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Mr. Tom Wappel

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•(1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. Good morning, everyone.

We are continuing our study of the estimates, and in particular votes 1, 5, and 10 under Fisheries and Oceans, and the supplementary estimates votes 1(a), 5(a) and 10 (a) under Fisheries and Oceans. Today we have Mr. George Da Pont; Monsieur Bouchard, assistant deputy minister; Mr. Bevan; Commissioner Adams; and Dr. Watson-Wright.

I don't believe we have any opening statements, do we?

A witness: No, Mr. Chairman, we don't.

The Chair: Good. Then we'll get started with Mr. Cummins for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. Bevan, last week the issue of the Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee was raised at this meeting. The issue here is that in the 2004 sockeye fishery some of the questions that have been raised have to do with the native fishery. It's imperative I think that anyone who chairs that investigation into what went on in 2004 be seen as impartial. Mr. Bryan Williams was appointed to chair that committee as a chairman and facilitator. There are some concerns in British Columbia about Mr. Williams' appointment, and I'm curious as to whether the department was aware of those concerns.

Mr. David Bevan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you.

First, I would point out that while that is an element of the review, it's also very important that we keep in mind that the review will have to look at the running of the commercial fisheries, test fisheries, the Mission hydroacoustic process, and all of the other elements that could have had an impact on the low escapement that was realized this year. So it's not just one element that would be important.

I'm aware of the—

Mr. John Cummins: That's fine. Thank you for that.

The Chair: Mr. Cummins, excuse me.

Mr. Bevan, the question was, was the department aware of concerns in British Columbia about Mr. Williams?

Mr. David Bevan: I think it's fair to say that we were aware of Mr. Williams' past history and that there are those on all these issues

who have different views. So the concerns of one are not the concerns of another, obviously, in this particular case.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: Let's try to keep the answers brief, Mr. Bevan, if you wouldn't mind.

Mr. Williams was a lawyer for 40 years, and as a lawyer he represented native groups as well as the B.C. government in the Delgamuukw case. When he was head of the Canadian Bar Association he also commissioned a report on native land claims. Now the issue that's before him, the issue that concerns us here, has to do with native rights. Were you aware of Mr. Williams' involvement in Delgamuukw and the fact that he had commissioned a report on native land claims as chairman of the Canadian Bar Association?

Mr. David Bevan: The department was aware of his involvement on both sides of native land claims issues. That's to say that on the part of the government he was also representing government in dealing with claims as well. Having said that, I would point out that this is not an issue about native rights. The complaints that people are making and the concerns they have are about compliance on the Fraser River. Native or not is not the issue. The issue was, was the enforcement a contributing factor to the low escapement? And that has really got very little to do with the rights of the individual.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Bevan, we're not here to discuss the issue today of what went on in the Fraser River. I'm asking you questions about the impartiality of the chairman you appointed. And if you could stick to the point, I'd appreciate it.

With regard to the Delgamuukw case, British Columbia had won at trial. On appeal, as counsel for B.C., Mr. Williams argued against the trial decision. In fact, in Delgamuukw he conceded on appeal the fundamental issue that the province had won at trial the extinguishment of title issue. Some lawyers suggest he threw the case. The judges, in fact, of the Court of Appeal were so uncomfortable with Mr. Williams' position that they appointed two lawyers to argue the case, which had been the province's position, at trial.

Are you aware, was the department aware, of just how deeply involved Mr. Williams was, and are you aware that his handling of the Delgamuukw case is still an issue of debate and concern in British Columbia?

•(1110)

Mr. David Bevan: I certainly wasn't aware of any of those levels of details. I can't comment on the Delgamuukw case.

Mr. John Cummins: For a period of time after his appointment as counsel for B.C. in Delgamuukw, he also continued working on behalf of several Indian bands. Many see this as a conflict of interest. It's like a lawyer acting for both the husband and the wife in a divorce case. Were you aware of that conflict when you appointed him chairman?

Mr. David Bevan: First of all, I didn't appoint him, obviously.

Mr. John Cummins: When he was appointed chair?

Mr. David Bevan: I can't speak for the department's knowledge base as a whole on those issues. I did not know the details around that. Having said that, again, I'm not the only one providing advice on these issues.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Williams was appointed chief justice of the appeal court. On the Court of Appeal he showed partiality to aboriginals and was often overheard saying that he would assign the right judges to particular aboriginal cases. As you know, the chief justice of the Court of Appeal has the job of assigning justices to hear the appeals. As a result, Mr. Williams lost the power to assign judges to hear aboriginal and resource forest appeals. Are you aware that he lost the right to appoint judges to hear aboriginal and resource appeals? Were you aware of that when he was appointed? Was the department aware?

Mr. David Bevan: I think that these are very serious accusations that I'm not competent to talk about, Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: Were you aware of them, though?

Mr. David Bevan: I was not personally aware of them, no.

Mr. John Cummins: I'm not suggesting one way or another the veracity of those issues. I'm not raising them. I'm just saying these are questions that are out there in the marketplace about Mr. Williams.

The Chair: Mr. Cummins, excuse me.

Mr. Bevan, who would we inquire from, if not from you and Monsieur Bouchard and Mr. Adams?

Mr. David Bevan: There are some accusations here—

The Chair: No. There are no accusations. There are only questions as to whether or not the department was aware of what Mr. Cummins is saying. That's not to say that what Mr. Cummins is saying is right or wrong.

Mr. David Bevan: Only on a very broad level, we were aware of the concerns that some may have felt there was a potential bias. But in looking at the issue here, it's not whether or not we're dealing with rights. We're not dealing with rights; we're dealing with the issue of escapement to the spawning grounds and a potential problem that was caused by compliance. So that's hardly a rights-based issue.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Bevan. I'm not interested in what the issue is that's being studied. I believe your answer was—I didn't write it down—that you were only one of a number of people who were involved in the decision-making. My question is—I'm not taking any time away from Mr. Cummins—if not you, who should we be asking?

Mr. David Bevan: We were aware—I was myself—of the higher level. I don't have the detailed responses to Mr. Cummins' questions around specific issues. I would not know whether somebody in the region would have had more familiarity with it. Having said that, we were aware of the possible concern at a broader level.

The Chair: Was the minister made aware of this?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard (Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): I can't say if the minister was made aware of those details.

The Chair: No. Was the minister made aware that there were people who were concerned about the impartiality of Mr. Williams prior to the appointment?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: I would have to verify that.

The Chair: Would you, please?

Sorry, Mr. Cummins. You still have time.

Mr. John Cummins: That's fine.

As chief justice of the appeal court, Mr. Williams was responsible for administration of the court. When he was nominated and accepted the chief justice appointment, he said, "But also, the administration of 106 judges, I think it is, there's an awful lot to do. So I won't be able to sit full time". As chief justice in the administration, he has an executive committee of eight justices with whom he works to oversee the court system. When he left as chief justice, he said that the "working relationship with the executive committee [of other judges] has become too difficult". In other words, he wasn't able to work with the elected executive committee of chief justices and was required to leave, or felt compelled to leave, his position as chief justice after a very short period on the job.

Doesn't that go to the question of asking Mr. Williams to act as a facilitator, and were you aware of this reason that he gave for leaving his job as chief justice when he was appointed chairman of this committee?

•(1115)

The Chair: We'll only ask the question, was anyone in the department aware of what Mr. Cummins just said?

Mr. David Bevan: I can only say that I wasn't. I can't speak for everybody in the department.

The Chair: Is there anybody higher than you who we should be asking?

Mr. David Bevan: That would be the deputy or Jean-Claude.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: I was not aware personally of those things. I doubt if the deputy minister was, but I can verify that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: When Mr. Williams left as chief justice, there was another issue that came up, and it was the issue of pornography being found on his computer. There was an investigation into that and there are some who suggest that investigation found he had imported that material by visiting various porn sites. Nevertheless, Mr. Williams resigned as chief justice at that time and the issue was left up in the air.

So the point really isn't did he or didn't he; the point is that there is a question out there, again, a cloud over his leave-taking of the job of chief justice of the appeal court. Were you or any members of the department aware of that outstanding issue when Mr. Williams was appointed to chair this committee?

Mr. David Bevan: Of the two of us here at the table, we're not aware of that. Again, I can't speak for everybody in the department. There are 10,000 employees, many in the Pacific region, and I don't know what people personally know. Again—

The Chair: Of course, Mr. Bevan, we're really only concerned about the decision-making people. I understand how many people work for the department.

Mr. Cummins, last question.

Mr. John Cummins: I have two quickies, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Fire away, quickly.

Mr. John Cummins: All right. On March 6, 2001, the former chief justice at that time, Bryan Williams, was appointed to head a commission of inquiry into the Carrier saga. The Carrier Lumber scandal was a big issue in British Columbia having to deal with the Carrier native band and some concessions made by the department.

Without going into the detail of it, Mr. Williams was appointed to head up a commission of inquiry into that issue, but only after he was appointed did it come out that two of the native bands involved were once Mr. Williams' law clients. In other words, Mr. Williams accepted the job of commissioner of inquiry knowing full well that he had a conflict, that in fact he had represented two of the bands involved.

