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—
Chair

Mr. Tom Wappel

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•(0935)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC)): Our members are starting to come in now and we would like to get started.

I would like to welcome everyone here, and maybe I'll introduce our witnesses here this morning. We have John Adams, Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard; David Bevan, assistant deputy minister, fisheries and aquaculture management; Michel Vermette, acting director general, program planning and coordination; Charles Gadula, director general, marine programs; and Yvette-Marie Kieran, senior counsel. Welcome.

We are expecting a few more members, but perhaps you'd like to begin with your opening statements.

Commissioner John Adams (Canadian Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Chair, we did not arrive prepared for an opening statement. We thought we'd present ourselves and be at your disposal for questions or what have you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Very good.

Since the official opposition isn't here at this time...Monsieur Roy.

Mr. Cummins is not in his chair. I would love for him to ask the question, but it'd be very difficult.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Good day, Mr. Adams.

As you know, a report on the Coast Guard was drafted by the committee and will be tabled again in the House of Commons. The report recommends that the Coast Guard become an independent, autonomous agency.

However, Bill C-3 was recently tabled in the House. I'm curious as to the impact this draft legislation could have on the Coast Guard. Responsibilities appear to be shared between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of Transport.

[English]

Commr John Adams: I don't know how extensively you want me to go into this response. It's multi-faceted and I don't want to spend too much time on the answer because it will deprive the other members of the opportunity to ask questions.

With respect to Bill C-3 and the independent agency, first of all, Bill C-3 was not in response to your report. I think that's important to remember, because it was announced on December 12 and the report

did not come out until some months later. But what happened on December 12 was that the Canadian Coast Guard was created as a special operating agency under the ambit of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which is different from being an independent agency as such. But it would not preclude taking the next step to its becoming an independent agency if that's what the government chose to do as a result of the consideration of your report, which I understand was retabled yesterday in the House.

Given that point of view, taking the next step is not precluded, but the government was interested in establishing the CCG as a special operating agency, I think, for two reasons. One was so it would very much focus on what the coast guard tends to do best, which is delivering services to Canadians, and the intent was to differentiate, if you will, and to separate that activity from policy and regulation. What they did was to move the policy regulatory matters out of coast guard over to Transport Canada simply so there'd be one point of contact for regulations and policy and one point of contact for the delivery of services. That was the thinking behind what they did.

In fact, rather than splitting responsibilities in the sense that before this we had some policies and regulatory matters within CCG and some within Transport Canada, now what they've done is to put all policy and regulatory matters under the ambit of Transport Canada and to leave CCG with the service delivery arm of the government in marine matters. That was the intent.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Basically, the Canadian Coast Guard will be accountable, at least in part, to the Department of Transport because the latter will be issuing orders. Correct?

[English]

Commr John Adams: No, not at all, Mr. Roy. It reports strictly to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is therefore responsible for all of those services and operations the coast guard delivers to Canadians, and Transport Canada has all of the responsibilities with respect to policy and regulations. It's a much cleaner split than we had before.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: That means that Transport Canada will not be issuing direct orders to the Coast Guard.

[English]

Commr John Adams: That's correct.

• (0940)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Thank you for clarifying matters for me.

You also talked about possible legislative changes. Of course, the committee report has been tabled again. Last spring, however, you indicated to us that you were in the process of restructuring Coast Guard operations. Can you give us a current status report on this internal restructuring of Coast Guard operations?

[English]

Commr John Adams: I don't know that I used the term "reorganization". What we're in the midst of doing is rethinking how we deliver the services we deliver, all with a view to being more cost-effective in the delivery of those services. We've continued to progress in that work.

Frankly, what we have done is to roll all of those initiatives, of which there are quiet a number, into our response to the expenditure review committee's request of all departments as to how they would consider reallocating funding from lower priorities to higher priorities. Rather than looking at lower priorities to higher priorities, what we have done is to say that within the coast guard we feel there are a number of things we could do that would, we hope, generate resources for reallocation within the coast guard.

Our hope is that this funding will be part of the reallocation back to us so we can get on with other priorities within the coast guard. In other words, we want to rebalance and reallocate our operation and maintenance money such that we have a different balance within the coast guard but not such that we would not continue to do things we're doing now. We'd just do them differently.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): It is time to go back to the official opposition. Mr. Hearn.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Again, let me thank the guests for being here. It's certainly not their first time in front of us and I hope not the last.

Mr. Adams, I might have missed some of this, and I apologize for being late; it's a bit of a hectic time.

In our part of the world the coast guard and maybe even fisheries are playing second fiddle for a change, and you're probably not sorry to hear me say that.

How does this affect you? Will you now be reporting to two different departments, or are you responsible for the part that moves with Transport Canada? I presume you are. Would you explain your role to us and how you see it played out?

Commr John Adams: Certainly. And by the way, we find it equally hectic on our side, but for different reasons.

There are two things that Bill C-3 does. Well, actually it was the order in council on December 12. Bill C-3 is more a housekeeping thing, to adjust legislation in recognition of the December 12 announcement.

That December 12 announcement did two major things for the Canadian Coast Guard. The first thing it did—and I think I quote the

Clerk of the Privy Council—was that it made the coast guard whole again. By that, what he meant was that we are now a line organization from top to bottom.

As you will recall from our attempts to explain the departmental management model to this committee in its previous life, the commissioner was functionally responsible for coast guard activities but not directly responsible, because the regional directors of the coast guard used to report to the regional directors general of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Now the regional directors of the coast guard report directly to the Commissioner of the Coast Guard, so we in fact are whole from top to bottom, and now when they ask for the real Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard to stand up, I can stand up, because I am responsible for all aspects.

That was one of the outcrops of the decision to make us a special operating agency. I'd like to think it was one of the most important reasons, but maybe not.

The second aspect of the December 12 announcement related to the coast guard as a special operating agency. Most special operation agencies deliver services, are operationally oriented, and have no policy or regulatory responsibilities to the home minister, so to speak. So what they did on December 12 was to make the coast guard whole again, but they also took the policy and regulatory aspects that were formerly resident in the coast guard and moved those to Transport Canada. There were two reasons for that: first of all, obviously to make the SOA pure in the sense that it's a service deliverer and an operator; and secondly, to put all of the maritime policy and regulatory matters in Transport Canada, which is the government's transportation policy regulator.

Those elements of the coast guard that went to Transport Canada have gone to Transport Canada and now report to their hierarchy. No longer am I responsible for them. So it's a split. We like to think it's for good reasons in the sense that there's one point of contact for policy and regulatory matters in transportation, writ large, but obviously including maritime transportation, and it leaves us purer to deliver services and to be focused on operations.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Thank you for that.

I know the coast guard is responsible for a tremendous number of activities, but if as the head of the coast guard now you were asked to pick the three issues that you feel most important for the coast guard to address, to be responsible for in this country, what would they be?

Commr John Adams: The top three?

Don't tell the rest of the coast guard that I've said this, because some of them are going to be upset, but I think probably among the top three would be, certainly, responsibility for maritime search and rescue; I would put ice-breaking up there, because there's no one else who can really do that; and finally, the others are very important, but my colleague here would probably suggest that the fleet support to conservation and protection, the fisheries side of our business, would be very important, but I'd be hammered by science if I didn't say that the fleet support to science was equally important.

So I would say search and rescue, ice-breaking, and support to the other key components of fisheries and oceans would be the top three—not to suggest that aids to navigation and the other things, marine communication and traffic services, aren't important, but I would put those in the top three.

• (0945)

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Are we still okay, Mr. Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Yes, you can have another four minutes.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: I'll just add one more.

In relation to science, I'm glad you brought that up. We hear from all quarters concerns expressed about cutbacks to budgets, about the effect on science, about the lack of science, about our inability to deal with many of the issues relating to the oceans, particularly groundfish stocks, because of the lack of science.

I have talked to some independent scientists who say they are hamstrung quite often because of their inability to get the boats they need at certain times or even to have the money to be able to carry out their work. Have you found that your hands are tied somewhat in relation to what you would like to do, perhaps in any of the three main areas that you mentioned, because of a lack of funding?

I'm presuming the fleet itself is adequate in relation to the dollars we have, but is the fleet adequate to do the job, and is the money there to enable you to do the job that has to be done?

Commr John Adams: If I may, Mr. Chair, there are two aspects to that question. The fleet itself is an enabler. It is there to service programs. Generally speaking, what we've done is we have fixed costs associated with fleet, which coast guard is responsible for, and we have variable costs, which are the program costs, which the programs themselves are responsible for. From the point of view of adequacy of funds, there's no question that it does take a degree of imagination to stretch the funds to the extent they need to be stretched in order to satisfy all program demands.

I won't speak to the program side of it, the variable funds. I would be over my head in that regard. For example, on science, I think it would be better to have Wendy Watson-Wright talk about her capacity to provide the program funding essential to provide her with the vessel support that she needs to do her science. But I can talk about the fleet side.

