trying to identify what self-government would look like, we researched Washington D.C. because it's a separate little thing from the state and it has a kind of self-government but with lots of problems so we didn't use that. So we studied the Vatican model. The Vatican has a small piece of land there and has their own governance so that if something happens in that area, they have their own law but if someone commits a serious crime, well then the Italian government takes over the proceedings.

When you look at the church, every diocese has to be financially independent. But the church has its dogma, the tenets, everything the church has applies to me here in Winnipeg as a Roman Catholic and so we have one leader but our own individual communities to look after and if one community doesn't have the financial resources to look after themselves, then the communities that have more money contribute to that community. All people have to be involved in it and many of the decisions that are made for it. So that was the model we choose because Aboriginal people don't all live in one area, we have 62 reserves – with the same amount of Métis communities.

So my background is community development and in that there are 2 kinds: psychological community that we all belong – we are all Aboriginal, and the other type is a geographic area, so we as urban Aboriginal people, we have a psychological community here. Those are the kinds of things that you young people have to be aware of, so that every time there is an agreement signed, you're losing something. At one time you could travel the railroad, and all you had to do was pay half fare. In some places you didn't have to pay because of the land that they took and whatever but now you have to pay 75%. When Via Rail had a conference here, there were no Aboriginal people at that conference so I spoke up and I got shit from the Chiefs, they said you're not a First Nations person so how can you speak for us. It should still be applicable today.

I think its great to be self-governing but I think we also have to pay taxes to ourselves, our government, because as someone said, the Chiefs are employees for the government because that's where they get their money from. That's not treaty money you're getting its contribution agreements that anybody can apply for. So when we are talking about self-government, to me, it's not just delivery of service on behalf of the government because legislation has been changed, the CFS industry is still child protection and we are not going to take children away but if you are not doing your job how long will the government let you keep your contract. So those are the kind of things we have to watch when we look at self-government and we have to unite and that's the most difficult thing we can do.

I think Norman had a great idea, I turned 65 this year and most of us here, what we have to do is work together as elders, the division in our communities is unreal and that's why nobody really listens to us because they can just go to somebody else and they will have a different point of view, and like the lady says, people are appointed to boards and what not. There is a massive amount of money coming to Winnipeg. Right now there is the Urban Aboriginal strategy, it's a 5 year program, and is \$75 million dollars and there's a committee set up – I just got appointed there for 3 years – but we haven't had a meeting with the grassroots people as to identify...and already the government has the policy on how it's going to be delivered so we're going there and saying okay. You are never sure as an Aboriginal person who is going to

support you. So it's pretty tough to be a leader when you need support sometimes and you're standing there all by yourself.

Those are the kind of things that young people will have to work on. When I was young we were demonstrating all the time. George Munroe would get us going and we'd march down the street and demonstrate and we got some of the things we wanted but under government we got to get our own money because as long as government is giving us money they will tell us what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. When I get money I don't always do the way they want it done. And Mary Wilson works across the street here at the emergency shelter and we met with the sniffers and all that, and it was the sniffers that told me to build that sweat lodge there because they have no money to get out of town, no money for tobacco, to buy the fruit needed for a food offering. Then one year I didn't get funding. This year I'm only getting \$25,000 from the federal government for this place and the province gave me \$25,000. So that's why I'm still here, I'd like to set it up before I leave.

So I think as Aboriginal people we have it in the palm of our hand to be the leaders in the community. 50% of the people that come here for the rites of passage are non-Aboriginal because they are looking for something they can't find in the non-Aboriginal world – the lodge, the same thing. This is something they respect and these are not just people that come in so they can set it up somewhere else. So now I hope we can have a children's portion as the numbers have increased over the years. I just wanted to share that little bit of information with you and inspire you to and let's get this nuclear waste issue solved. I think we will do that because you young people are very intelligent and if you get the help from the elders, from the natural law, how can we lose. Thanks.

**Norman:** Thank you Mary. There's one other voice we need to hear. Please come forward.

**Female Child:** Hi. I hope you had a good day today.

**Norman:** We had a gentleman join us now, just off the plain I think, Larry it is good to see you, thank you for coming. I still have some things to say but Larry if you have some words I'd like to have you up. Larry is the President of the Aboriginal Council of Manitoba.

**Larry Wucherer:** Hi. When I hear Mary talk I always get inspired and the reason you have this today is that I was coming to Mary to talk to her a couple of weeks ago and Mary starts telling me about this idea she has but needs money and Mary, with me, she doesn't tell me what to do, she's subtle, very nice, and she says wouldn't it be nice to get the elders together, the students, and we talked about this nuclear waste stuff. Being the bright guy that I am, I'll find some money and that's what I did. We talked more about it and there's 2 ways to go about it, you can attack it or work within it. I guess for me I would rather work within it because I think there's a time to fight, a time to protest but there's also a time to know we have to be a part of something.