Was the department aware of that conflict when he was appointed to head up this most recent inquiry for the department?

Mr. David Bevan: Again, I can only say I was not personally aware of that. And I—

The Chair: Thank you. No, I don't classify that as a quickie. I'll have to give you another opportunity, but you're way over time now, even with my interruptions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roy, you have five minutes.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you. My question deals with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and it will need a long answer.

I want to know about the requirements of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I am talking about the whole Richelieu River issue, which you may have heard about. If you have not, you will be hearing about it, since the regional county municipalities are having a serious problem right now with the DFO. I want to know what DFO's requirements are under the Canadian Environment Assessment Act for the cleanup of a waterway and what help it offers to local communities for that purpose when these communities are involved in a process. Is the Quebec Environment Department involved, and does DFO have the same requirements as the Quebec Environment Department for the cleanup of a waterway like the Richelieu?

• (1120)

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, I will try to answer Mr. Roy's question, and my colleagues can jump in as needed.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is involved only on a project basis. When a structure is built that could affect fish habitat, DFO gets involved. It has to determine whether the construction has a negative impact on fish habitat, and if so, take whatever measures are necessary. However, I do not believe that the department is involved in river cleanups. Maybe my colleagues can help me.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: I will give you an answer right now. The department has an entire page of requirements for communities along the Richelieu, which are having a serious problem right now negotiating those requirements with DFO. It could cost millions of dollars to fulfil the department's requirements. Is the river cleanup disturbing fish habitat? Is it the responsibility of local communities to pay for that, or is it up to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: In our opinion, that kind of question needs to be addressed to the person responsible for the project.

As concerns the Richelieu River specifically, I would have to do some research. I have to say that this is not one of the major projects that I have heard talked about in Quebec. I am hearing a lot about the Hydro Quebec projects, but not this one. However, I could make sure that someone comes to the next meeting of the committee, on Thursday, in order to answer your questions in detail.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Does the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have any links with the Quebec Environment Department, which is also involved in this case? Are those ties maintained? That is my question. It seems that the ties are not maintained, that DFO comes in and says it wants this or that and that no one can do anything unless those requirements are met. All this is done without even talking to the Quebec Environment Department.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: There are contacts with the Environment Department. If you ask me to list the official contacts that have taken place in this particular case or in another one, I will have a hard time giving you that information. We have discussions with the Quebec environment department, but I do not know enough about them to be able to tell you what the nature of those discussions is. However, I can make sure that someone is here at the next meeting to answer those kinds of questions in detail.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: This is a problem that we are experiencing right now. But you are not really answering my question. I want to know about the DFO requirements. Does the department require a complete study of the waterway or only a study of the affected part? When you are dealing with the upper Richelieu, you are dealing with practically...

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: There is an impact on the rest.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Those requirements make no sense. Will a regional county municipality be forced to invest millions of dollars simply to remove old tires from the bottom of the river?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: We first do a risk assessment for each project. We are making changes to that activity right now, and in cases where we feel that the risk is low, our requirements are not very high. Where there is a medium or high risk, the requirements are more stringent. I know that I am not answering your question to your satisfaction, but it is not because I do not want to. It is because I do not have the information. I can make sure that your questions are answered.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: In closing, Mr. Bouchard, I will ask you to provide a written answer to the committee. This is a specific case, but there may be others like it. Would you be able to provide a written answer on this to the committee?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Certainly. With pleasure.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer, five minutes.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, again, thank you all for coming.

With the recent oil spill off Newfoundland, who would be the lead minister responsible? Would it be the Minister of Natural Resources or would it be the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans?

• (1125)

Commr John Adams (Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): In this case, it's really neither. The Minister of the Environment will oversee the cleanup.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: It's the environment minister. Can you advise the—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Stoffer.

Is that still the case with Bill C-3?

Commr John Adams: Yes.

The Chair: That answer would still be the same.

Commr John Adams: It's a combination. The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the environment, and the Minister of Transport is responsible if it's a ship source. This is not a ship source, obviously; this is a platform source. But if it's a ship source, then Transport is responsible for dealing with the ship aspect of it and we're responsible for overseeing the extent of the spill, etc., with our patrols.

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer, there's no time lost.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Sir, can you advise us on what is happening, as we speak, more or less? Do you have any information on what's going on?

Commr John Adams: Yes, only to the extent that basically what I know is in the press. They now have determined what they think is the size of the spill, and it's about twice what it was originally estimated to be. It's now up to about 1,000 litres, as I understand it, which is about 200 or 300 barrels.

We've provided them with some survey work on their behalf simply as a resource, not because we're responsible. We're simply

answering their call for help. So we have our bird expert out there with respect to oily birds and the potential impact of that spill on birds. We also have our folks out there who determine the drift and where it might go, the same as we do with search and rescue. So we're out there helping them with that.

They have borrowed some of our equipment. They are responsible for working with the Eastern Canada Response Corporation with respect to cleanup. They're now attempting to do some cleanup, given that the weather has tempered itself a little and they think they can get some of the cleanup done. We're there helping with that by lending them equipment, etc., but the overall responsibility for the cleanup and for the response rests with the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board. We're simply there as an adviser, and Environment Canada will oversee with respect to the extent of the cleanup, etc.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you, Mr. Adams.

The Chair: Just one minute, Mr. Stoffer, I'm sorry.

For the purposes of the record, just repeat what you said about how much oil has spilled.

Commr John Adams: I think it's 1,000 litres. That's what's been reported.

The Chair: That's hardly anything. More like a thousand barrels?

Commr John Adams: A thousand barrels?

Do you know what it was?

Okay, it was 170,000 litres.

The Chair: It was 170,000 litres. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: In the principal budget for 2004-05 of DFO, it says \$1,470,799,000. How much of that is dedicated to the coast guard? In the estimates it's under fleet management and all these other things, but can you give a ballpark figure of how much of that is actually for coast guard?

The reason I ask for that is this. My second question after that is, when did coast guard, for the record, become an SOA, and why?

The third part of that is, if x number of dollars are dedicated for coast guard activities—it is my understanding, and I stand to be corrected—can DFO for other purposes attack the coast guard budget and put that into other areas of DFO jurisdiction?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: I think my colleague George can answer the first part of your question.

Mr. George Da Pont (Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Corporate Services, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): In terms of the total budget for coast guard, it's \$512.1 million, which is almost 35% of the estimates. The only item that's in the coast guard that is not part of that, and it will be when we shift to our new program activity architecture, is the Coast Guard College, which would add another \$7.3 million.

That was your first question.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Yes. Okay, thank you. Why did it become an SOA and when?

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer, in terms of the record, an SOA is a special operating agency?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Sorry, yes.

Commr John Adams: There were two principal reasons, as I understand the explanation for the December 12 decision. The first was to separate the policy and regulatory aspects from CCG as part of DFO over to Transport Canada as the transportation policy regulator. The rationale for this was that they then wanted us to focus on what we tended to do best, which was to deliver operational services to Canadians. So it made us pure in that sense, and on that basis, they could then make us a special operating agency.

Generally speaking, special operating agencies give less or virtually no policy advice to ministers. So by taking the policy and moving it over to Transport Canada, they accomplish that.

I guess there was a third reason. It was in response to the stakeholders who wanted one point of contact for policy regulation and it was split between the two, so it was also in response to the stakeholders, the clients.

• (1130)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: And of the \$512 million dedicated for coast guard activities, as was reported by Monsieur Da Pont, can any of that money be used for other Fisheries and Oceans Canada activities?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, the preceding question implied that it was an SOA. The decision was made to create an SOA, but that hasn't been done yet. We and the commissioner are in the process of trying to define the kinds of proposals that we will present to Treasury Board on the terms and conditions of that SOA.

And then comes your next question. We don't attack budgets, Mr. Chairman, but can there be a fence around the CCG budget? There certainly can. That would be per part of the terms and conditions of the SOA itself.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: The reason I say that, Mr. Bouchard, and I say this with great respect, is that since the merger of coast guard with DFO in 1995, we have seen coast guard turn from a great organization into a very diminished, low-morale one with actually no direction now. We feel, at least I feel, that the merger of coast guard with DFO has been nothing short of an unmitigated disaster. If you speak to the unions, to the workers, to management who work there, especially in the Halifax area, they tend to agree with us. Their perception is that coast guard money was siphoned out of the coast guard and put into other Fisheries and Oceans activities.

Our committee recommended a stand-alone agency responsible to the Department of Transport. I still hold that recommendation, that you should just keep on going and get DFO out of the business of coast guard and allow coast guard to be with the transport department, where it should have been in the first place. So this is why I don't personally want to see the budget of coast guard used for anything else but coast guard activities.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: We are defining right now the terms and conditions. That could very well be one of them. There could be all sorts of terms and conditions for the coast guard. We could request that it work under a revolving fund, which means that

revenue stays with the coast guard and helps in a reserve and then helps fund activities of future years. Those are all possibilities. We are presently—the commissioner is—working on defining what those terms and conditions look like.