Talking about the fleet side, one of the challenges that we've had is the age of the science component of the fleet, particularly the trawlers. And I refer specifically to the *Alfred Needler*, *Wilfred Templeman*, and *Teleost* on the east coast, and the *W. E. Ricker* on the west coast. Those vessels, with the exception of the *Teleost*, are clearly past their economic life. And consequently what's happening

and what is frustrating our scientists, leaving the program side alone, is that even with the program money they have, in too many cases our trawlers are not coming to the mark on a regular basis. We are having more problems with the trawlers than science would find tolerable. And that is a question of lack of capital, lack of recapitalization of the fleet over a protracted number of years. We simply have not been reinvesting sufficient money in the fleet to keep it rejuvenated, to keep it fresh, to keep it capable of responding to the program demands.

So from that point of view, we have a capital problem. I can talk a little bit, if you'd like, about what we're trying to do to address that, but the fact remains we have not recapitalized the fleet in anywhere near the rate that would have been warranted in order to be there to meet the program demands, assuming the programs had sufficient money to all of the things they wanted done.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Thank you very much.

I'll just say in conclusion that I think it's our job, and I think we can commit to try to help you there wherever we can.

Commr John Adams: You have helped, because the report that you tabled in the last government and that you re-tabled yesterday speaks to that very issue. We have used that report in fact by way of partial justification for our initiatives in attempting to convince the new government to give us a hand, an injection of capital, in order to address the most serious shortfalls within the fleet. And in that regard, the two most serious shortfalls in the fleet at this moment are the science vessels for trawling, some vessels for charting, for the hydrographers, and vessels for conservation and protection, which are among, as I said earlier, the top three priorities that I would see if you forced me to go to the top three within the department.

• (0950)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you. It's certainly encouraging to hear that someone is actually looking at the committee reports and able to use them.

Our next person up here is Mr. Angus.

Mr. Angus, I understand that you didn't bring a substitution form.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Yes, I did.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): You did?

Mr. Charlie Angus: It's sitting right here.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): I'm glad to hear that.

You have five minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Actually I'm here just to take notes for Mr. Stoffer, because I'm not as up to speed on fisheries and oceans, living in a landlocked part of the country as I am. So I would prefer to turn the time over to my colleagues.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Come visit us.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would love to.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you very much.

We'll go to Mr. Bagnell, ten minutes.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): I live almost landlocked too, but we have five species of Pacific salmon that come into my riding.

I have a very quick question. In regard to the very last point you made, about hydrography, your need there is independent of the \$40 million or something that we put into mapping of the polar continental shelf? That's a separate project?

Commr John Adams: Yes, it is.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: I want to thank you all for coming.

When you listed the main, major purposes of the coast guard, in your opinion, and then you gave about seven or eight, I don't think in those seven or eight were security, drug interdiction, and sovereignty in the north, which of course is big for me. I assume that those would be no worse than ninth, tenth, and eleventh at least on your list.

Commr John Adams: Or tied for fourth.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Being the only northern representative here, I'm trying to fight for northern—

Commr John Adams: But ice-breaking is in fact tied to sovereignty in the north, because every summer what's representing Canada in the north would be our icebreakers. So in fact you're in the top three in some respects on presence in sovereignty.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Excellent. I'm going to stand up for the north, being the only northern representative.

Now, if you answer long enough, this could take the whole rest of the time. This question is basically related to Nunavut and their quotas. Turbot is one, and if you want to carry on with shrimp, that would be great.

Is there, in general terms, a long-term strategy in place to ensure that Nunavut is working towards having the same rights and percentages as any other province and region of the country, such as Nova Scotia, or Newfoundland and Labrador, etc., so that they would have ultimately—I know that's not what they have now, for good reason—the same percentages of the quotas of all species in their waters as any province?

Mr. David Bevan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): There are a number of criteria that are used in making decisions on access and allocation. They involve adjacency, which is very important, obviously, but also historic attachment to the fishery, recognizing those who developed the fishery, etc. That's one reason why we have the difference in percentages that you see between Nunavut and, for example, Newfoundland or Nova Scotia, where the vast majority of the quotas are allocated to people who are adjacent

to it. In the north, much of the development of those fisheries took place by companies, etc., from farther south. So we had the northern shrimp and turbot fisheries developed by companies that moved into the area before the Nunavut land claims agreement had been settled and before there was capacity locally to take it on. They therefore have an attachment.

Subsequent to the development of those fisheries, however, when there's an opportunity to increase the quotas, that has been done. The majority of the quotas as they increase have gone to Nunavut—in some cases, all of the increases. In other cases, the majority, being more than 50% of the quotas, would go to Nunavut. Obviously that's had a positive impact over the last number of years. We've seen the quotas of resources adjacent to Nunavut increase substantially, but not at the pace that would be acceptable to Nunavut and to Nunavut interests.

The only way to meet those expectations would be to take quota away from those who developed the fishery in the first place, to essentially remove them from the fishery and then provide the quotas all to Nunavut. This has not been something the minister has wanted to do. It's also not reflected in the land claims agreement, where it's indicated that those individuals who have had an historic attachment and have invested heavily, because fishing in that area is obviously difficult and does require a great deal of capital investment, would not be disadvantaged in the process of trying to move more fish to Nunavut.

It's a challenge. We are seeing progress over the last number of years, but we need to continue with the process and to continue to see if there are ways of making further opportunities available to the people in the local area.

● (0955)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: I appreciate your sensitivity to those who developed the industry. I have no problem with that. That's good. But I'm just trying to ensure that the long-term strategy is to move Nunavut towards what every province has. The Basques and Spain developed the original fishery in Canada before we got here, but we don't give them all the quota now in the 200-mile limit. I'm hoping that the ultimate goal is to give Nunavut ultimately those quotas through attrition or buying out of licences. As you said, there are certain rights for people who developed the industry, and they should have those. But as those people pass on we should buy out the rights. I certainly appreciate the fact that you're giving the largest percentage of increases of new quotas to Nunavut. I'm just hoping that's the long-term goal of the government.

Mr. David Bevan: I think we haven't deviated from that. We indicated earlier that for turbot and things of that nature we'd be looking at providing them with at least 50%, when in fact it has been 100%. So that's indicative of the intention of the government to continue to provide further opportunities to the people of Nunavut, especially to those resources that are adjacent to their territory.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: One last question, a comment, basically, on your presence in the Arctic half of the country related to sovereignty. I know you have basically the only ice-breaking equipment that Canada has, which is great, but generally on your operations in the north, have you had any planned increases over the last couple of years that may have increased the profile of that demand because of global warming?

Commr John Adams: Yes, indeed. About 18 months ago we launched a new class-1200 ice-breaking science vessel, the *Amundsen*, that spent all last winter up in Franklin Bay doing scientific experiments, and before that was in the Arctic doing work and has been since then doing work. It will have spent the first 12 months of its new life, in fact, doing Arctic science.

This whole matter of global warming and its impact on the north has increased our activities in the north, primarily because of ecotourism. There has not been any attempt, as yet, to commercially exploit in a large way the global warming phenomenon, but there has been more and more ecotourism in the north. In fact, the global warming is a little bit overrated from the point of view of commercial activity in the north.

What global warming has done thus far is to remove the first-year ice. There's not as much first-year ice as there used to be. In the past, when we went up early in the spring, there would be a great deal of first-year ice and we'd be breaking a lot of first-year ice. There's less and less of that now because of global warming. What that means is that the waters are more open and multi-year ice is blown in, particularly into the choke points. So in fact it's the contrary phenomenon, which people find strange. In spite of global warming, the actual commercial exploitation will be more difficult because there's more multi-year ice in the choke points.

From the point of view of ecotourism, there's more of that. You have more kayakers, you have more yachts, you have more smaller tourist trade in the north, simply probing in as far as they can get, but not from the point of view of using the passage as a thoroughfare.

So we do have the *Amundsen* and our activities have increased as a result of ecotourism. However, in the middle to long term, we do have to think about what the impact of the gas, if they do ultimately exploit the gas in the Beaufort and bring it down, is going to be on the Mackenzie, where of course we have responsibility. What impact is that going to have on the Beaufort? Will we need more capacity in the western Arctic than we have needed in the past? That may mean increased activity for our organization.

Ultimately—looking out a decade or two, maybe three—we are going to have to think about what impact the attempt to commercially exploit will have on our responsibilities in the north. We do have to study that and be part of it.

•(1000)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you very much.

Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Adams, first I want to compliment you. Recently you made a misstatement about folks flying helicopters in Prince Rupert, and you were big enough to apologize for that. I want to compliment you on doing that in a timely fashion. I think it appropriate.