Mary went to this national meeting about this stuff. The government tried to get these elders together to I guess do some white washing but went there and said you want to use us that way but how about you think about having an Aboriginal component here, have a commitment to the Aboriginal people, how about you really work with us. So she came back and part of the thing you're doing today, the talks you're having, and Norm here is going to do a report, and part of what I was doing in Ottawa last week, is talk about this to.

I am amazed by Ottawa because the people there don't have a clue about what's going on. All these people that work on this nuclear stuff out there when I told them about the idea, I said why

don't we do that – you'll see the report, the recommendations that come from that, we want to be a part of this thing. I thank you for all coming here and sharing your time. I know it was short notice because I only met Norm a week and a half ago when I got the money so we just said lets just do this. The reason we're rushing this is because the government has a final report they are going to be tabling in November and they have a deadline of October 5<sup>th</sup> or something so we have to get this stuff done right away and sent to Ottawa.

So just to add on to what Mary was saying, we don't want to just involve you here, there are so many other things – in November the government is going to announce \$3-5 billion dollars for Aboriginal people in health, housing, economic development, education and relationships. Anyway part of why I went there is to ensure us urban people through out the province get a fair share of that because so many times, with all due respect to First Nations and Chiefs and the Métis Federation, they always seem to forget us urban people. They know it's not right and I went to some meetings there, and the bottom line is that we got to figure out a way to let Ottawa know what we want here. Right now they are just talking about giving all the money to the Chiefs and to the Métis.

I don't know about you but a lot of urban groups in Winnipeg are worried because they don't want t be taken over and want to continue to do good work. We don't want to have to be nice to or kiss up to at a First Nations group. We have been doing our own thing in urban, I mean, look at this place. Mary has been in urban 30 or 40 years. Anyway, having the tenacity to do things under housing – we want more housing, more homeless programs – like the housing shelter that Mary talked about, we did that together, even our own people didn't want us to have it, our people are even scared of our own people down here. I was talking to staff back there and they were saying the feedback they have been getting today is you want more meetings. Health is important to all of us and it was talked about. I met one of the senior bureaucrats on the place and Monday is the deadline, and putting up road blocks.

We'll figure out something and we want to make sure the Health & Wellness Centre, like the Mamawi's, the head start programs – that's funded under health – we need more. The treaty people here, you know they cut back what your benefits are and allow certain things and some cases you have to pay first before you get it. These are things we have to tell the government to stop doing that and listen to us; we're better at working with us, don't just give our rights and privileges away to someone. That someone I mean by like the AFN, Phil Fontaine, great guy, but do we get to vote for the Grand Chief? Where is the democracy, where do the grassroots people get to speak? We have to make our voices heard because in November they are going to decide so we have to tell them what we want. Over the next couple of weeks we are going to be doing more of this kind of thing.

So I think we have to change our ways of thinking on these things. Like we are making some inroads in child and family, we now have a Métis and First Nation one, well for these other areas a lot of people make money off our misery but if we take control of all these programs and run them ourselves, and we can do that, we can start building that self-government for us. By creating our own wealth we start supporting ourselves. I remember somebody asked why those East Indians have everything. I said well, because they work together as families. The Chinese are the same way and the Jewish people are the same too but we got to figure out a way to work together and be united.

Anyway, I'll shut up now and I hope you had a good day. And I hope I said some encouraging words to and I'm keen to listen to what you have to say for the rest of the day. Thank you.

**Norman:** Thank you Larry. I want to share with you just in rapping up what sort of recommendations would come out of today. I don't know if you all have one of these, "*Choosing a Way Forward*", it's an executive summary of a bigger study that was done on nuclear waste. I want you to look in that executive summary and look under the recommendations. There were 11 recommendations put forth by the NWMO and they started talking about this a long time ago and they came up with 11 recommendations and under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (1972)* there's 5 recommendations that were made. We have spent a day talking about our recommendations and how we want to be involved and I can tell you from looking at what they had recommended to what we would recommend to them about our involvement, they will be just as sensible after 2-3 years of talking about it.

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**2:45 pm      Formulation of Recommendations:**

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1. I want to assure you that some of the stuff we talked about today was very important and in fact because of one of the elders that spoke here today a recommendation that was made was if you're doing something wrong, and you know you're doing something wrong, just stop it; a very common sense approach. That is a good recommendation.
2. Another one is how do we get these views here up to the top so that people will be speaking for us as community people? Well, using our national organizations was one recommendation here and given to me. We have to be heard; we do have the organizations, we do have the means by which we can make our voices heard and we can use that.
3. Some other things that I put on the sheet over here is Mary mentioned it, togetherness. We have to work on it together as a community and can't do it in isolation of one another or we can't fight each another when doing it. We got to come together in forums like this and we got to work together on this, it has to be a community thing.
4. Information sharing came up and we have to teach and educate our young people about what they are going to look at in 7 generations. We have to let them know what they will be looking at and get them involved and keep them involved. It is so important.
5. Our young people are important. They are interested and have to know what the topic is. We have to keep the interest up and we have to maintain that. That's my responsibility and yours, no one is going to do that for us.
6. We were told to be cautious and don't sell out for money. We are concerned that the nuclear people will approach a First Nations community and there's a good possibility that they may sell out for money offers because of our weak economy, we must be cautious of that. That may have to be brought to the First Nations peoples' attention.
7. Another one is to make this a part of the school curriculum; a continuous learning exercise. I mentioned what I would like to see is have us going into the colleges and universities and talking to our college students about nuclear waste and what we are faced with.
8. Attending meetings in your community that may go on about this topic, be there and let your views be known.



