

UCN THE PAS: LINKAGES IN NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

CANADA'S NORTH IS CANADA'S FUTURE: A REPORT FROM THE SENATE OF CANADA

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Thank you for inviting me to speak today at this special conference, *Linkages in Northern Economic Developments*. It is always a pleasure to visit Manitoba communities beyond the Perimeter, to see what is going on, to hear about concerns, and learn about dreams – after all, as a Manitoba senator I represent all of Manitoba and Manitobans.”

I had the opportunity last night on my flight to The Pas to read the current issue of *Up-Here* -- it's 35th anniversary issue. Publisher and co-founder Marion La Vigne wrote: “Real glory remains elusive. That is something we will achieve only when southern Canadians recognize and celebrate the North and northerners as we do.” She continued: “Honestly, it's been a struggle to keep the North in the face of Canadians, but we took this on 35 years ago, and bit by bit we believe we're succeeding.”

I believe, as my colleagues on the Senate's Special Committee on the Arctic do, that the North is the future of Canada, and now is the time to ensure that we have the appropriate healthy linkages to solidify a productive future for the North and for Canada.

Today's goal is to initiate creative, critical thinking and collaborative conversations about northern economic and human development, knowing viscerally that Manitoba IS at a critical juncture, as is Canada's Arctic. We must be ready for the future, and can only be so with a solid understanding of the past and present. I believe, too, that we must do so by setting aside attitudes of 'siloisms'. In order to create constructive pathways of connections and linkages, economic and societal, I believe we MUST poke holes in past silos, and allow ideas to flow between sectors.

The description for this session noted that this would be an interactive discussion on the findings of the report of the Senate's Special Committee on the Arctic, of which I was Deputy chair. I want to highlight a number of our recommendations, and underline my true belief that Manitoba plays an essential role for the Arctic. But, given my art history and gallery directorship background, I also want to look at the role culture and arts plays in those linkages.

One might well ask what arts and culture have to do with ‘linkages in economic developments’, here or anywhere, especially when they have all too often been considered frills or leisure activities?

First, what does linkage mean? Its synonyms include words like relationship, connection, correlation, interconnection, interdependence or similarity. I contend that every aspect of society, societal wellness, and individual health and wellness are inextricably linked. Also, I believe key binding elements are arts, culture and language, in other words understanding who we are, what we stand for and how we interact with each other in the multiple spheres in which we live, work and move. Arts, culture and language are also essential for true reconciliation, which will obviously be a pillar for future economic and societal health and wellness.

Art defines our humanness and who we are – our places, our people, our dreams, the beauty around us, and the tough societal issues we face. Culture includes art. It also embraces the concept and reality of land, and the shelter and food land affords; and it embodies language, and how we communicate. Culture is at the essence of our wider web of issues, as John Ralston Saul said, “Culture is the motor of any successful society”.

Playwright and former Chair of the Canada Council for the Arts, Mavor Moore, discussed the basis of culture, when he said: “The root meaning of culture, as every farmer and chemist knows, is ‘preparation for growth’ - and in our communities we are ‘growing people’.”

Sustainability, of our communities, our industries, and our various endeavours is of concern to us all, and sustainability is included in the concept of economy. So, what does sustainability look like? A positive balance sheet on one level, but sustainability, if honestly addressed, links the economy, culture, and social wellbeing.

In order to take positive *action* in dealing with societal problems and in developing a sustainable future, we must have strong, trusting, open relationships, individual to individual, organization to organization, and government to government.

Sustainable communities have been described by many scholars and researchers as having four elements, four integrally linked pillars: Social Capital, Human Capital, Natural Capital and Cultural Capital. The Pas has them all, and this afternoon I will be visiting several organizations in that fourth pillar of cultural capital -- the Sam Waller Museum and the Community Arts Council.

When addressing the conference *My City's Still Breathing*, held in Winnipeg in 2010 when our provincial capital was the Cultural Capital of Canada, Jon Hawkes of Australia vividly depicted the cultural capital pillar as:

Creativity = light from the dark

Art = fire from the light

Culture = the warmth from the fire.

That warmth from the fire IS an essential societal link.