The dive team from the *Cap Rouge* feel they're owed an apology, and that hasn't happened yet. I'm wondering if it's your intention to issue a similar or formal apology to those fellows.

Commr John Adams: Fortunately, about two or three weeks ago I met with the two divers involved. We had a thorough discussion about who said what to whom and when. Only yesterday I received a letter from the two divers—in fact, it was from their union representative on the west coast—with respect to a way ahead. What they are looking for now, and frankly we're working at arriving at the wording, is basically a statement of clarification that would correct some misconceptions that arose out of some of the comments I made. I can't speak for other people's comments, but those I made, and would want to set right. So yes, Mr. Cummins, I'm in the process of preparing that statement.

I'm not sure how we're going to make it public at this stage, whether it will be a letter to editors, or simply an open letter to the individuals and whoever picks it up, but we are on the road to setting that right.

Mr. John Cummins: That would include an apology, I would hope.

Commr John Adams: It would include an explanation, and if you want to construe it as an apology, yes, it would include an apology.

Mr. John Cummins: We certainly look forward to that.

•(1005)

Commr John Adams: So do I. I want to put this behind us.

Mr. John Cummins: You've done this before, and again, I'm going to compliment you for it. You've been straightforward and forthright with the committee when it comes to the adequacy of funding for coast guard vessels. Again today you made a very clear statement that, to me, to other committee members, and anybody else listening, there is a shortage of funding, that we haven't kept the fleet up the way we should in this country. I appreciate your doing that, and I want you to know that.

However, I've got troubles, as you know, with your procurement policy, in particular with the replacement hovercraft on the west coast. At the time it was debated whether to procure this used ferry from Britain or to build new, there were offers on the table, as I understand it, to build a new coast guard vessel to coast guard specifications that would have included a bow ramp and costing in the range of \$9 million to \$10 million. We were led to believe that the cost of purchasing this 20-year-old used ferry and reconfiguring it for use as a search and rescue vessel was costing the taxpayers about \$7 million. I'm not sure whether that's going to be the final cost, but that's what we were told. How do you justify doing that? How do you justify buying old and spending three-quarters of the cost of something new when, to most of us, the best idea would seem to be to go new right from the get-go and get the kind of vessel you need?

Commr John Adams: There were two driving reasons, and I think probably the most important reasons, associated with the route we selected. One was that we needed a proven design. We needed a proven vessel that would meet our needs and would, to the maximum extent possible, have similar technology associated with it from the point of view of life cycle maintenance of the vessel. In fact, the government procurement policy is much bigger than the coast guard. Frankly, the proposals we had with respect to build new were from a company that had proven expertise in this area, but they did not have a proven design. That was very important to us. We needed a proven design, so we went looking to other possibilities, and the other possibility was the used hovercraft from Hoverworks in the U.K.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Your time is up.

Mr. John Cummins: Can I have a quick follow-up on that?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): It needs to be very short.

Mr. John Cummins: I will, Mr. Chairman.

I have two points, Mr. Adams. To my understanding, one of the companies that was bidding on it had already built two vessels for the coast guard. The second point is, to my understanding, the *Liv Viking* was actually taken out of service in the early 1990s because it had difficulty operating in winter conditions. Is that the case?

Commr John Adams: The *Liv Viking* is now called the *Penac*. Any resemblance between the *Penac* and the *Liv Viking* is quite coincidental. It is virtually a completely new vessel, save for the original hull.

Mr. John Cummins: It's heavier too, is it not?

Commr John Adams: Yes, but it's more powerful as well.

It was stripped right to the hull, and non-destructive testing was done on the hull to make absolutely certain its integrity had not been breached. Then it was rebuilt. Most of what's on it is new. The lift engines are not new, but they were completely rebuilt and in effect have zero hours on them. That vessel is a completely new vessel that will operate in the operating conditions on the west coast.

Mr. John Cummins: But it's a heavier vessel, and the lift engines haven't been increased in size—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Excuse me, John. You have to allow the other guys to have a turn. You've gone over by almost two minutes.

Mr. Murphy.

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): I just want to get Mr. Bevan's reaction to something, and I'm to a certain extent asking this question on behalf of Mr. Stoffer, because I know he has an interest in it.

On the movement into Nunavut of the vessel that was taken from Iceland, I know it was a Canadian vessel. It was reflagged under Canadian law and met all Transport Canada regulations. I believe this is its first year of operation in the Davis Strait. I believe it's either owned by the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, or is under a lease arrangement with them.

From your experience, can you give this committee some indication how that operation is working this fishing season?

Mr. David Bevan: This is a normal process for many of these emerging fisheries. The northern shrimp fishery was built by bringing in the technology from other countries, Canadianizing it, and then moving ahead with the development of the Canadian industry. So that's similar to what's going on in this area.

The vessel, as I understand it, was reflagged. The crew was to be Canadian, but I also understand that the numbers that were expected in terms of local employees may not have been realized. I don't have the exact numbers on who's on the vessel right now, and can't give you too many details on how the season's progressing.

As I understand it, they're successfully fishing. They had looked at trying to broaden their fishing operations from just relying on otter trawls, to exploring how longlining would work. That would require another vessel that they're currently looking at obtaining in order to move into a broader type of operation.

We can provide the committee with further details on what's happened there, within the constraints of the Privacy Act. We'll have to make sure we aren't providing information that would breach that legislation.

•(1010)

Hon. Shawn Murphy: In the whole development of the Nunavut fisheries, which I think is so important for Canada's north, you'll need a trained workforce, some boats, and quota, which Mr. Bagnell talked about. But there's also the whole infrastructure issue. I did make it up there this summer. I met with a lot of the fisheries organizations, groups, and fishers.

In the south we complain about the state of the small craft harbours, but up there it's not the state of them; it's the existence of them. They're just not there. There are no wharves or.... You would need one larger base in Nunavut, because right now the fish caught by the Nunavut fisheries and the Newfoundland fishers up there actually land in Greenland, for shipment by sea back to the southern ports. Do you see anything in the future plans of DFO to try to develop a similar base in a Canadian jurisdiction?

On a secondary question, some of the smaller towns and inlets up there would benefit greatly from some harbour or wharf infrastructure. Do you see any plans for the future?

Mr. David Bevan: That's a question that's best put to my colleague, the assistant deputy minister corporate, who's responsible for small craft harbours.

I know there has been a lot of communication between Nunavut and the Government of Canada regarding the desire to move ahead with the development of infrastructure that would help support a fishing operation, but I have to confess I'm not current with all the details of those discussions. It would be better put to my colleague.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you.

Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My questions concern Coast Guard revenues. It may be tempting to want to increase these revenues to coincide with decreased government funding of Coast Guard services.

First of all, I'd like a status report on talks with marine industry workers that provide ice-breaking services and so forth. These talks have been dragging on far too long. Negotiations with the marine industry have been rather arduous.

I've had the opportunity to meet with these individuals in recent years and given the lack of funding, I'm wondering if the Coast Guard might not be tempted to increase its revenues. If that were to happen, then we would truly be at an impasse.

But first, I'd like a status report on negotiations with marine industry workers.

[*English*]

Commr John Adams: An increase...no, what we've discussed with the industry is the possibility of a decrease. You're right that we have a fiscal challenge, but it is not our intent to attempt to lumber that challenge on the recipients of our services at this time. In fact, the industry would argue it is paying more now than it feels is fair. We've agreed to disagree on that, but we certainly do not disagree on the fact that the possibility of increasing the fees associated with those services is certainly not something that the coast guard is going to pursue.

Just to refresh your memory a little bit, the decision on the fees was basically a cabinet decision of 1998. Any change in those fees is going to have to be once again a cabinet decision. I think that's the challenge we're facing. It's not an issue that's high enough on the cabinet's agenda that they're going to face it.

Within the department now we're faced with collecting round figures, about \$30 million a year in fees, but the fees are vote-netted, and they take \$40 million a year from us. So we're getting a \$10 million hit, in the sense that we're collecting \$30 million but paying the centre \$40 million.

What we're trying to do is resolve that \$10 million impasse. That has nothing to do with industry; that's internal to government. That's a bit of a long-winded answer, but there's no plan at this time to look at increasing those fees.

There are other fees that the coast guard does receive, and those are fees associated with the Coast Guard College. On one of the other things we've done within the last 10 months, the Coast Guard College now reports to the Commissioner of the Coast Guard as well, again to make the coast guard whole.

I think most of you know that we provide training to international students at the Coast Guard College. They pay for that training, so that is another form of revenue. It's early days yet, but we will see if there are possibilities of increasing that revenue source so we can use it to address some of our shortfalls in other areas, including the Coast Guard College itself.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: With your permission, Mr. Adams, I'd like to focus on one point in particular. Would the temptation not set in then to try and contract out operations? For instance, towing services in the case of vessels in trouble could be contracted out to the private sector. That would be one way of resolving the crisis or funding problems. However, this solution would create big problems for some companies and for some fishers.