But John, maybe you want to...

The Chair: That's the end of that. Just to remind committee members, our vice-chair did in fact re-table our unanimous report on the coast guard in the House of Commons and has asked for a response. I'm sure that everybody in the department is working on that as they're thinking about what they're going to do with the Canadian Coast Guard.

Thank you.

Now we have Mr. Cuzner for 10 minutes.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): I'll just finish up with what Mr. Stoffer was pursuing there, gentlemen, and I thank you all for being here today and addressing the questions put to you. With regard to the allocation of funds for the coast guard, could we compare the amount of funds allocated now back to before the coast guard was assumed under DFO and make a comparison there?

Commr John Adams: You could, but I don't know how useful it would be, because at the same time as we merged with DFO, the entire government was going through the—what did we call it in those days?—program review. That's a swear word now. We can't use it anymore. The reductions to the coast guard would have come as a result, one would argue or could argue, of program review. I can tell you that program review had a comparable impact on CCG as it had on most of the rest of government—in round figures, between 30% and 40% reduction in our total resources. That's personnel and financial resources.

So that's what you would find if you compared what we had pre-merger. But I would argue it's pre-program review and post-program review as opposed to pre-merger.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: So the current allocation to coast guard would be about 30% to 40% less than what it was prior to going into DFO, but there would be a significant change in the programs offered by coast guard. You're saying that there were some duties and responsibilities that would have been deleted or...

• (1135)

Commr John Adams: Frankly, what happened and what we've been striving to do—and in fact we think we've sustained it pretty well—is that we've changed the way we've delivered programs in order to accommodate that type of reduction without backing away from the vast majority of our responsibilities. To give you an example, we have far fewer aids in the water than we had in the past because of course navigational technology has enabled ships and vessels at large to manage with fewer aids. We are maintaining our aids differently and so we're saving funds. We've taken all of those steps, and our statistics with respect to our success in responding to lives at risk have in fact improved rather than decreased post-program review. We think we've adjusted.

Now, are we as robust as we were in the past? The answer is no, in response to Mr. Stoffer. We have achieved some of these improvements on the backs of our employees. We are demanding more of them, and clearly it's having some negative impact on our employees. Frankly, we've managed to sustain the programs at an acceptable level in spite of those reductions.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Thank you for that answer too, Mr. Adams.

I have a couple of questions with regard to the fisheries access program. It's clearly identified that a prime goal for the fisheries access program is to allow the aboriginal communities the opportunity to derive a moderate livelihood. How do we distinguish this? How do we determine a moderate livelihood?

Mr. David Bevan: That has actually never been defined with a high degree of precision. Obviously the Supreme Court decision in 1999 didn't define that with any degree of precision.

What we have done is we've looked at the basic incomes and tried to move first nations toward what could be described as perhaps a more moderate livelihood. We're not defining it ourselves. That'll be done through the negotiation process with INAC and through the treaty negotiators. We have moved access to first nations, however, and a considerable amount, obviously, to try to provide jobs, economic opportunities for those communities. But we have not defined moderate livelihood, and we have not said whether we're there or not. That's up to the negotiation process.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Would the licences that are granted to the aboriginals to fish have any special provisions, or would they carry the same terms and conditions as for the non-aboriginal licence holders?

Mr. David Bevan: Generally speaking, they'd carry exactly the same terms and conditions. There are some possible exceptions, such as being able to split a licence, for example. Instead of having one person fish 350 traps, they might be able to distribute that to a few other people and there may be six or seven people fishing 50 traps. But generally the vast majority are fished under exactly the same conditions, and any exception would be done in a way that would not provide an advantage to first nations but would just allow them to distribute the wealth more evenly among their members.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: There are no communal licences, though, are there? They are individual.

Mr. David Bevan: Those are communal licences, but they're fished as a unit generally. So when you move, for example, a first nation into a fishery, they would have a licence to fish shrimp or whatever and they would fish it as a unit even though it's communally held. It's up to the first nation to figure out who gets to fish it and how it's allocated within their community.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: With regard to monitoring, do they have the same rigours as the non-native community?

• (1140)

Mr. David Bevan: Generally, yes. There may be some AFS agreements where there actually could be some additional monitoring in terms of first nations and there could be other activities happening. But again, when people are landing at, say, the Richibucto wharf, they're under the same requirements as anyone else.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: There's been an extension on the program. Do we know what the exact costs are to have the program implemented so far?

Mr. David Bevan: So far we've spent in the vicinity of \$364 million. That would be up until now. There's been an extension of the program to allow us to fund the access committed to in the signed agreements until April 1, 2006.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Is all of that funding DFO funding or are there INAC dollars in there?

Mr. David Bevan: No, that was funding provided by the government to us to run the Marshall response initiative.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: All right. So that was money over and above....

Mr. David Bevan: That's correct. You'll see in the budget there's a fairly large amount of money for grants and contributions, and that would represent the Marshall funding.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: We've heard talk, and I think there are some tremendous success stories out there, but as well I think there are some concerns. Concerns have been voiced around this committee table with regard to some of the consultants' fees and fees paid to those who have worked through on some of the deals, the ad agencies.

Are we able to draw consultants' fees out of this? Do we have an idea as to...?

Mr. David Bevan: Yes, about \$1.6 million was spent on consultants. That includes brokerage fees, appraisers, because we are moving obviously hundreds of enterprises and they have to be evaluated, etc. So there are brokerage fees, appraisals—

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: That's since 1999?

Mr. David Bevan: That would be since 1999. That's correct.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: What's your own sense of it? How has the program gone?

Mr. David Bevan: We had Savoy look at a sample of nine first nations, to look at the impact. Clearly there has been a positive impact on first nations in terms of employment, even housing, and so on. Deriving money from fishing has been providing the communities with a base to do other positive things for their communities.

We still have a lot more distance to cover. Fishing is not, as some might think, a simple enterprise that you can pick up without having some training and experience. For people who have entered it even as early as 1999, there's still lots to learn and lots to do in terms of getting their efficiency up to the commercial average. So there's work to be done, but there have been tremendous steps, and if people can visit some of those communities they'll see the progress that was made.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Could you elaborate a little bit more on the study that was done on the nine reserves?

Mr. David Bevan: I think we could make that available. It has been provided to the—

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I think that would be of benefit, and I would really appreciate getting a copy of that.

But there was a sure sense that the capacity is being built up within the aboriginal communities?

Mr. David Bevan: That's correct. We have a mentoring program. I think that's one of the issues that come out of the whole perception on Marshall, that this is easy; you just grab a boat and a couple of lobster traps and you go out. I think most people in Canada would have a hard time figuring out whether they're going to drown or starve first if they got into that business without training.

We have a mentoring program that takes some of the people who voluntarily left the fishery, who retired their licences to make room, and they are working with first nations in training programs, helping them understand the maintenance of equipment and vessels, how to run these enterprises, and how to fish more effectively.

So there has been some significant progress.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cuzner.

Mr. Hearn, five minutes.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC): Mr. Chair, if it's okay with you, Mr. Cummins has one snapper. I'll allow him to have my time.

The Chair: If it's okay with you.

One snapper, Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: I'd just quickly point out that this review of this Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee is not a judicial inquiry despite the appointment of Mr. Williams. In fact, Mr. Chairman, you'll find interesting that one member of that committee describes the whole thing as a scam in an e-mail to me.

• (1145)

The Chair: What's the name of the person who describes that?

Mr. John Cummins: Greg Taylor, one of the members of that committee.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Williams himself—

The Chair: This is a snapper, Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: Yes.

Mr. Williams himself, in a *Law News* article, is described as being well known for his active interest in aboriginal issues. In fact, the article points out his involvement in several organizations, including the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund, the Bill Reid Foundation, and so on.

One interesting organization that he belongs to—and it should be pointed out that in fact it's perfectly legitimate that he belongs to this organization and probably commendable that he does, but I think it brings into question his role and his neutrality as a chairman and a facilitator—is an organization called EAGLE.

EAGLE refers to Environmental-Aboriginal Guardianship through Law and Education. The purpose of this organization is “to assist Aboriginal Peoples in protecting the land and environment.” And it goes on to say this: “Our collective future can only be assured when Aboriginal Peoples' strong ethic of protecting and preserving the lands, waters and resources is transformed into land and resource management principles.”

The question here is simple. That organization has a purpose, a perfectly legitimate purpose, but as I say, it certainly brings into

question Mr. Williams' neutrality. My question to the department is, were they aware of Mr. Williams' involvement with EAGLE when he was appointed chair of this committee?

Mr. David Bevan: Mr. Chair, I was not personally involved or had that knowledge, but I again must point out that the context of the review is not to deal with native rights; the context of the review is to deal with the escapement and what led to it.

The fact is that the question regarding what happened in the river is environmental and enforcement. It's not dealing with somebody's having a right. That's not the question. So I think many of the concerns raised by the member are ones that would relate to something relevant to a question about rights, not about compliance.