Donna Walker Kuhn, author of *Invitation to the Party*, takes it one step further in her book noting that “the arts are the best tool we have for social change” and “The arts cultivate non-violence, trust, solidarity, community and breadth of mind”. Surely these are core elements of what it is to be human.

I developed an octopus several years ago to address the key issues all parties at all levels of government are dealing with -- each tentacle is related to one essential issue -- The eight were: Jobs and Job creation; the Economy; Health; Education & Learning; Crime Prevention; Rural Revival; Environment and Tourism.

It became quickly apparent from my statistical and anecdotal research that none of these important societal concerns can be resolved, or even effectively addressed, without arts and culture.

While the arts have naively often been relegated to a silo for 'leisure', as non-important to the economy, we know from a number of international research projects that is not the case. For instance, studies have shown that those who attend the arts live on average two years longer and cost the health system less and they miss less work, and tend to get out of hospital a day or two earlier after elective surgery – thus positively affecting the economy!

We also know that involvement in the arts is a truly positive factor in reducing crime, arrest rates and recidivism rates – again proved in many jurisdictions, in Canada, the US and elsewhere. For instance, Florida's STARS Program had stunning results: At its outset 75% of the children involved were making less than a C average; after participating 80% of them were making a C average or better; the juvenile crime rate dropped by 28% and the youth 11 and 12-year-old rate of recidivism dropped 64%. These are impressive numbers.

Creative endeavours have also revived 'dying' communities, including Powell River with the international choir festivals, and Cape Dorset, Homan Island, Rankin Inlet, each with their art focuses. My travels in the past few weeks to Fox Lake Cree Nation, Cape Dorset, Iqaluit, Churchill, and Brandon, and my meetings and speaking engagements to groups on various topics in Winnipeg and in other parts of Canada, has enhanced those earlier conclusions of mine. Those in Manitoba and in Cape Dorset show how the arts lead in defining who we are. I was so pleased to see the strong work by northern Manitoba artists at the recent juried exhibition presented at the Buhler Gallery in St Boniface Hospital. Also, Cape Dorset's West Baffin Island Coop artists, have been Canada's face internationally since the 1950s – and work by other Northern artists have been at the front of our international image. That work is both an important economic generator and positive social determinant.

What should we be particularly mindful of as we look at the linkages in and for Northern Economic Developments now and going forward? The North and the Arctic are of course core to my work, just as arts and culture are. Linking to the economy, I should underline that the arts are the third largest employer in Canada, 3.3% of our workforce, double the number of people in forestry, and more than double the number in

banks. 609,000 work in the cultural sector; 135,000 in the automobile industry.

Further the arts industries contribute about 7.4% of the country's GDP, and in 2007 paid in taxes MORE THAN 3 times the \$7.9Billion governments paid directly on culture that year. Interestingly in 2008, the Conference Board of Canada concluded:

The health of that culture economy, and therefore the future economic health of Canada, depends on having a large and diverse pool of professional artists at the very heart of the economy.

You can see this particular linkage for our economic health.

The arts are also critically important for Canada's profile internationally, and thus impact positively on our international trade. Our video game creators, for instance, are reaping huge financial gains. These impacts were very apparent in the Senate Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee's year-long study and report, *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*, released in June.

At the same time the Senate's Special Committee on the Arctic released its report following its year-long study: *Northern Lights: A Wake-Up Call for the Future of Canada*. In my view these reports intersect, and both link with key issues I am working on going forward, which among other things, include the development of a Canadian Cultural Bill of Rights, and an initiative linking art, wellness and healing. Both are relevant for all Canadians, and both are embedded in reconciliation, or reconciliation, as I prefer to call it at this point.

So where does that lead me with today's topic – Northern Manitoba and the Arctic, our Senate Report *Northern Lights: A Wake-up Call for the Future of Canada*? Where does that put The Pas, other northern Manitoba communities, and Churchill, now that the railway has been repaired? What did I learn several weeks ago as I toured the Churchill Port facility, the Northern Research Studies Centre, and when I saw the Churchill Marine Observatory finally under construction with materials now able to get to the community with the repaired rail line? I applaud the consortium of rail owners, the communities along the line, First Nations communities, business, and the assistance from the Federal Government.