[*English*]

Commr John Adams: I should probably explain the towing responsibilities of the coast guard.

Towing is generally associated with search and rescue. If we have a vessel that is in trouble, in imminent danger of running on rocks, for example, then we hook up and tow. As with everything else the coast guard and other government service agencies do, what we have to be very careful of in towing is that we must not be seen to be in direct conflict with the private sector. There are, of course, towing companies in the private sector.

It's a call that has to be made, obviously, and sometimes people would argue that we make the wrong call. But if the vessel needs towing but is not in danger of becoming a search-and-rescue case, then we rely on them contacting towing companies or fellow boaters to tow them in.

We would never not tow a vessel that was in danger. We do that. We've done it in the past, we do it now, and we will continue to do it. But what we have to resist is towing vessels simply because they ran out of fuel and are looking for a tow. We would say to them to check with other alternative options with respect to towing. That's the way it is.

So, no, we will not seek alternative ways of addressing the towing associated with search and rescue under any circumstances, but we will call on the companies to provide tows in those instances when it's simply to tow, not to rescue.

• (1020)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you very much, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Matthews, for five minutes.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank the officials for coming this morning.

Commissioner Adams, I think you realize that the committee has been most supportive of the coast guard, and will remain so for a very good reason: because of the very nature of the constituencies that most of us represent and the good work that the coast guard does.

I have to tell you something. In my years on this committee, I have found your presentations and testimony to this committee to be very forward, and I want to compliment you for having a very good handle on the coast guard. We can't always say that about the people who appear here, so I want to throw you a bouquet this morning. I'm in a good mood for some reason, and that has nothing to do with the Atlantic accord, I assure you. How happy I'd be if we had more revenue, and so would you.

We recommended that the coast guard be removed from DFO. I understand that there are some sensitivities and things you probably can't comment on or you probably wouldn't be commissioner after today. But have you been consulted on that issue as to where you think it should go if indeed the decision is made to remove the coast guard from DFO?

Commr John Adams: In a word, no, not directly. What I have been consulted on is the question of where I would place my energies with respect to the coast guard if I had my druthers.

I think I've told this committee before that the challenge the coast guard faces is a fiscal challenge. I think I've also said to you before that I have not spent an awful lot of time worrying about where we should be; I have been spending my efforts on trying to get the resources so that we can deliver the services Canadians want no matter where we are. However, I've also said you could make arguments for us to be in any one of a number of places, including an independent agency. I have not entered that debate other than academically when asked by folks like yourselves or by outside agencies.

So the answer is no, not directly, but yes, indirectly, because what I've said is that I would not want to spend a disproportionate amount of our time right at this moment debating and arguing that position. I want to spend our time getting the resources to address the issues that Mr. Hearn made reference to with respect to the funding challenge that we have.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Very good. I appreciate that answer. I understand. Thank you very much.

I have another question, probably for Mr. Bevan.

Fisheries research and science—or the lack thereof, I guess—causes great grief for all of us. There's a great debate going on all around our shores today. One group is saying there are no cod and another group is saying there are more cod than we've seen in the last I don't know how many years.

If there's one thing that's perfectly clear, it's that your department's funding for science and research has been, in my view, drastically cut, reduced. Can you tell me how much money is being spent today on science and research?

Mr. David Bevan: Again, that's probably a question best answered by the ADM of science. If I recall correctly.... Actually, I'd better not try to recall. It's not my program.

That said, as the client, we need science advice, obviously. We need the science advice that is clear, and clear as well about what level of uncertainty exists around that science advice. Let's put aside the fact that there's never going to be enough money to reduce the uncertainty to a negligible level. There's always going to be uncertainty around science advice.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Oh, absolutely.

Mr. David Bevan: You also have to find a way to partnership with fishing industry groups in terms of making sure that we're working together to come to a common understanding on science. That's something we work on with our colleagues in science, and have to work on with the fishing industry, to try to establish the right kind of relationships. Then when we do come to a conclusion on abundance, we'll have some sharing of that view.

Right now in your area, as you're aware, the view of science is that concentrations of cod along the coast are being seen by fishers and being looked at. They're saying that there's a lot of fish. If we go offshore, there's nothing there. There used to be a huge resource in that area, but right now it's all along the shore, according to our science. I'm not sure how we can get together with fishermen to try to have some more confidence that this view is right, or, if it's wrong, to convince science that it's wrong. The distribution of cod that was once there is definitely not there now, in our view.

I agree, we need to find a way to work with fishing interests in order to come to a process that will lead us to a common understanding.

• (1025)

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you for you that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Last question, Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to combine a question now, since you're forcing me to be short.

Is there any consideration inside your department, Mr. Bevan—again, perhaps you can answer this, or perhaps it's for someone else—to abolishing the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council? As well, I understand that your department has concluded a fairly recent survey on the seal population. If it has, can you inform the committee on what that survey has found?

Mr. David Bevan: On the latter, I can't tell you what the survey has found. We've done the aerial surveillance, and now they're going through the analysis phase. Again, it's for science to tell us when that will be concluded, but from past survey experience, it should be concluded by sometime early next year. At that point we'll know much more clearly the population of harp seals. They've also looked at the other species of interest, such as hooded seals, and we're looking at doing grey seals as well.

Those populations will be surveyed, and are being surveyed, and we should have the results over the course of the next number of months for harp seals and then for the other species in subsequent months, perhaps, or sometime over the year 2005.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Then the FRCC question.

Mr. David Bevan: Yes. We've talked about rethinking the use of the FRCC. We have a number of areas where we have some significant concerns with respect to conservation. Those would be right now in the shellfish area. We've asked the FRCC to provide us with multi-year advice on what kind of conservation frameworks are needed to deal with crab, first, and then later we'll consider whether to include shrimp. They may need to revisit lobster.

Clearly, we're not looking at the elimination of the FRCC. Rather, we're refocusing the FRCC to provide the kind of advice that we felt was so useful in terms of the lobster advice we received some years ago. Quite frankly, the concerns we have on crab are quite high. We are very concerned. There's so much dependence, more so now, on crab than there was before on cod. If that stock were to decline in any dramatic way, the impact would be very, very severe.

We're hearing lots of anecdotal information that's not presented, by the way, at the RAPs. We're hearing this outside of that. People are telling us that there's too much handling, or the handling is such that it's causing high mortality. We have numerous charges under way in terms of misreporting, collusion between dockside monitors, fishermen, and plants, etc., in some locations.

All of that's leading us to have a high degree of concern that's not coming out in the formal process. That's why we've asked the FRCC to look at it, to conduct consultations with communities and with fishermen, etc., and to provide us with some understanding, based on their analysis, as to whether any of these things are real, and if so, to what extent we are to be concerned with them and what kinds of actions we might be able to put in place, with the fishing interests, to try to bring to bear in the crab fishery a much more sustainable set of practices, if indeed what's going on now is unsustainable.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you very much for that, Mr. Bevan.

Mr. Hearn.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to come back to the Baffin Fisheries Coalition issue. When this first became a topic of conversation, concerns were expressed about bringing in foreign boats when we should be using Canadian bottoms to catch our product, but the main concern was the positive effect, if any, it would have on the region.

A number of the communities that made up the Baffin Fisheries Coalition originally have left and are looking, as you well know, for an inshore quota of their own, which they think they can catch and process, and create some employment to leave themselves at home.

I remember one of our people in the House, Mr. Byrne, defending the minister's decision and saying that 75% of the crew would be native, and we know that isn't factual. It hasn't happened. Many of them don't want to be at sea for long periods. It's not their style of life. They want to fish inshore. For any who were involved, it was a token to show that aboriginal people were involved in the process.

There is a question that hasn't been clearly answered on whether or not this boat is operating legally, under proper licensing. There is also a question as to the movement of some officials who were involved in the original transaction from the departmental side who

are now working with the Baffin Fisheries Coalition or affiliated with them in some way.

The bottom line to the whole thing is it's a bit of a mess. It seems the private sector involved is doing very well, thank you, and the foreigners who own the boat will be doing very well, but the people in the area have had the shaft.

I'm not sure whether you feel that's factual, but it's the story that's quite common out there, and most of it comes directly from the people who live in the region itself.

• (1030)

Mr. David Bevan: Thank you.

Obviously there has been a lot of debate and controversy around this issue. From our perspective, what we did was follow the process we'd worked out with Nunavut and with their desire to see the allocations that go to Nunavut. They decide that this should go to the Baffin Fisheries Coalition and from there it's further sub-delegated.

We've left that process in place. We understand there is obviously some excess in allocation, which always brings stress and conflict and confrontation in terms of who should get what piece of it, but we have not tried to get involved in those decisions in Nunavut when there is in fact the Nunavut government and the Baffin Fisheries Coalition and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, etc., all in place to deal with those issues. They should have a much clearer idea of what the best decisions would be for their communities than we would have here in Ottawa. We have therefore left that to them in terms of those suballocations of the excess in allocation.