Mr. John Cummins: In response to that, Mr. Chairman, I think there is a reasonable apprehension in British Columbia that Mr. Williams will find on the aboriginal side of any issue involving aboriginals, and that if the issue in post-season review were Indian overfishing, there's no doubt he would take a very soft position on that. He has a bias, and it has been demonstrated clearly in his legal career. That's a problem. This position should be occupied by someone who's neutral and doesn't have the baggage that Mr. Williams brings to the table.

The Chair: All right, that's it. We have both positions on the record.

Mr. Hearn.

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

The projection over the next four years in science shows a decline in the science research budget, which is scary. One of the casualties already is Dr. George Rose, noted independent scientist in Newfoundland. In fact, if anyone connected to the fishery in any way is looking for information that can be depended on, basically George Rose's name comes up. Over the last x number of years he has received boat-time funding to hire a boat or to avail himself of a boat, usually the *Teleost*, to do scientific research. That funding has been cut this year. Why has that been done, or is it going to be reinstated? Right now, he is left to his own funding and his own little boat to do inshore research. That certainly isn't good enough, in light of the concerns about the fishery in the provinces.

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright (Assistant Deputy Minister, Science, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you for the question, Mr. Hearn.

In fact, it's not a funding cut to Mr. Rose, it's more vessel availability. This committee has heard that we do have vessel issues, and Mr. Adams can certainly speak to that. We've had a lot of loss of at-sea research days this year alone. We've lost more than 300 days due to mechanical breakdown. We also have a \$10-million deficit within the science budget in order to pay for the vessels. The combination of those two led to the decision. It really wasn't a decision, it was something we had to do. In order to accomplish all of the surveys that we need to have, ecosystem surveys and what not, the vessel was simply not available this year. In the future, we will be looking at taking out one trawler on the east coast, which makes it questionable as to what we can fit into the remaining two trawlers.

Again, I'm very respectful of Dr. Rose's work—I know it very well—but in this case we didn't feel we had a choice.

•(1150)

Mr. Loyola Hearn: I find this incomprehensible, Mr. Chair. We all know of the complete and utter lack of science we have in relation to cod stocks. Nobody in the department can give you an honest answer. In fact, you talk to people across the world, and they don't know what's going on in our ocean. But here you have a program that has worked, the only bit of dependable science we had, and we don't have time, yet boats can't go to sea because we can't afford to put fuel in them. I visit St. John's every weekend and I can tell you how many boats are tied up at any one time, not at sea.

That is certainly not a legitimate answer. I'd like to know why Dr. Rose's availability is not there, in light of other uses that the boat might have. Certainly there has to be a priority list. If the type of research done by the best scientist we have is not up on the priority list, then there's certainly something wrong with government priorities.

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: Mr. Chair, I would take exception to hearing that's the only bit of dependable science that we have. I don't agree with that. I do agree that Dr. Rose's work has been very good. In this case, it was a question of priorities. And in terms of fitting in the ecosystem's larger trial surveys, we had to cut some things. We are cutting some of our own surveys. This is one of the ones that we had to cut.

The Chair: Mr. Murphy, five minutes.

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Witnesses, thank you for appearing.

When I review the estimates and I listen to these committee hearings, I certainly see a department under a lot of pressures from a funding point of view, whether it's science, which Mr. Hearn just raised, or whether it's the coast guard protection.

My question is whether there is anything this committee can help you with, as you go forward, not only in the estimates but in the budgetary process in February and March of next year.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: The committee is already helping us quite a bit with some advice. You are right, we are a department under a lot of stress financially. You explain that; you talk about it; you make recommendations to us. This is helpful. At least, what we find is that we've been very busy explaining to central agencies some of the challenges we face. You've been very helpful in helping us illustrate the kinds of shortcomings we have. I think you should continue to do the work you do.

At the same time, and I know the deputy and the minister have said this, we are doing our utmost to ensure that direct services to Canadians are the least affected. That's why last year we undertook a major review of our overhead and our administrative costs and have reduced those costs significantly.

I don't know what more I can add.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: My next line of questioning is on the issue of Judge Williams being appointed chair of the post-season salmon review. I'm not clear. He is the chair. How many people are there on this committee or commission?

Mr. David Bevan: I have to confess I don't have that information off the top of my head. There are a number of first nations, a couple of ENGOs—environmental non-governmental organizations, which, by the way, have come out in support of his appointment—and commercial and sports fish representatives. If I recall, the numbers are somewhere in the vicinity of commercial having four or five members, and first nations the same, and so on. It is not just a one-person show, obviously; there will be a number of participants. We can get you that specific breakdown.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Perhaps you could give us not only the breakdown, but the names of the people.

Is this Greg Taylor a member of the committee or commission?

Mr. David Bevan: Each group was offered the opportunity to select its own representatives. I have not seen the list of names at this point.

•(1155)

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Is this committee or commission under a mandate to report back by a certain date, as I hope it is?

Mr. David Bevan: Yes. What we're looking at is having advice come back to us in order to make any necessary changes to the fishery before 2005. We're looking at a very short turnaround time over the next number of months.

We can give you the makeup of the committee and, if we have them available, the names.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Is DFO providing technical assistance to this committee?

Mr. David Bevan: It's not clear at this point whether the chair wishes to call upon our technical advice or whether there will be a call upon other experts. There have been preliminary discussions with the chair, and there is an indication that he may wish to have as much independence from DFO as possible, which would indicate perhaps he'll use other advice. It will be up to the group to decide how much they wish to call upon DFO for specific information.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: On the estimates process, can you give the committee a summary of where we stand on the whole issue of labour relations? Has there been a settlement made with the main groups? How is this going to affect your financing going forward?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: The negotiations, Mr. Chairman, are carried out by the Treasury Board Secretariat. The group that was on strike recently is now in the process of voting on the offer that was made. That is a process that will continue, I believe, until the beginning of January, so we are likely to find out whether the employees accept that offer or not. I'm not aware of any other significant groups in our department that are in negotiation, but I could be mistaken.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: There has been an offer given to the group that was out on strike; they are now voting on it. From what you're saying, that encompasses the main group of DFO employees.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: How many employees are there, George, among the people who are in negotiations right now?

Mr. George Da Pont: I don't have at my fingertips the number of employees represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, which is the main group that was out on strike. It's a very significant number and a very significant proportion.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: I have nothing further.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Bevan, has the commission, or whatever it's called, been given a specific date by which it has to report?

Mr. David Bevan: I can't recall the exact contents of the terms of reference right now, and unfortunately I don't have them with me. I believe there has been a specific date, but I can't recall. I think I have to get back to you with that information, perhaps at the next session.

The Chair: If you would be so kind.

Monsieur Bouchard, how much has been allocated as the cost of this commission?

Mr. David Bevan: The budget is still being worked out. Because we've just started discussions with the independent chair and are working on the kind of support needed, etc., the budget has yet to be finalized.

The Chair: But there must be some number floating around, because you can't go ad infinitum.

Mr. David Bevan: We started off discussions in the \$100,000 range, and that will go up, I presume, as we go through the amount of support needed: the number of staff; whether we are going to have DFO experts provide the technical information; or whether there are going to be independent people. Those discussions are underway, and the budget will be developed over the course of the next little while. We couldn't really set the terms of reference and then come out with a budget unless we talked to the panel and the chair.

The Chair: All right. Please have the terms of reference for us by Thursday. Thank you.

M. Blais, s'il vous plaît, pour cinq minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Blais, you have five minutes.

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

The last time we saw each other, I told you that I still had other questions on small craft harbours. I probably had 200 or 300. Today I will ask you a few more of my questions.

The \$20 million allotted beginning in 2002 was for a period of five years, if I am not mistaken. So that money can be allocated until 2007. I would like to know how this \$20 million of extra money for small craft harbours has been spent up until now. Can you also give us a breakdown for Quebec, the Atlantic region and so on? Twenty million dollars is a significant amount of money, after all, but it is a far cry from what is needed. It was already mentioned that the amount was under review. How has this \$20 million already allocated been spent up until now?

• (1200)

[English]

Mr. George Da Pont: The \$20 million is broken down among the regions in accordance with a specific allocation formula that's based primarily on three major factors, I believe. There are certain wrinkles to it. About half of it is based on what the replacement value for harbours would be in that particular region. We use that as a proxy to determine roughly the amount of maintenance money that should go

into the region. The other considerations obviously are the number of harbours and the number of harbour authorities.

That money has been divided up basically among all the regions according to that particular allocation formula. As I believe the minister mentioned when he was here, he wants to revisit all aspects of the program administration and delivery as part of the review he talked about.

As to the specifics of how much has been allocated, I believe last week you asked what had been allocated to Quebec region for each of the last five years totally for the various components of the small craft harbour budget. We're in the process of putting that together.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I want a clearer understanding of how this \$20 million is broken down. Could you explain the replacement value to us, for example?