Our Special Committee on the Arctic went north, from Kuujuak to Whitehorse, spending a night in the mine at Meadowbank, visiting Baker Lake, the research centre at Cambridge Bay, and many communities in between. We met with leaders, with workers, students, researchers, artists, educators, business people - in fact individuals from all walks of life, many cultures and all ages. The importance of our Arctic Committee's work cannot be underestimated as we examined the multiple issues facing the North, and its peoples, indigenous and non-indigenous.

The conclusions this report put forward are URGENT, born out of a CRISIS resulting from years of neglect, and/or disregard for the needs of northern peoples. The report's title: *Northern Lights: A Wake-Up Call for the Future of Canada*, reflects that urgency as well as the deep connection of northerners to the land and environment.

It also references the aurora borealis and its link to the Northern people's ancestors.

It was clear to the committee that the North IS the future of Canada, and northern Manitoba is its gateway. Comprising 40% of our country and linking our eastern and western oceans, it is imperative that we address the many pressing and burning issues, those due to the rapidity

of climate change, some to isolation and others due to a history of a lack of attention by governments of all stripes over many decades.

What needs to happen to turn the tide to give Northern Canadian citizens the respect, treatment, infrastructure, and empowerment, they deserve, while enhancing their ability to sustain their culture, to gain a profitable way of life, and at the same time to protect Canada's sovereignty, security and safety of and in the North?

The Government of Canada's Arctic Policy Framework six themes are all addressed in our four chapters: Healthy Economies, Culture and Language, Science and Indigenous knowledge, and the Global Context. The six interlocking topics are: Comprehensive Arctic Infrastructure; Strong Arctic People and Communities; Strong, Sustainable and Diversified Arctic Economies; Arctic Science and Indigenous Knowledge; Protecting the Environment and Conserving Arctic Biodiversity; The Arctic in a Global Context. Climate change, mining, oil and gas exploration, and environmental concerns are especially complex.

The testimonies we heard emphasized the intersection, or linkages, of all these issues, including health care, the mental health crisis, substance abuse and suicide, water, the economy, housing, security,

education, food, culture, language, communications, climate change, shipping and conservation, all of which affect both the daily lives of Northerners and Canada's national security and international relations. All are critical. Stewardship of northern resources is imperative, balancing extraction and sales with the environment. Financial gains should go to the north, not solely to international and southern corporations.

Our committee concluded that government policies must align with priorities of northerners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and empower northerners to create their own programs and initiatives through the eventual devolution of decision-making powers about northern issues to northern institutions.

We heard, and agreed with the principle that decisions FOR the North should be made IN the North and BY the North. We believe our 30 recommendations should become the platform and pathways going forward, as they reflect concerns of sovereignty and security, telecommunications, education, science, traditional knowledge, culture and language.

Importantly, we recommended that a Minister of Northern Affairs be appointed, with a full ministry behind him or her, in control of its own parliamentary appropriation and that this cabinet position report annually to Parliament on its activities.

We called for the Government to direct the National Research Council to complete a building code adapted to Arctic conditions and the effects of climate change. I have seen the consequences of the melting permafrost on buildings and runways. We also noted that immediate measures should be taken to address the housing crisis in the Arctic.

With regard to telecommunications, we recommended that the government establish a broadband telecommunications action plan with dedicated funds to support fibre deployment to underserved regions in the Arctic by March 2020. Secure forms of energy, including renewable energy and alternates to diesel was another recommendation.

Education needs did not escape our attention either -- we called for increases for basic adult education, Indigenous language training resources and University in the Eastern Arctic, as well as ongoing training for the labour force. We must find a way with the rapid

technological shifts to have this part of our country, much of which is without broadband connectivity, to leapfrog ahead and be able to deal with the next iteration of technology. That certainly became apparent in the work of our Senate Transport and Communications Committee on Autonomous Vehicles. I was Deputy Chair at the time and issues of ice roads and shorter lifespans for batteries in cold climates were real concerns.

Health, broadcasting, funding to northern and Arctic artists, both emerging and senior were also highlighted in our Northern Lights report. How can artists submit 20 high resolution images for consideration to funders without high speed internet? Science is called on to work in collaboration with traditional knowledge, and funders were to respond accordingly. Co-management of natural resources was seen as another concern, one that certainly came to the forefront in my work as Sponsor to Bill C-55, the Marine Protected Areas.