With respect to the vessel, we acted on the premise that Transport Canada has said it's a Canadian vessel. A licence was issued to the vessel. I understand that was done before the registration was in place. That has now been rectified and the vessel is fishing under a valid licence and it has all the proper documentation.

On the actual performance in terms of the initial expectation to have a large number of Inuit on board the vessel versus what's actually happening, I'd have to get back to the committee on whether that's acceptable to the people operating the vessel in terms of the Privacy Act. I understand from some sources that the goals they had haven't been met, but I can't give you the details on that off the top of my head. I'd have to see if we can get back to the committee. I think there are some privacy issues that will have to be considered in doing that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Perhaps I could just interject, Mr. Bevan. I think the Privacy Act only adheres to names and addresses. It wouldn't adhere to whether 75% of the crew were Inuit or not.

Mr. David Bevan: I just want to make sure I'm not overreaching it if we come back to the committee with the details about who is on the vessel, who is not on the vessel, and the vessel operators. I don't know if they have some protection under the Privacy Act or not. I just didn't want to overstep that, but I will undertake to get the information to the committee within the constraints of that law.

•(1035)

Mr. Loyola Hearn: The minister himself would know the concerns expressed by people from Nunavut because a delegation went to the NAFO meetings in Dartmouth to meet with the minister and express their concerns. They made those quite clear. Again, I'm saying at least half the communities that made up the coalition have left because they don't see any benefit at all coming to the communities.

I think there are two things here. It shows that powerful people who can manipulate the situation can easily gain access to quotas at any time, and that whether or not the benefit goes to the people who should be getting it doesn't make any difference.

The other question deals with the issuing of quotas, particularly shrimp—and turbot in this case, I guess, but shrimp in particular. We're seeing quotas of shrimp given out almost as you give government grants. We can't give them money, so we'll give them a quota of shrimp. I can go back to the Prince Edward Island deal, several deals with aboriginal groups, and whatever.

The product in the ocean should be there for the benefit of the harvesters and the people in the area who will gain from the processing or spinoff activities: transportation, freezing, or whatever the case might be. Surely to God we are not dealing as we did years ago with cod: "Set up a car factory and we'll give you a quota of cod on the Grand Banks". Now, if they're stuck for funding, we'll give them a quota of shrimp and they can sell it in the ocean. Some private interests or well-connected individuals do well, while the people of the region and the people of this country, the people who should be deriving benefits from these resources, do not.

You can cut it however you like, but I can give you numerous examples. I'm sure you will know much better than I do where this is happening, but this is not supposed to be the way it is. Unless we make some hard and fast changes, the people who should really depend on our fisheries are not the ones who are going to get the benefits.

A voice: You're right. Bang on.

Mr. David Bevan: Clearly, with respect to the Nunavut situation, we have been working with the Government of Nunavut and have been reflecting very seriously on their point of view of how they want to see the allocations take place. They've still chosen at this point to use the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, notwithstanding the internal stresses and strains there. If at some point they wish to change that process, then we would consider changing it as well, but we will respect their views relevant to the access to their quotas.

As noted earlier, we are trying to move ahead on providing opportunities for Nunavut and Nunavut interests in the waters adjacent to their territory, but that process would have to be one that respects the historical attachment.

The other point you're raising is a much broader issue that gets at the heart of all the issues that relate to access and allocation. As you are aware, ministers have absolute discretion to allocate under the Fisheries Act. There is nothing in the Fisheries Act that legally tells the minister how that can be done or cannot be done. Natural justice has to be followed, but that is the limit. It doesn't say much more than that. Therefore, that is allowing the decisions to be taken.

They're usually taken on an annual basis, so the fishing plan that you have at the end of the day is the result of an accumulation of many years of decisions based on an annual process. Despite what might have looked good ten or fifteen years ago, today you end up with something like northern shrimp, for which we have communities and fishing groups offshore and inshore. Everybody's in the fishery and the fishery's performance is probably subpar as a result of the layering on of decisions over a number of years.

I think our minister will be coming to the committee with an analysis, if you would, of what has led to the kinds of problems that we see; why we have a relationship that's so often rife with conflict and confrontation between DFO and fishers; and how we can rebuild a different relationship. I think I'll leave to the minister the introduction of that issue, but I can't argue about the fact that, at the end of the process, we had some decisions made years ago that might have been good at the time and looked very sensible at the time, but when you layer them all on, they do create a bit of a mess.

•(1040)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you very much, Mr. Bevan, and thanks, Mr. Hearn, for your questions.

I would just like to let all the committee members know I'm having a hard time keeping everyone to the five minutes today. We've all gone over on our questions and probably on our answers. If we could keep it just a bit shorter, everyone will have a little more opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Bagnell, we're going to start with you on the five minutes.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you.

As you said, search and rescue is a primary function. The military has done a preliminary analysis and has said they don't believe they need an airplane north of 60 for search and rescue because of the limited number of incidents and the speed with which they can get there.

Do you agree with that analysis?

Commr John Adams: I have no basis upon which to not agree with it. Air SAR is their responsibility, Mr. Bagnell. I don't even know the facts of the matter.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Back to northern sovereignty, which we were talking about earlier, given that you have more maritime presence, or at least you're frequently up in the northwest Arctic with your patrols at Herschel Island and everything, do we have a boundary dispute with the United States on the Alaska-Canada border?

Have your boats gone in that area, or have they had any instructions not to go in that area?

Commr John Adams: The answer is we have a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Coast Guard that overrides for our operations any disputes that may exist. The way we work it on boundary issues is if there's an issue that needs coast guard response, whoever is closest will respond. We work it that way in all our mutual waters. Boundary disputes will not stand in the way of rapid response in the event of emergencies.

We generally don't go into disputed areas for the sake of going into them. If we have to go in for real coast guard reasons, we go in, in the same way they will go in if they have to go in.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: But you said fisheries policing is one of your big functions. If we were to have a fisheries dispute in that disputed area on our border, I assume you would go in there and protect Canadian interests.

Mr. David Bevan: In that area, we don't have that situation. We do have it in Dixon Entrance and in Machias Seal Island with the United States. What we do there is work out arrangements with them as to what happens in Dixon Entrance, the disputed area, and we call it the "grey zone" around Machias Seal Island.

There's an arrangement whereby each country deals with the enforcement in those areas on their own flag-state vessels. If there were a problem developing in that area, we would have to work out a similar arrangement to reduce the tensions and the potential conflicts until those border disputes were resolved.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Your role with drugs, policing fisheries, and sovereignty has a surveillance component. There has been some criticism that Canadian federal departments have not economically coordinated the surveillance services that they contract or buy, with UAVs, airplanes, and everything. A lot of departments need the same service and could work together in a coordinated fashion.

Is there some effort from the federal government to better coordinate and get economies of scale for the surveillance we need for a number of federal departments?

Commr John Adams: Yes. In fact, those criticisms were quite valid. I think it's less so now, as a result of the actions that were taken post-9/11, but I think there is still some overlap and duplication, which we're working on.

What has driven this, in fact, are the perceived gaps in maritime security and the necessity of more collateral sharing of information in order that we don't have the problems that have been identified in the United States, with respect to one agency not talking and not sharing, and therefore proper decision-making not being facilitated. I think it's better than it was by a long shot. I think it will continue to progress.

To give you just a small example, led by defence—because it's very much under the rubric, if you will.... It's a new term that we've.... It's situational awareness or marine domain awareness. Under that rubric, with DND in the lead, particularly on the coasts, we've created what we call MSOCs, marine security operations centres, where all agencies feed information into that data-fusion centre, if you will, out of which comes intelligence that is then shared with all agencies.

You should also know that the U.S. is participating, certainly in the east coast MSOC. The United States Coast Guard has a liaison officer in those headquarters. We're looking to duplicate something along those lines in conjunction with the navy. So you have Transport Canada, DND, the Border Services Agency, and us all together in those centres ensuring that we are gathering all of the information and then sharing the results and analyses of that information.

So I think it's much better than it was, Mr. Bagnell, and it will continue to improve.

•(1045)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you.

Mr. Roy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Murphy, you are correct in stating that bitter complaints have been voiced about the state of the infrastructures to the south. Before Parliament convened, I toured some communities along the Lower North Shore, where I'm sure you'll understand, Mr. Bagnell, there are no roads. The only way to reach these villages and communities is to arrive by water at the wharves. The situation in Rivière-au-Tonnerre is rather bleak. Infrastructures in most coastal communities are in a deplorable state of repair. The lives and safety of residents is forever in danger.

As I see it, as infrastructures deteriorate, the Coast Guard will have more and more work to do because people will have trouble finding a wharf that they can actually use.