[English]

Mr. George Da Pont: Yes, we did an estimate of what the rough replacement value would be of all harbours. That was part of a study on life cycle management, which I believe we tabled with the committee earlier this year. It's also included in the additional study from 2001, which the committee has requested. Basically we got work done to estimate what it would cost to replace all the harbours. We didn't do a study of what the condition was of each individual harbour, and that is among the refinements we're hoping to be able to do. We use that as a proxy, because as a generalization you should be investing about 4% of your replacement value—that's the general figure—in the year-to-year maintenance. That's why we use it as a proxy to determine how much to invest.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Given that two of the three criteria are the number of harbour authorities and the number of small craft harbours, if you have more harbour authorities and more wharfs, you get a larger allocation. Is that right?

[English]

Mr. George Da Pont: Yes, and it would make sense, because if you're looking at some type of allocation formula, the actual number of harbours should be a relevant factor.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: We are hearing that the allocation process will be reviewed. What will the review focus on? The criteria, the amount of money needed?

[English]

Mr. George Da Pont: I think it's both. The minister has asked us to look again at our approach for allocating small craft harbours funding across the various regions. We will revisit how we currently allocate and divide the money among the various regions. He has also, as part of the study, asked us to look in a broader sense—as he mentioned the last time—at a series of issues relating to making the program sustainable. Among the things we would look at are what we anticipate the funding requirements might be into the future, and the options related to them.

The Chair: Merci, Monsieur Blais.

We have Mr. Matthews, followed by Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It seems, Mr. Da Pont, just a couple of years ago there was a figure given to this committee of \$400 million or \$500 million for small craft harbours requirements. Is that correct? Can you confirm that?

Mr. George Da Pont: Yes. We covered that perhaps at an earlier session when you weren't here. In 2001 we did a study that indicated it would be about \$400 million to basically put all of the core harbours into good condition or better. We have done some internal work to update those figures, and we came out at around \$470 million to do that today.

• (1205)

Mr. Bill Matthews: In the review that's ongoing now within the departments, they're looking for about \$12 billion—or they're looking at departments to prioritize, or whatever they're trying to do. I don't know what they're trying to do, and I don't know if they do.

Do you see that impacting negatively on the small craft harbours program? Will you be required to give up some money as a result of this review? Are they asking you in small craft harbours to give up some money to contribute toward this \$12 billion they're looking for?

Mr. George Da Pont: I'm afraid we're not allowed to discuss the specifics of departmental submissions to the expenditure review committee process, since it is obviously a cabinet process that will make decisions. The one thing I can point out on the estimates, as I think I noted when I made the initial presentation, is that next year the major capital budget of the department will decrease by \$42 million as a result of the sunseting or the end of a special five-year program that was put in place. As part of that, we will see a decline of about \$5 million in the major capital budget for the small craft harbours program and a decline in the budgets of a number of other areas, as the major capital is divided up among them.

That's an issue we're working on with Treasury Board now in the context of renewing our long-term capital plan, which is due to be renewed by the board before the end of the fiscal year. At the moment, that is one specific thing that's actually in the estimates that would see a potential reduction in the small craft harbour budget.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Are you telling me that the \$20 million per year for five years ends on March 31?

Mr. George Da Pont: No, that is separate. What ends is a special department-wide program that was put in place five years ago in relation to major capital. The \$20-million-a-year program that was put in place specifically for small craft harbours is still there, and I believe it runs for two more years.

Mr. Bill Matthews: So major capital is a general departmental budget, and small craft harbours get some of that for their major capital projects in excess of \$1 million, or something. Is that what you're talking about?

Mr. George Da Pont: Exactly.

Mr. Bill Matthews: As a result of that drying up, we're going to see an approximate decrease in small craft harbours of \$5 million. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. George Da Pont: Exactly.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Toward major capital?

Mr. George Da Pont: Yes, that's where it would be, and it's reflected in the estimates that are before you.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Okay, thank you. We'll have to try to correct that, then.

The Chair: Is that it, Mr. Matthews?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Yes, thanks.

The Chair: Do you mind if I ask a question on the one minute...?

I'm interested in some issues about aquaculture and I'll ask one question at this point. The New Brunswick Salmon Growers Association, I hope, is an association that is known to the department. They're seeking a number of things, including some recognition—and this is a broader policy question—that aquaculture be considered as an agrifood. Has the department been talking about aquaculture and its relationship to agriculture?

Mr. David Bevan: Yes, we have. We are currently working with other departments, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as well as Agriculture Canada, to look at elements of agrifood that really should be applied to aquaculture, specifically things like the need for a national aquatic animal health program, the possibility of some other protection for the industry in the event of catastrophic events, etc. Those are things we are actively discussing with other departments.

In addition, through the process that was explained relevant to our review of expenditures last year, we did flow some moneys into the national aquatic animal health program and are now working on the development of that. CFIA has also done the same thing. I don't think it's enough, really, to satisfy the needs but we are making that step and we are moving toward an attempt to further develop the program.

• (1210)

The Chair: Good. I wish you good luck on that, and I hope on this issue the glacial speed will increase to tortoise speed, at least.

Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to say that my name is Peter and the Prime Minister's name is Paul, and I have this impression that within the DFO you're robbing Peter to pay Paul, especially, Dr. Watson-Wright, when you mentioned the \$8-million deficit within the science concern.

I'm with Mr. Hearn on this one. I'm absolutely flabbergasted. If I were in your shoes, I'd be screaming until the roof fell in to get this department an increase on its science budgets, because one of the concerns we have between New Brunswick and P.E.I. right now is the herring concern and whether or not that fishery is based on sound science. Everyone is saying no. I don't know what your department is saying, but everyone else is saying no. One of the concerns we have is that you're missing salmon on the west coast, you have salmon problems on the east coast, you have cod stock problems and everything else. We have concern about the lack of science, and here is a department that is really short in terms of additional resources to science.

I remind you that the only reason we're all here is for the protection of fish and fish habitat, and science is the key to unlocking many of the answers we require. So I'd like your estimate. Is money being taken from other aspects of the department, going into science or vice versa? When you sent those extra patrols out to the 200-mile limit before the election, there were x number of dollars allocated for that, so where did that money come from?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: That was new money, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: New money. Okay, so why don't we have new money for science, then?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: We would love to have new money.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Is science not a priority within the department?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Certainly it is a priority. In answer to a previous question, Mr. Chairman, I explained that we have some financial difficulties.

Last year, in a long process, we reduced our overhead and our administrative costs significantly—close to \$40 million—to make sure we were not impacting on the rest of the department. That includes science, and that includes other parts of the department.

I believe we are doing what's humanly possible to make sure we preserve the programs that are of direct service to Canadians. I know it's not—

Mr. Peter Stoffer: With great respect, Mr. Bouchard, I'm trying to tell fishermen on the east coast...the government just announced an additional \$8-billion surprise surplus—\$8 billion—and she's talking \$8 million. It doesn't fit. How can the government on one hand brag about this burgeoning surplus and be like Scrooge McDuck with the taxpayers' money and, on the other hand, tell Mr. Hearn they can't send one of their pre-eminent scientists in Newfoundland out to do his job?

If you were talking to fishermen now on the east coast, Madam Watson-Wright, what would you say to them?

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer, as you well know, that would have been a great question for the minister.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I've asked him that on an airplane and he didn't answer.

The Chair: It would have been nice on TV last Thursday.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: It's very frustrating.

Again, we in this committee have talked about science before and the importance of science to fisheries management. Constantly, year in and year out, we hear about the lack of science because of the lack of money.

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: Thank you for that. It's music to my ears, needless to say.

Yes, we are struggling within the department and within science in terms of budgets. Yes, we are closely aligned with fisheries management. I think the science we do is excellent science and I'm pleased about that.

In terms of your question on the herring issue, science is being blamed, but I will say that in my own mind science is not really the issue. My colleague may wish to speak to that or not.

I do appreciate your comments very much, and I think you can understand the kind of conundrum we feel ourselves in the department.

Mr. David Bevan: I think it's not quite fair to characterize the herring issue as that nobody believes in the science. Obviously one side of that issue does believe the science.

We also are confident in the assessment on the fall spawning stock. I think if there's a problem with herring conservation, let's keep in mind that the seiners' catch is about 23% and the inshore fleet gets the other 77%. We have no evidence from the work being done now that the seiners actually contact the bottom and are fishing in a way that is any more dangerous to the stock than the inshore fleet. As a matter of fact, it may be less so.

• (1215)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: The question then is, how many scientists are working on the herring stocks in the gulf?

Mr. David Bevan: We have several. Let's keep in mind they're working in a partnership arrangement as well. They're gathering data from fishermen and a number of sources.

I know we've heard about how many dollars are spent, but the trouble we have is it's not just O and M and ship time that's needed here, but it's a collaborative work. The arrangement we made with the PEIFA and the New Brunswick seiners was to put that in place.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: My last question, before I get cut off, is just a quick one.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: There's a conference in town, the CMAC conference, about regulation of boat size and everything else. A lot of the groups that are here from the east coast representing the fishing industry are very concerned that these discussions are taking place at the same time with the recreational boaters. Obviously you're aware that it's happening.