9. Share our traditional teachings with others, with our families, our children and grandchildren. Share those teachings with them and tell them about the strengths they have, the values that we have in our traditional teachings using our elders for that reason. We have such good teachers and we have to use those teachers.
10. Make written submissions to your national organizations or to the NWMO. Write them and tell them your views.
11. Use the media, our media. We have good media now and media methods so that we can get our views known. Educate the general public on how we feel. It's our resources.
12. Avoid being token representatives; this was such a good recommendation. Again we have to rely on our national leaders to represent us but we also want them to know to be cautious about being a token representative and hear our concerns.
13. Use and involve our communities – we have to keep doing this; exercising these kinds of forums to involve our communities and especially our children. Bring your young people out, get them involved.

These are the kinds of recommendations and you know there are others but I listed these that I heard today. You may see or know of others that you want to put on here. We will circulate a report and if you want to add others, just write it up like this lady did and send it to myself or the Aboriginal Council and let them know these are your recommendations.

**Mary:** When we were in Ottawa with the elders and the youth, they were talking about that when the report comes out that they would have a separate Aboriginal report and I said I didn't want to have that because nobody would read it. So I said I wanted parallel to the same page of their report. I don't want our report at the end of this piece of paper, I want it right here along side with this because I know what they will do with this, so that's one of the recommendations that we made.

**Norman:** Thank you Mary. It's 4:00 pm and I know that some of you are anxious to call it a day but I am going to give us one last opportunity to come forward and share with us or say something about the day.

**Female Speaker:** I just wanted to add that we never got to the alternative fuels and energy, like what is the alternative to nuclear power. If we reject the idea of nuclear power than we should offer alternatives like with wind power, solar energy. So the government can increase their expenditures in developing and using alternatives that don't harm the environment; renewable energy and not nuclear or uranium energy. I think that's the way to go myself because if we are not going to use nuclear power then I have to offer an alternative.

**Mary:** Maybe we could recommend a moratorium for a number of years – maybe 5 or 10 years. This would give the Aboriginal people time to get some research money for the development of alternate energy sources. I mean most of the dams are on the reserve.

**Larry:** I was reading in the paper a couple days ago that they have the oil sands project. The article was saying that this company from France wants to build a nuclear reactor on the oil sands so they could generate enough energy to extract the oil out of the sand. A lot of this driving stuff is about energy and they're saying they will run out of uranium in twenty years, gas in twenty years, oil, natural gas, we're going to run out of that to. I think that as Native people it

fits nicely because in PEI there's another big project of wind turbines. There are solar panels all over.

**Male Speaker:** One thing I'd like to point out to is that like you hear about cost at around \$13-14 billion on each nuclear station and their going to spend additional billions to manage it so what really concerns me is why are we spending so much money for something that causes so much damage? Why can't we explore renewable resources instead of polluting our atmosphere and our Earth? I mean sometimes we're getting 6 billion people on earth and that's going to open the book on diseases and our health is going to suffer, it's going to be a scary place soon and it's so unbalanced and that's why you see all these natural disasters lately and that's a wake up call to them but they are not getting that message though. So I don't know what the problem is but I know our voice needs to be heard as people.

**Norman:** Thank you for sharing that, it's good to share that with others about how the world is imbalanced right now and the storms that we see is caused by something and that's imbalance. If that is all then I am going to ask for the closing prayer.

Oh yes, Neil, you are having a sweat tomorrow at little Peguis, just north of Selkirk.

*(Larry speaking, cannot make out, too distorted, echoed)*

**Norman:** The question is on waste, do we know we are talking about a certain waste, and there are many other types of wastes. I think that we should be concerned about all types of waste that we don't know what to do with, you know, we have a lot of our communities struggling with garbage and waste, what do you do with that? I would like to know who ever thought of making shopping bags because they stay around forever and never deteriorate.

**Male Speaker:** If we're concerned about power and all the stuff we are throwing away, we're using power to create this stuff in and by not conserving we are creating the need for more power.

*(Inaudible, echo and background noise)*

**Male Speaker:** I wanted to thank everybody for coming out today because it really was short notice and really tough to get a hold of everybody but those that I did get a hold of, I would just like to have you print your name and contact information so I can call you when the cheques are ready. I have a few already so just come to the desk and fill out your information.

#### 4:15 Closing Prayer

#### 4:30 Adjournment