The situation is utterly ridiculous, having seen first hand what's really going on. I won't even begin to tell you about Grande-Vallée where a fence was erected this summer to block access to the wharf. I'm not sure how residents are going to get their boats out of the water this fall, since the fence is padlocked.

I should have brought along with me photographs with messages for the government. The situation is disturbing to say the least. You understand what I'm saying. I'll bring the matter up again when we examine estimates.

I'm sure you share my view, Mr. Matthews.

I'd like to get back to the subject of the Coast Guard, but for an entirely different reason. While touring these communities, marina officials, particularly those in Matane, informed me that they were in charge of placing the buoys. In my opinion, that should be the Coast Guard's responsibility, since these facilities are used not only by marina officials, but also by the ferry that travels along the North Shore, by the rail car ferry and by all vessels that dock in Matane.

Apparently, there have been no cuts to services, Mr. Adams, but what would you call the removal of the buoys? Can you answer that question for me please? The locals informed me that they are now responsible for placing the buoys, but they are not the main users of the docks. Who is responsible for this decision?

I won't even get in to the problem that we had at the beginning of the summer.

[*English*]

Commr John Adams: I can't be specific about Matane. Perhaps Mr. Gadula can be, but let me just make some general comments, and then I'll see if Charles can help me out.

What we've been doing with aids has been very much driven by our efforts trying to exploit a new technology. The big challenge has been the weight associated with many of those aids. For that reason, you needed big ships and fairly well-trained crews in order to deal with many of those aids.

What we're finding with the new materials, the composites and plastics, and with the new lights, the light-emitting diode lights, which can be solar-generated and you don't need battery packs for, etc., is that we've been able to reduce both the size and the weight of those aids, such that we are now looking at alternative ways of servicing the aids. We remain responsible for the aids in the sense that they have to be in the right place; so we have overall responsibility to ensure they're in the right place.

What we've been doing is working with marinas and private sector companies to see if they can find alternative ways, which we pay for or contract with them for, to put those buoys in place, because they can now be placed by much smaller vessels. Many of them are man-handleable or can be handled by persons. We're doing more and more of that.

The reason we're getting away from that, in a sense that the unions are not screaming bloody blue murder, is that we are not displacing, if you will, mariners by having other private sector mariners do that work. We've always had more work for the mariners than we could get done, so we're able to devote them to things that only we can do and the private sector can't do, such as search and rescue, ice-breaking, and placing the large buoys. It's good for all of us. We're able to do things that only we can do, and the private sector can do the things they can do.

We're doing that, but it's not as if it's for free. We are contracting and overseeing the contract to make sure it's done right, and to the satisfaction of the mariners themselves.

In other cases, basically since program, we're not placing private buoys. For example, this buoy marks the turn point for me to get to my private marina, but we're not servicing those buoys any more; those buoys are now the responsibility of the individuals themselves. Again, we help them. In fact, in some cases we've even provided them with the buoys, but we're out of the private buoy business. So if it's a marina that has buoys for their private use.... I'm sorry, I'm running over.

Charles, can you speak to Matane?

• (1050)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Roy, be very short, very brief.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: I'd like to make a brief comment. The buoy is probably privately owned, but it is not used solely by the marina. The marina is responsible for it, but it is used by all mariners. As I understand it, that's the crux of the problem. Perhaps some kind of agreement could be negotiated, given that the buoy in question is not used solely by the marina.

Thank you. I'll stop at that, since I've run out of time.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you, Mr. Roy.

Mr. Eyking, five minutes, please.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the coast guard people for being here today. My riding is Sydney—Victoria, and we have the Coast Guard College in it. I'm well aware of the facilities; it's a gorgeous facility with good staff.

You're dealing a lot with your balance sheet, getting more funds and how to keep all the responsibilities together. The difference between our coast guard and the U.S. Coast Guard was mentioned before. They have different responsibilities. You're more into ice-breaking; they're into security, whether it's keeping Cubans from coming across, or what not.

When I look at our Coast Guard College, it's really being underutilized for the type of facility it is. I see our responsibilities as a government since 9/11.... Since 9/11, the U.S. Coast Guard has also had a lot more responsibilities in security, but they've been given a lot more funds from the U.S. Treasury.

Could there be a linkage here between your department and, say, other departments in the government where you could offer more services and utilize your equipment on the whole security side? We seem to be having more meetings with the U.S. government now. Maybe there's a fit here where the U.S. could use some of our facilities, for instance, our Coast Guard College or our ships or equipment, so that we can utilize those in that way—since you're going more on your own, I guess is what I'm saying.

Commr John Adams: We're working this in a precedence approach. We're addressing the higher priorities and then the lower priorities.

The U.S. Coast Guard has not approached us with respect to utilizing our facilities at this point in time. However, within the Canadian ambit itself, we think there is potential for far more collaboration, far more horizontal work than what we've been doing, and in that regard, there's no question that the Coast Guard College has some additional capacity that we could exploit.

Let me just give you an example. We are going to work far more closely with the RCMP. We've always worked very closely in the past in policing-type work—anti-drug, migrant ships, and so on—but we're going to do more and more work with them with respect to maritime security. They will provide the armed force side of the business, and we will provide the platform. So it is not inconceivable that we could do some of that training, both classroom training and practical training, utilizing the Canadian Coast Guard College.

There's another aspect to the Coast Guard College that we're looking to exploit in a little bit more detail, and that's back to the revenue business. Over the last five years now, we have been running training for international students. We're looking to see if we can't exploit that even more, again to use the capacity that exists at the Coast Guard College.

The challenge we have at the college is that we have physical capacity, but what is killing us is our teaching capacity. It's a real challenge to sustain the level of professors that we have at the college, simply because it is not—and pardon me, Mr. Eyking—the most appealing place to attract academics to. It is only out of ignorance; they don't know what's there. Once we get them there and they appreciate it, they never want to leave, but it's to get them there.

The other challenge we have is the fact that we must sustain that college as a bilingual institution. Again, it's tough to build up the base in order to sustain that requirement. The Americans have no interest in our bilingual challenge, but we think we can exploit the college and we will.

• (1055)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Mr. Eyking, you have time for one more question.

Hon. Mark Eyking: This goes back to looking at other opportunities, and we know that trade in the world is going to be increasing, especially with Asia. The whole demand for captains and skippers and a whole civilian side is going to largely increase. I don't know if we ever want to get in there just to help keep our balance sheet going, but we have to think outside the box, and if we have experienced people in a university or the Coast Guard College, we should think of all angles that could help out.

Commr John Adams: John Harker was in to visit us this morning from the University College of Cape Breton. He is looking at a number of areas that we think we can work together on with respect to education and training. So we will continue to pursue that, and he in fact is in town to do some of that discussing today.

For example, on the trip that your office in your real life is looking to make to the Middle East, we're looking to send René Grenier, and John is going to send somebody with that delegation. It's a Middle East entreaty, to see if we can't expand our activities in that area. We will work very closely with John and his folks, and obviously your office, to see if we can take advantage of those opportunities.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to make just a couple of quick points, Mr. Adams, and I'm not going to ask you to respond to them, but if you would like to, perhaps you might do it in writing, because I know Mr. Bevan is eagerly awaiting my questions on some other matters.

You talked about proven design. One of the companies that actually submitted a bid was a company that built a couple of coast guard vessels, as I understand it.

Secondly, on proven design, the hovercraft *Liv Viking* was actually taken out of service because it had difficulty operating in the wintertime—which brings the “proven design” into question.

Thirdly, the vessel is heavier, but the lift engines could not be upgraded, so they're having to lift more weight than they were previously, which I think is going to compromise their operation in the winter.

If you'd like to provide some written comment on that, I know we'd be happy to have it.

Commr John Adams: Can I do it now, or do you want it written?

Mr. John Cummins: Pardon?

Commr John Adams: We'll do it in writing.

Mr. John Cummins: If you wouldn't mind. There may be time for it at the end, but I do have to get to Mr. Bevan here.

• (1100)

Commr John Adams: Absolutely.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Bevan, as you know, Governor Murkowski of Alaska has had a long-time interest in fisheries matters. He is well respected in the U.S. Congress, from the time he served there as a senator. He's not unknown in British Columbia for his interest in fisheries issues and in fishermen.

Recently he wrote a letter to Premier Campbell, and in it he expressed his concerns about black cod aquaculture. In that letter, he advised and reminded Mr. Campbell that Alaska's economy relies heavily on its fisheries resource. He was concerned that perhaps British Columbia's activities in black cod aquaculture may adversely affect their fisheries.