Is there any chance that the fishing industry can have their own discussions with DFO regarding regulations in the future and not be lumped in with recreational yachters?

Commr John Adams: They do have their own working group within CMAC, which represents all boaters in Canada. They do have their own working group on that very issue, so they're well represented.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: But, sir, right now there are meetings going on and they're all together in the same room.

Commr John Adams: Yes, but they have their plenary sessions and then they have their breakout sessions. The vast majority of their time is spent in the breakout sessions, where they do work that issue in conjunction with.... Remember, the regulations really are with Department of Transport, so they're working with their Transport opposite numbers on that very issue in conjunction with Fisheries and Oceans representatives.

The Chair: Thank you.

Just before we go to Mr. Simms, Dr. Watson-Wright, just help the committee here a little bit.

We got this deck here from Mr. Da Pont when we began our discussions of the estimates. I'm looking at page 5, which lists Fisheries and Oceans science as appearing to receive \$7.9 million more in 2004-05. We have habitat management and environmental science, which seem to be receiving \$4.8 million more than last year. And we have hydrography, which I'm assuming is some sort of science, receiving slightly more. You mentioned fisheries management parenthetically, which I gather affects your budget and which is down horrendously, at \$77.9 million.

I wonder if you could help the committee by explaining why you're in such dire straits if those three business lines have more money than last year.

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When we do receive additional funds, it's usually tied to something very specific. In terms of Fisheries and Oceans science, the difference in the numbers has to do with species at risk and the moneys we received for seal research on the east coast, in Newfoundland predominantly. There is some money in there for pesticides and some for collective bargaining and employee benefits.

When I said we were closely tied to fisheries management, I didn't mean to imply that science takes fisheries management budgets. We don't, unless they happen to be supplementing our budget to do a program for fisheries management.

So those are predominantly the reasons why those numbers are slightly increased. But again, they are tied to very specific issues and don't allow us to address shortfalls in other areas.

The Chair: What you're saying is that it would appear as if science has gone up, but it's gone up only because of specific items; in fact, you're static and really you need more money.

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: Yes.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Who doesn't?

The Chair: Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: In regard to our comments, we referred to the fact that fisheries and aquaculture management's budget is reduced significantly. I think we will all recall that this is largely due to the reprofiling of the Marshall money.

The Chair: Yes, you mentioned that. Thanks for reminding us.

Mr. Simms.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A lot of my concerns have been addressed already, thanks to my honourable colleagues, but I do have one quick question. Maybe it will take a long answer; I don't know.

Recently, for my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the species getting the greatest attention has obviously been the snow crab; this is the bitter crab disease issue, which has come up in a big way. My question is for management and science and concerns not just Newfoundland and Labrador but the Maritimes as well.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

On the east coast of Quebec, I do not know. It may be a problem.

[*English*]

Basically, my question is about the funding issue. This could potentially be a very large disaster on our hands, given how dependent we are on this in my particular area. What kind of funding is available for this, for an emergency-type situation that could be thrust upon us?

Mr. David Bevan: Actually, in terms of funding available for any kind of emergency adjustment in the snow crab fishery, there is none available at this time. We are very concerned about the management of the snow crab fishery, particularly in Newfoundland. We've asked the FRCC to look at snow crab across Atlantic Canada. They have been holding hearings, as you're aware, and have been getting information from fishermen and from others regarding how the fishery is prosecuted, and there are some interesting and perhaps disturbing findings coming out of that process. We have not yet received their advice; we won't get it until June.

In addition to the bitter crab there are the conservation issues, the method of handling fish at sea, the differences in approaches to dealing with soft shell species, etc., and the kind of mortality that can be caused by poor handling practices at sea. All these are issues coming forward, and we are going to have a significant challenge in making adjustments to deal with them.

As you perhaps are aware, what we've asked the FRCC to do is look at fisheries that are currently very important economic drivers. We don't want to have advice on something that's already gone down. For example, we have cod rebuilding teams in place now to try to provide advice on how to rebuild the cod, etc., but what we're looking for from the FRCC, why we've asked them to look at things like snow crab, is to have advice when the stock is abundant enough that we can actually turn it around and prevent problems from happening.

But we don't at this point have any funds available for any kind of relief in the event we have to make some significant adjustments in that fishery. Our view is that the idea should be to make it sustainable in the longer haul and to take any action necessary to do that now.

Mr. Scott Simms: Are you looking at the possibility of that? Is there an avenue by which you can approach this to give some recourse to the many people who will be devastated? This is certainly going to have quite an impact,

Mr. David Bevan: At this point we don't have a good handle on the impact of bitter crab, or on the impact of any changes we'll have to make to the fishing plants to respond to the FRCC advice when we get it. It's really impossible for us to quantify it, and therefore it's impossible for us to consider any budget implications or whether or not there'll be a decision to move in that direction or not.

Mr. Scott Simms: Merci.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have one and a half minutes left on your time, Mr. Simms, so I'll bootleg a question.

Have the main estimates and the reports on plans and priorities integrated the departmental alignment assessment project recommendation to put aquaculture under the umbrella of fisheries management, and if so, how much money will be spent on aquaculture management this year?

Mr. David Bevan: Yes, that has happened, and \$2.3 million is available for our aquaculture management program this year.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Cummins.

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

Mr. Chairman, this review that's under this Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee has also been described as a debacle.

•(1225)

The Chair: Even before it starts?

Mr. John Cummins: Even before it starts, Mr. Chairman, and let me give you some reasons why. Just for your information, Mr. Chairman, the committee is supposed to complete its review by March 31, 2005. That's according to the document that was produced by the government. The terms of reference were issued on November 18, but it wasn't till late in the day the committee members themselves actually received the terms.

Mr. Bill Otway, in a letter to the minister, suggests that he was very upset by that and thought, at least from a courtesy point of view, that the committee could have been advised of what was expected of them before the public announcement was made.

He goes on to say, though—and this is after the meeting, because this email is dated yesterday, November 22: Currently we sit in limbo, not knowing what we are to do, apparently given a task by yourself, with no specifics, none given to your staff and no idea when or where we are to meet again, if at all. In fact your staff indicated that they were looking at the next meeting of our group to be sometime in March or April. Considering that the [terms of reference] indicated the report was to be out in March, one has to wonder how serious you and your government are with regard to this whole process.

The Chair: To whom was that addressed?

Mr. John Cummins: That was addressed to the minister, and the copy was sent on November 22.

There are 30 members on this committee, Mr. Chairman, plus the chairman, and he says: I see utilizing a 29 or 30 member committee as the main driver for this review poses some very interesting problems. First of all, we are unaware of any budget allowance for this effort and moving this many people around this province is, as you well know, an expensive proposition, not to speak of our simple expenses and given the scope of this review. We have yet to be advised that there is any consideration of a per diem for the participants, or is the chair the only person to be so blessed?

He goes on to say he waits with bated breath to see if Mr. Williams has any more knowledge, and your staff, and so on.

The question, Mr. Chairman, is quite simple. It was mentioned here just a few moments ago that \$100,000 was the budget—

The Chair: No.

Mr. John Cummins: Or it may be. That number was thrown out, was it not?

The Chair: Yes, but that's what they started with, and they're in discussions.

Mr. John Cummins: Well, Mr. Chairman, the committee says they're going to meet in at least three locations, and why they picked these locations, I don't know. Nanaimo, Kamloops, and Prince George were the suggested venues. I just wonder how an investigation of this scope can be conducted with 30 members who are only sitting in those three locations and with nothing in the lower Fraser at all. It's to complete the budget. Why is it that DFO staff are suggesting a meeting in March or April? The whole thing has the appearance of being a debacle.

The Chair: Was that a statement or a question?

Mr. John Cummins: Well, I'd like a response to Mr. Otway's comments. I think they're certainly worthy of response.

The Chair: Mr. Bevan.

Mr. David Bevan: As you're aware, the independent chair was just recently named. We are in discussions with the independent chair about the budget. As I said, we started off at \$100,000 and are on our way up. Where it'll end I don't know at this point, but we have to talk about the budget, the process, etc.

Clearly, there are going to be meetings as soon as we can get them organized. We then have the intention to have this report done so we can make decisions relevant to the 2005 season. As to the information about having meetings delayed until March or April, it's certainly not our intention to do that. We are looking at getting this up and running as quickly as we possibly can.

There's going to have to be a decision made about how to engage the public more broadly. I'm sure we'll have more discussions on that with the chair and possibly later with the panel.

Mr. John Cummins: Given that a 30-person committee will be travelling to three places, it just seems like even suggesting your starting point is \$100,000, knowing the cost of moving our own committee around, is unrealistic.

How do you propose that this committee is going to function when there are 30 members sitting around a table? How are they going to receive information? How are these questions going to be asked? What research assistance is going to be given the members? This committee never was designed to investigate the management of the fishery in this way, so what kind of backup are you going to provide these guys?