Short and long-term effects of rapid climate change, melting sea ice, and sea life are overarching. Marine species are being recorded further north than ever before. Mercury levels are rising with melting permafrost. The food chain is changing. What will result from rising sea levels and the projected demise of forty coastal communities?

Coastal communities in the south are in peril from the melting sea ice too – including New York and even Singapore, where they are already taking action to protect their island.

Circumpolar and international concerns were underlined, those of security and sovereignty, icebreaking, and search and rescue. The opening of the Northwest Passage will increase international marine commercial traffic and tourism. Yet only one percent of Canada's Arctic ocean coast is charted. Russia and China have better knowledge of our sea beds than we do.

Do these recommendations create linkages in or for northern economic developments? I hope so -- I hope they are pan-disciplinary enough that it is clear action must be multi-pronged.

The status of all of this? We will have to see -- the report only came out a day or two before Parliament rose and thus there has obviously not been a government response. We will see what happens in the coming months. It is my sincerest hope that we can move forward as a society in implementing the report's recommendations, which can only serve to improve the living and working conditions in the North, respect the

long cultural and language traditions while taking Canada's security issues and international commitments to the forefront.

Our responsibility is clear; the need is great; and the opportunities exciting. We must ensure ways to keep profits in the north and not have the economic gains always go south or offshore. To do that we must make sure northerners successfully attain jobs at every level of the workforce, not just the lower paid positions. To that end we must ensure equal access to education, with equal standards, and ongoing job training. And that includes Northern Manitoba, the gateway to the Arctic. We must ensure proper housing, access to country foods, and make sure the annual drop of non-perishables takes place regularly -- not like last year when three communities went without a drop.

The challenges faced in the North, are real; they are serious and in many ways are really quite similar to those faced by Canada's arts and artists, and to those living below the poverty line, the working poor and people unable to work for whatever reason. All need to be resolved in order for our country – its north and south – to be self-sufficient.

All in all, this puzzle of linkages is rather like our spice racks or spice cupboards – all neatly organized in separate sealed jars and it is only when we have decided on our recipe that we know their relationships. We must fully understand how the present issues, crisis and future opportunities and needs tie together, so appropriate steps, both in policy and in action, can be taken to realize that future.

Add to this that fact that climate change is real, and is compounding northern complexities and doing so much more rapidly than ever anticipated. Several weeks ago, I met with ice and climate change researchers at the University of Manitoba. Their work is impressive and their attitude encouraging. They are incorporating traditional indigenous knowledge and people in their work, and while keenly aware of the crisis they are simultaneously looking for positive opportunities. That will be an important link for future northern economies, perhaps one for which outcomes remain little known at this point, but nonetheless one that must remain upper most in all our minds.

Meanwhile, I will continue to bird-dog all these issues.

During this election time, with the Senate not sitting, our job as independent senators has been to continue our work as individual senators and that for the senate as a whole – hence my using this period to see multiple realities for myself.

I remind myself daily, regardless of the topic I am dealing with at any one time, that when I was asked by the Prime Minister to take a seat in the Senate he said I was to work on everything and review all legislation. He added that I was not required to vote for the government, but I was to improve legislation. Our job as senators is threefold: legislative, investigative and representative of our regions and for me sector. The Prime Minister specifically challenged me to do all my work “through the lens of arts and culture.” That is exactly what I do, and I do so on all manner of issues and concerns.

So -- with that wide-ranging approach to today’s topic, *Linkages in Northern Economic Developments*, I conclude by saying there are multiple linkages - each critically important and this web of interlocking issues weave together as I monitor forthcoming legislation and actions on past legislation and decisions, whether resource based, education, arts or health focused, or fisheries, conservation and environmentally

directed. All are inextricably linked to the economy, and any is ignored at our peril!

Remember, “Real glory remains elusive” and will only be achieved “when southern Canadians recognize and celebrate the North and northerners are we do.” We must encourage, and honour, the decisions IN the North, BY the North, FOR the North.”

Thank you!

Now to questions and debate!!!