He raised three points with Premier Campbell, and I think they're really questions that should be directed to the federal government. I can read directly from the letter, in which he said that he wanted to delay the start of black cod fish farming in British Columbia until:

1. adequate research is conducted to determine the industry's potential impacts on marine environments and fisheries resources;
2. socio-economic studies are completed that will define the impact of sablefish farming on existing fisheries and fishery-dependent communities; and
3. the Canadian fish farming industry develops and employs the technology necessary to prevent any harmful interaction between natural stocks and farmed fish. Given the high stakes involved for both the State of Alaska and British Columbia, I would ask that you pursue a careful science-based look at the potential impacts before allowing sablefish farming.

As you know, we share the Pacific coast with Alaska and the state of Washington, but cooperation with Alaska is critical to the management of Canadian fish stocks, be it salmon or black cod or halibut. I think these concerns that Governor Murkowski has presented require an adequate response. I wonder if you could give us perhaps a brief response and if necessary provide the committee with written documentation to support your answers at a later time.

Mr. David Bevan: With respect to research, that isn't something we can agree to. We are undertaking a risk assessment relevant to the development of black cod aquaculture. The risk assessment is specifically focused on the issue of fish health and the impacts on the environment, particularly the impacts on the environment relevant to the ability of the black cod stocks to remain sustainable and healthy. So that is work that is underway.

We have undertaken, in conjunction with the interests of aquaculture as well as the Canadian Sablefish Association, to have those risk assessments done. They're done in a transparent way. People will have an opportunity to come to the table and raise issues that are of concern to them. The decisions are based on the appropriate way ahead and the risk assessments that would be done.

Now, we have seen some fish move in small numbers out to sites. That's being done in small numbers before large operations are allowed to take place. It's done as part of the development process to determine if there can be grow-out, etc., and what the economics of that might look like. We have committed to the fishing interests, to the province, and to the aquaculture interests that we would proceed expeditiously with this risk assessment to try to get it done so that we can make informed decisions as to whether or not this can be done in a sustainable way.

On the socio-economic issues, our view is that this aquaculture activity will take place, maybe not in our jurisdiction, and certainly perhaps not in the Alaskan jurisdiction, but we are hearing that it is taking place in other locations. I will have to get back to you with more details in a written response.

Our view is that there are market forces, things are evolving, and we can't turn back the clock on technologies, etc. We will have to look at the broader socio-economic issues. The aquaculture industry is a major provider of jobs in Atlantic Canada, in Pacific Canada, and it's providing coastal communities with a means of continuing to thrive, and—

• (1105)

Mr. John Cummins: You're rambling here now, Mr. Bevan.

The issue that should prevail in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is the notion of a precautionary approach. The department likes to reference the so-called precautionary principle in its management. But Governor Murkowski was very clear and he urged Premier Campbell to delay the start of black cod fish farming in British Columbia until the proper scientific investigations had been conducted, and as you indicated, that's not the case. There are these experimental programs with close to 20,000 sablefish in operation, and there's a risk involved there. You say we're undertaking risk assessment and that, as we understand it, is being undertaken prior to a Canadian Environmental Assessment Act review. So you're moving ahead without the appropriate investigation, are you not?

Mr. David Bevan: There will be CEAA work done as well, and that is—

Mr. John Cummins: There will be, and Governor Murkowski asks that this be delayed.

Mr. David Bevan: Okay, there are two elements. The CEAA is relevant to a specific site—

Mr. John Cummins: If you would keep your answer brief, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. David Bevan: —and the risk assessment is broader in terms of the overall risk that could be posed by this kind of economic activity and what are the risks that have to be managed. So we're doing the risk assessment on a broader area. CEAA is site-specific.

Mr. John Cummins: But shouldn't that be done before you get involved and allow these fish to go in the water? Wouldn't that be the precautionary approach?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): We'll take that as a statement, Mr. Cummins, because we are over time by a minute. We've managed to continue along on the lines we were on.

Mr. Murphy, please.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to come back, Mr. Bevan, to this Nunavut issue and the new vessel that's presently in the Davis Strait owned by the Baffin Fisheries Coalition. When Mr. Hearn asked the question, you indicated there seems to be a crisis up there and that there are communities that aren't supportive of this.

I was there the first week in September, and I met with the minister, the deputy minister, and a lot of the representatives of the Baffin Fisheries Coalition. There was a dispute in the Cumberland Sound, but that had been settled back in August, regarding some quota for the plant in Pangnirtung.

They all seem to be very supportive of this vessel. I know there have always been a few problems in the actual integration of the Inuit community onto the vessel, but is this a recent development in the last four or five weeks?

Mr. David Bevan: Which element being a recent development...?

Hon. Shawn Murphy: The communities that are leaving. There are 13 communities in the Baffin Island coalition—

Mr. David Bevan: No, I've heard that there have been stresses for some time. Having said that, the vessel that went in there was operating under the management of Nunavut directly and the Baffin Fisheries Coalition.

They want to find a way to bring the operations under their control locally so that they can explore ways of bringing the benefits locally. And that's one reason why they're really interested in a longliner. They think it could be an even more appropriate type of gear to use, to have local benefits.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Until you make some infrastructure improvements, is that possible?

Mr. David Bevan: How they're going to do that, I don't know, quite frankly, or the details of it. I understand there's been a long history of seeking infrastructure in Pangnirtung, but again I think you'd have to talk to the ADM of corporate services on that issue, who's responsible for small craft harbours. And what developments are possible or not possible, I can't really state. I can only state that our responsibility is to try to work with Nunavut, the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, in responding to their proposals to move ahead with changes on how they harvest turbot in the area. They want to get out of royalty chartering and that kind of arrangement and into more local control.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: I would like to deal with that issue, Mr. Bevan. There are some interests there now mainly from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland. And you made the statement earlier that they developed the fishery. But they really didn't develop the fishery; the fish were there. They just fished the fish that were there.

Wouldn't the principle of adjacency have priority over people who were there before?

• (1110)

Mr. David Bevan: Actually, on that one I was thinking of northern shrimp, where the gear technology, the ability to fish under those conditions, the marketing, etc., was developed by—

Hon. Shawn Murphy: I was asking the question on turbot.

Mr. David Bevan: On the turbot, generally, the majority of the quota, as I understand it, is held by Nunavut interests. I'll just have my colleague nod, and if that's not the case, I'll correct myself.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Is the majority of the turbot in the 0A, etc., held by Nunavut interests?

A voice: Yes, more than 50%.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Mr. Bevan, I would ask you to introduce your colleague.

Mr. David Bevan: This is Brian Wong, who works with resource management in Ottawa at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Have you no further questions, Mr. Murphy?

Hon. Shawn Murphy: No.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Hearn.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: I'll defer to Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Bevan, the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council was established as an independent body to review the management of the Pacific fisheries. It was to be an independent body. It was to operate at arm's length from the department. It seems now that it's staffed by DFO scientists on a rotating basis. That in itself would seem to compromise its independence. A scientist can't come into the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council office one day and criticize the work of the department and then the next day end up back with the department.

Would you concur that this system is improper and that it should be changed?

Mr. David Bevan: The department, obviously, is responsible for providing support to the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council. We do see an independent chair and independent members who take the information from science, consider it, and provide independent advice. As I understand it, the science is a support to the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council and is not there to directly provide contributions to the recommendations that might come out.

Mr. John Cummins: That's the point, though. Science, to operate fairly, has to be independent. We had an example on the committee the other day where a scientist responded to an order paper question that I asked, and there was an advisory from a senior staffer in the department that her answer was too negative and had to be more positive before it could be submitted to the House of Commons.

My point is that scientists understand at times, especially if they work for the department, that they're going to have to fall in line with the political thinking of the department if they're going to continue to work there. You can't operate with the department today, and then tomorrow provide independent advice to Mr. Fraser and his council, and then the next day go back and work with the colleagues you may have criticized, can you?

Mr. David Bevan: Again, this might be something more appropriate for the ADM of science, but I'll wade into her turf one more time.

Science is a dynamic process. Some have called it constructive destruction: old theories die violent deaths at the hands of new

theories. There's always debate within the scientific community. The challenge we have is to come to a consensus on the information that would be provided to decision-makers. I don't think it's unrealistic to expect you'd hear differing views from inside the scientific community.

The point in this case is, however, not whose views are correct, but that there has to be support to the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council. If that comes from DFO scientists, that's one source. If it comes from another, fine. That information has to be available, and often the expertise rests within the DFO science community.

● (1115)

Mr. John Cummins: But when it was formed, the minister directed that it was to be an independent council, and "independent" means that it has to be seen to be independent as well as be independent. If it's relying for its advice on departmental scientists, that, in the view of the public, certainly compromises the independence of the council.

Mr. David Bevan: We do have independence. Obviously the chair is independent; all the members are independent. They need support. We provide secretarial support, and when necessary, they need to have access to scientific support to further their debate. If it can be done elsewhere, fine, but I think at this point that's been the most pragmatic way forward.