I can't even in my wildest imaginings understand how this is to work. Perhaps you could explain it to us and enlighten us this morning, Mr. Bevan.

•(1230)

Mr. David Bevan: Indeed the discussions taking place now with the independent chair are on those very issues. The region will be coming forward with their budget and the response from the independent chair on how this will be dealt with, and how much money it'll cost.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cummins.

This has the potential to be a real problem for the department if there are huge cost overruns, and if the information Mr. Cummins has available to him on internal sniping by members of the committee before it even begins its work.... I urge you in the strongest possible terms to keep a leash on it and keep your eyes on it 24 hours a day. Otherwise there's going to be major trouble, and we're still investigating.

Mr. Roy.

[Translation]

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

I am going to ask you a question on another specific case. I am told that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans may have created a precedent in Canada.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: A precedent?

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Yes, a precedent set by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I am talking about the use of the *Nipigon* as an artificial reef. If memory serves, it is a Second World War Canadian destroyer that was sunk in the St. Lawrence River just off Sainte-Luce-sur-Mer. DFO demanded compensation for the ship. I would like to know whether it did the same or intends to do the same for the piers of the Confederation Bridge.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: That is an excellent question, Mr. Chairman, and I will have to provide an answer later. I imagine that the compensation must have been for the destruction of fish habitat.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: I will explain the situation. Do you know what the compensation was? The not-for-profit corporation had to remove the cement blocks from the old CBC towers located between Canuel Island and the shore of the St. Lawrence River 15 kilometres away. That caused a one-year delay in getting the ship into the water and led to wharfage costs, which were recovered by Transport Canada. There was also compensation to be paid to DFO. All that put the corporation into financial difficulty.

Right now, the Municipality of Luceville—this is a concrete example—is facing a bill of some \$50,000 that it will have to pay because the Government of Canada has demanded large amounts of money that no one could calculate before. All of this delayed work, etc. Does DFO demand compensation in this kind of situation elsewhere in Canada? I am told that this is a precedent. Has the department imposed this kind of requirement elsewhere in Canada?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: The departmental policy is to request compensation when a project destroys fish habitat. Equivalent or more extensive fish habitat is created elsewhere. The department's objective is to ensure that there is never any net loss of fish habitat in Canadian waters.

As you will appreciate, I do not know the details of the specific case that you have raised. In fact, I am not familiar with it at all. All I know is that a ship was sunk off Sainte-Luce-sur-Mer, so that people can use it for underwater diving, etc. However, I cannot answer your specific questions and I will provide a response as soon as possible.

You asked whether there are similar cases elsewhere in the country. This is done in all regions of Canada. Is there a case that is identical to the one that you have raised, which would mean that no

precedent was created here? I do not know. I will give you an answer later.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: In any case, I sent a letter to the minister. You will be able to answer it.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Thank you.

The Chair: Is that all?

[English]

Mr. Simms, do you want to take a crack at things? Go ahead.

Mr. Scott Simms: No.

The Chair: You're all right? Okay.

Then we'll go back to aquaculture. After my five minutes we'll go to Mr. Stoffer, if you want. We have time for even more.

Chapter 5 of the 2004 report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development pertains to salmon stocks, habitat, and aquaculture. The audit identified the lack of a wild salmon policy that would provide clear objectives for the conservation of wild salmon. Why has it taken DFO so long to finalize the wild salmon policy?

• (1235)

Mr. David Bevan: Thank you.

By the way, we expect the wild salmon policy to be released in December. The target date is December 15. I would also point out that there have been steps taken over the course of the last number of years to ensure that we were protecting weaker stocks of co-migrating fish by reducing harvest rates and by implementing conservation plans for things like coho and sockeye.

The reason the salmon policy has taken a long time to put out is that it is not an issue that is without tremendous controversy. There are polarized views from those who wish us to have a policy that allows fishing on stock aggregates that are fairly large and that are made up of a number of stocks, and the other side of the spectrum is those who wish us to go down to subpopulations, to have each subpopulation protected under the wild salmon policy. So we have a huge range of views that we're being trying to reconcile, trying to bring together and find ways to have a policy we can put out in another few weeks that will allow us to move the debate forward and try to resolve those issues as to how we're going to manage. This is made even more controversial by the Species At Risk Act and by our response to that.

I think it has taken a lot of consultation, a lot of work, to try to bring the variety of views together. It's a technically demanding subject: Do we go with populations, species, deemed subpopulations? Do we have to protect each stream, or what is the level of protection required in order to respond to the concerns of both fishing interests and conservationists? So it has been a great deal of work and a great deal of technical work involving a team of scientists and managers working with stakeholders.

The Chair: Thank you. You answered both questions.

The process of reviewing aquaculture site applications at the department has been criticized by both industry and the provinces as being slow and inefficient. There was also overlapping and duplication between the work done by the provincial ministries and DFO. The audit also identified problems in how DFO applied the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which we know in March was transferred to Transport Canada. What action is the department taking to resolve these problems?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: I can answer this one because I was personally involved.

We realized at one point in the last couple of years that through talking to the industry and to the provinces, the process of site processing was different, or the principles were the same but the application was not necessarily consistent across the country. What we did was a series of workshops with the people who do that work in our various regional offices, to define a process that hopefully would be consistent, where the same criteria would be applied, of course taking into consideration the various ecosystems that exist.

We have also made a point of working much more closely with provinces with which we didn't have a close working relationship.

Can I tell you that we are 100% consistent and that we do a perfect job? No, but I can tell you that we have made quite a bit of progress. If you speak to some of those provinces and the industry, I think they will recognize the progress that was made in the last year in particular on that front.

David, maybe you want to add to that.

Mr. David Bevan: No, I think that's the case.

The Chair: That's pretty good.

I have one minute and 17 seconds to go, and two questions.

As to question one, the commissioner's audit identified inadequate monitoring and enforcement of salmon aquaculture operations and a lack of progress to deal with the deposit of deleterious substances. Is DFO meeting its legislative obligations under sections 35 and 36 of the Fisheries Act— section 35 being “harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat”, and section 36 being deposit of deleterious substances.

Mr. David Bevan: We believe we are. We now have almost all of the aquaculture sites in British Columbia coming up for re-approval, and that has led to numerous CEAA investigations, and so on. So it's providing an opportunity for us to re-evaluate impacts, and so on, and part of the renewal process that was just described would involve that kind of work.

We are also seeking an opportunity to go back and start consultations with provinces. This will be an issue of discussion with ministers to seek an opportunity to start discussions on how to improve the teamwork that relates to aquaculture in general and how sites are approved and how we meet our responsibilities.

• (1240)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Stoffer, five minutes.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A question I've asked a couple of times before is about concerns on the Digby Neck in Nova Scotia regarding a proposed basalt removal of the area and of a big shipping terminal to be put up in the White's Cove area down there. In the papers of the *Chronicle Herald* last week they were putting out for public that you could write in your submissions if you had any concerns over this. One of the concerns I have for Dr. Watson-Wright is this. Will the science aspects of research on the right whale movement in the Bay of Fundy be considered in this concern?

What happens is that the Digby Neck is about three-quarters of a mile long in the area where they want to do that mining. There are many people opposed to it in the first place. If they put a huge shipping terminal there, some of the concerns by people down there is that it may affect the movement of the right whale. There were some shipping lanes altered before for the right whale a few years ago. Will that be taken into consideration? I know it's a specific one. Perhaps you could get back to us on that. Will that be part of the consideration when those submissions are implemented?

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: I would say we will have to come back to you on that, and I think probably oceans and habitat management would wish to be involved in that.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Okay, thank you.

Also, the other day a friend of mine called me from Yarmouth and said he knew of two of his neighbours who had just signed trust agreements with a lobster company. We've raised the issue of trust agreements before because of the owner-operator principle and fleet separation. The frustration I feel is with what's happening to the lobster industry. It's becoming more and more corporatized under the table. I would really like to know what DFO's official viewpoint is on these trust agreements.

I think you should just ban them and stop them immediately. I don't know if you have the legal right to do that or not. But what's happening is that instead of an independent fisherman working for himself or his boat, you now have him working for a company. It's the last great independent fishery we have and it's slowly sinking into the abyss of a corporatized fishery.

Mr. David Bevan: Clearly that's a very controversial issue. We had hearings around the independence of the inshore fishermen. We've had the usual spectrum of views, from getting rid of the rules because they create economic inefficiency to creating new regulations, etc. I think the problem is caused by access to capital. Anything we do to try to regulate away the trust agreements is going to put pressure on some other way.

So we're looking at all of the input we've received from fishermen and from interested groups and stakeholders. We're going to have to come back for further consultations and go back to the minister with recommendations on how to proceed on this whole issue.