Mr. John Cummins: There was a recent study done on the potential impact of seismic activity on snow crab on the east coast. The study shows that there are long-term—well, five months—effects on snow crab after the seismic activity. We in British Columbia of course are looking at developing offshore oil in the Hecate Strait, and this study is particularly troubling because it shows that there may very well be some impacts from this seismic testing. Yet the department, to my knowledge, hasn't really begun to investigate those sorts of impacts on the Hecate Strait.

I'm wondering whether you want to make a comment on this issue.

Mr. David Bevan: I think I'll have to leave that one to the ADM of science. There was considerable debate around the results of the Atlantic study and the interpretation of that study; there were differing views on it. I'd have to leave to her the response to that question.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you, Mr. Bevan.

Thank you, Mr. Cummins.

Mr. Bagnell, five minutes.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you.

I apologize to Michel, Charles, and Yvette for not having any questions for you. I know you're distraught.

I would like to congratulate the fisheries committee on being flexible and working toward a solution to these untenable initial proposed changes to the Yukon placer authorization, and I encourage you to keep on with that flexible approach and solve that problem as soon as possible.

Going back to sovereignty, I want to ask about Hans Island. I don't know if that's within your area or if it's so far from anything that you never go there. I'm curious to know if you've ever been there. Would you go there if it were required for a rescue or other purposes? Are there any problems related to the 200-mile jurisdiction of the island—I know the island is just a rock, so it's not a big deal—in relation to any fishery, whales, oil or gas, or other resources that might be in that particular area?

Commr John Adams: Let me comment a bit with respect to the sovereignty.

We're not responsible, obviously, for sovereignty. That's the Department of National Defence, and I think they did mount a fairly significant exercise with respect to pushing Canadian sovereignty in that regard. Yes, we were part of that, and frankly, we'll go anywhere to effect rescue. So that would not be an issue.

On the fisheries side, again, that's not my bailiwick.

Mr. David Bevan: In that area we share a common border with Greenland, and that is not always 200 miles. The Davis Strait is narrow enough that we have equidistance, which means something like an isle under a rock could have an impact on the line, and that could have an impact on the future of resource utilization. So it is of concern any time there's an attempt to make a claim that might significantly move the line.

Having said that, I don't have much more information on that particular issue.

• (1120)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: I hope you'll give the Department of Foreign Affairs—I know it's in their bailiwick—the data they'd need related to fisheries if that were to be someone else's sovereign territory.

To go back to the coast guard, could you just outline the role you play in drug interdiction on the coast? You didn't mention it in the original list.

Commr John Adams: One of the catch-all responsibilities of the CCG, as the operator of the government civilian fleet, is support to other government departments.

We would provide platform support, generally speaking, in drug interdiction to the RCMP. Our role is a support role to the RCMP in drug interdiction. The most recent case was the sailboat that came up the coast. We provided the *Cornwallis*, I think, as a vessel for the RCMP operation. That would be our role in drug interdiction support to the RCMP.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Based on the excellent comment you made related to surveillance cooperation, is there similar cooperation with other agencies, such as CSIS or Interpol, where you would be getting data to help you in that drug interdiction work?

Commr John Adams: We would not be getting that data. That data would be coming, obviously, to the police authorities. But yes, that's how they get that information. They bring it in, assimilate it, and then make the decisions with respect to how they are going to approach the challenge they see coming.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: In the recent Canadian announcement of extended satellite coverage to the entire north of Canada, is that

helping you in your surveillance of fisheries policing in the northern and coastal waters on the east and west coasts?

Mr. David Bevan: On the east coast we have a very extensive monitoring system that involves vessel monitoring systems on all the foreign vessels off the zone, fishing in the NAFO regulatory area. We have the data every two hours. We supplement that with air surveillance, with ship time, etc.

The radar can tell us targets, but it can't tell us if it is an iceberg, a freighter, or a fishing vessel. So it does augment. If we see a target at a time when there are no icebergs, it might be something we'd go out and look at. But it's not in the north at this point. A huge issue is that there is not a lot of the kind of fishing activity that we'd be concerned about in terms of foreign fishing interests.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Bevan, this report on the impact of seismic activity is critical, because when the Nova Scotia offshore board was inquiring as to whether seismic activity would have an impact on fisheries, my understanding is that DFO said there was no problem.

I raise the issue of Mr. Fraser and his having to rely on DFO scientists. Again, I think it is related here because the DFO scientists always have to come home to DFO, so you have to wonder then about the independence of the advice, in the same way that I wonder about the independence of advice DFO scientists provided to the Nova Scotia offshore board.

This brings me right back to Governor Murkowski's request of British Columbia. This is all tied together because Governor Murkowski is asking that this appropriate testing and science be done before proceeding and putting farmed black cod into the salt water. I guess the department thinks that's okay, because we're going to go ahead, and they think it's okay for the reasons you gave, that it is an important economic activity and that we don't want to stand in the road of it if it provides jobs.

However, the question is how much confidence can Governor Murkowski have in the department's assurances? Why should Mr. Fraser accept the advice of departmental science? And how do you explain your failure to really provide the offshore board in Nova Scotia and the fishing community with appropriate assurances about the impacts of seismic activity?

You guys just seem to be responding. Your direction does not seem to be science-based or realistic on any of these issues.

• (1125)

Mr. David Bevan: I'll have to leave a number of those questions to the ADM of science. I can assure you that we in fisheries and aquaculture management are looking at making our decisions based on evidence, based on facts, based on the best assessment of the science that's available at the time.

We have a responsibility to make decisions that are going to result in sustainable use of marine resources. We have to deal with uncertainty. We have to deal with evaluation of risks. A precautionary approach is not risk aversion at all costs; it is assessment of the risks and making informed decisions. To do that, we need science.

With respect to what has taken place in terms of the seismic experiments, I'd have to leave that detail to the ADM of science. I think there's a difference of opinion on what that report actually says in the press clippings, as I see it, but again, I would have to leave that to the ADM of science.

We will take decisions in terms of the issue of black cod aquaculture that are based on the best information we can have available at the time. That information's coming out of science. It's going to be peer-reviewed. It's going to be open and transparent. It doesn't happen because a bunch of people go behind a closed door and come out with advice. They do so in a public domain where academics, people who are affected by the decisions, and all interested stakeholders have access to the raw information as the debate goes on.

We've had 70 to 80 people involved in some of these processes for over a two-week period. Academics from a number of countries have been used to provide information to us. That's the kind of open, transparent, peer-reviewed process that we need to see for us to have some understanding of the advice that's coming to us in order to make decisions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): One more question.

Mr. John Cummins: But you're not open and transparent, Mr. Bevan. Mr. Fraser made it very clear, in a letter that was written to the minister recently, which I raised in committee the other day. He was after some information about the state of federal-provincial responsibilities with regard to aquaculture and was told by the commissioner of aquaculture, Mr. Bastien, that he couldn't give it, that it was legally protected.

So openness and transparency is not something that one associates with the department. It's not something that Mr. Fraser, a very distinguished former parliamentarian, has found, either.

Mr. David Bevan: You are raising a question relevant to science. I can only say that science has moved toward peer review, an open, transparent process to come to the consensus around the advice they'll provide to us. I don't think the process that was followed in

the seismic review could be, in any way, shape, or form, deemed to be—

Mr. John Cummins: Well, you're offering it with regard to the Fraser River, a scientific explanation of what happened to the fish this summer. You say it's warm water, but there's absolutely no relevance or connection in that one at all. You look at science when it's convenient and walk away from it when it isn't.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you, Mr. Cummins; you're out of time. I appreciate your questions.

I certainly appreciate the witnesses appearing here today. I want to personally thank you on behalf of the committee for coming in today.

I do have two very quick questions for Mr. Adams. I very much appreciated your testimony so far and the honesty you brought to the table. Certainly, coming from the east coast, I recognize the fiscal challenge that you also have recognized and the blanket under which the coast guard works.

As to my two questions, the first one is about permanent employees versus permanent part-time. I'm wondering if we could actually get some feedback from you, in writing, about how many permanent part-time employees are now working for the coast guard on the east coast. It doesn't have to be today. It is an issue that I think is going to challenge you in the future, especially if we actually increase coast guard presence and the number of trained employees you have available to you.

My second question deals with maritime security and some changes that are coming into the shipping regulatory regime and the Canadian Marine Pilots' Association, the possibility of looking at vessels of over 14,000 tonnes coming into some of our ports without pilots. That's something that has been raised. I'm wondering where that process is and what will be your input.

• (1130)

Commr John Adams: Our input is virtually negligible. That is very much a Transport Canada issue. But I will certainly refer your question to Transport Canada and see if I can't get a response for you. I'll include it with the responses to Mr. Cummins' earlier questions and to the first question you just asked, if that's all right.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy): Thank you very much, and thank you, folks, for coming in.

We are adjourned.

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