I can say one thing. There are 50,000 or so enterprises, and this department hasn't the capacity or the competence to actually get at the interior working of enterprises. So suggestions such as just regulating trust agreements out of existence would put us in a very difficult position. I think we need to find a way to get at the cause. We have a huge intergenerational transfer of licences that's going to take place in the next little while, and they have no access to capital because the licence, even though it could cost.... We know how much they cost because we're out of the market in some areas. We've put forward offers for crab and lobster and we can't meet the private demand. They can cost \$1 million and yet you can't mortgage them. A whole series of questions are there regarding licence policy, the Fisheries Act, etc. that have to be looked at.

We know this is a big issue. We have a commitment. The independence of the inshore fleet is something that the government has said they're committed to, but we now have to get around the fact you can't have the independence of the inshore fleet with the intergenerational transfer of licences about to take place under the current rules. You just can't maintain it, and that means we're going to have to look at different rules, possibly change the Fisheries Act and other tools to try to achieve that outcome.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Bevan, we've been asking this question for over a year now. It's not a surprise for this question to be asked. We want a final answer on it. Will these trust agreements be allowed to continue? Obviously they are, because you don't have the resources apparently to go to monitor each and every transaction that takes place. But by the time you do get around to it, it may be too late for that. The professional fish harvesters are meeting on a frequent basis. One of the concerns they have is, do you still apply the rules of owner-operator principle—the rules that are there now—or is the department contemplating any changes to that in the future?

• (1245)

Mr. David Bevan: As I said, I think the reality is that if there's not a change in how we go about our business, and that involves the fleet as well as ourselves, the independence of the inshore fleet will be in jeopardy. So we have to find a way to change that will preserve that independence.

We don't have, possibly, the legal tools. We'd be on shaky legal ground with respect to trust agreements as well as being unable to really audit 50,000 enterprises, so that's probably not the way to go. We need to find another way to proceed. It's not going to be without controversy, because we have people who don't wish to have licences made into property that they could then mortgage at a bank on the one hand. On the other hand, they're looking for ways around the tax issues and corporations and so on.

So it's very complex, and we need to come forward to the minister with some suggestions and solutions that I'm sure will be brought to the committee some time.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Did you want to make a statement?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: A very quick one. One of the recommendations we made was that with respect to the licences of fishermen, they be treated like farmers, that when they transfer the licence over to their children, they be treated with a capital gains exemption exactly as farmers are. The fishermen now don't have that ability. Is

that one of the concerns that you're bringing to the minister, to ask that fishermen be treated like farmers when it comes to capital gains exemptions?

Mr. David Bevan: The capital gains there are exempted. You can have corporations, of course, that are exempt. The difficulty in getting the exemption of the farmers is that the finance department, etc., will tell us the farmers don't get EI.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: From what I understand, a short time ago you had a briefing for MPs on the Fraser River situation for salmon. Is that right?

Mr. David Bevan: Yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: Would you be having another one of those? Given that I'm new to this and my familiarity with the east coast is quite good but my familiarity with the west coast is probably not as great, is it possible to have another briefing?

Mr. David Bevan: I would suspect that clearly at the end of the process on the review, there will have to be some kind of briefing, either through this committee or through another means. But that was set up by the minister's office and I'd have to defer it to them.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay. Would you consider this to be an official request to take back to the minister?

Mr. David Bevan: Yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

I got notice yesterday that the appointment of Chief Justice Williams was applauded by the Sierra Club of Canada. Do you normally rely on them for their advice? Do you, would you?

Mr. David Bevan: Well, no. We didn't rely on them for their advice; that's a reaction. I think we're hearing some reactions on one side, and people have different views.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simms.

We still have three minutes and fifty-one seconds. Back to aquaculture.

Mr. Bevan, you were talking about the national aquatic animal health program. It's regarded by you and by industry as essential for both fish health in aquaculture and for the protection of wild stocks as well as for trade purposes. When will the program be operational and how does the department fund it?

Mr. David Bevan: Those are questions that I can't answer at this moment. I'm not quite sure of the.... I simply can't answer that at this point in time.

The Chair: These are up in the air, the answers to these questions?

Mr. David Bevan: Not so much up in the air, it's that there's a process underway and I can't discuss it at this point.

The Chair: Because of what, Treasury Board guidelines or what?

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Cabinet.

The Chair: Cabinet confidences? If you can't discuss it, that means something is being discussed. That's fine.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, we recognize the importance of having a national aquatic animal health program. We're working on it.

The Chair: All right. Good.

Perhaps I may go back to science, then, with my two minutes and thirty-seven seconds.

On page 55 of this year's RPP, the department states that it has completed a review of its science program for 2003-04. The review identified 30 options and initiatives to improve program delivery. There's no mention of the completion of this review in the departmental performance report for 2003-04. Can you table the 30 options and initiatives—I don't expect you to go through them now—and do they address the apparent disconnect often observed between science and policy at DFO?

• (1250)

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: The science review is underway right now, but maybe Dr. Watson-Wright could give you some more details.

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: That's exactly what I would have said. In fact, coming out of the departmental assessment and alignment project, we are undertaking a much more in-depth review of the science program. We began in late spring. I think we've made a lot of progress. I'd be happy to update the committee at any time on that. We expect to be finished and starting implementation at the beginning of the fiscal year.

The Chair: What about the 30 options and initiatives to improve program delivery?

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: Some of those options were pretty tiny, but they've been subsumed under the larger science review.

The Chair: What does that mean? Are you not implementing them, or are you thinking about them?

Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright: It means we are looking at, I would say, much more substantial possible realignments and changes within the science program, recognizing that we do have a budget to live within, and how we can deliver. But a very large part of the review is on how we can better align science with policy within the department and within the broader Government of Canada. Much of the work over the summer leading up to a workshop in September involved working very closely with my colleague sector ADMs, receiving from them their priorities in terms of policy needing science advice, and then working toward this workshop, which included about 60 science managers and senior scientists as well as our client sectors from across the country.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm under time for the second time. I just want everybody to know that.

Mr. Hearn.

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

I have a few snappers. Not Mr. Cummins' type of snappers—little snappers.

The Chair: We'll see.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: You mentioned the New Brunswick salmon growers a little earlier. They had a number of the farms with stocks to be eradicated because of disease some time ago and have requested compensation.

Has there been any movement on that? Apparently a lot of them will not be in business unless some help is provided.

Mr. David Bevan: There was some work—

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Actually, as you know, Mr. Chairman, we do not have any programs that would enable us to compensate salmon growers. There was, I believe, some relief provided through ACOA, but we do not have programs like that. A national aquatic health program could include programs like that. We're looking into that right now. But under the present programming, we cannot compensate them.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Chair, last week I raised the issue of our country supporting a resolution at the United Nations. I was basically told that the wording was changed 48 hours in advance, and we were sort of cut out of it. At the time, I said I didn't believe it, because if we had been, we should have backed away then. A lot of concern was expressed about that resolution by industry, which was not consulted at all.

However, on checking with industry, I found that copies of the final draft resolution were available as early as November 3, which was two weeks—not 48 hours—before the speech the minister made and the meeting at the United Nations. So it's a bill of goods.

The question I asked, which wasn't answered, was this. Did this resolution come through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, or did it come from the PMO?

Mr. David Bevan: It did not come from the PMO; it came from the Department of Foreign Affairs of Canada, which was doing the negotiations, with our instructions from DFO.

The intention was to remove the reference to bottom trawling, and it was our understanding we were getting progress on that throughout the negotiations. At the end, however, our attempt to remove the reference to bottom trawling was unable to proceed, and we saw that there was a reference then linking bottom trawling to the sensitive ecosystems.

I should also indicate that with the 141 countries that accepted the Oceans Declaration—and only one voted against it, and two declined—they didn't even have the vote on the fisheries. It was just accepted based on the overwhelming support.

Having said that, many of the speeches to the United Nations General Assembly made it clear, including the speech from our minister, that the view of the member states was that the declaration would be dealt with, first, through countries' economic zones and, second, through regional fisheries management organizations. They did not accept a blanket declaration to ban bottom trawling or destructive fishing without having it go through, case by case, as noted in the declaration, the jurisdiction of first the country and then the regional fisheries management organization.

That included many fishing states. The Prime Minister of Norway was actually there presenting Norway's position on this issue. Many of the member states made it clear that was their understanding of how it would be administered.

Having said that, I should let the committee know the IUCN is meeting now. That's the group of international NGOs. They're going to have a declaration of their own on this issue. They were not satisfied with the declaration of the UN General Assembly and will make something of their own, so I would expect it will be a bit more strongly worded.

I think it's important to understand the context of how this would be administered and the fact that most of the states that talked made it clear it was their understanding of how it would apply.

● (1255)

The Chair: Your last question.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Concerning the allocation of northern shrimp, we've seen over the last few years new entrants. We have seen aboriginal groups. Very little increase has been given to the people who started the fishery in the beginning, the 10 or 12 or 14 who were licensed, or whatever. The cost of licences has gone up tremendously, the price of shrimp has gone down, and these people are the ones probably hurting more than anybody else.

Are there plans in the future to help those who did all the work in the beginning and have probably benefited—at least, according to them—the least from allocations in recent years?

Mr. David Bevan: I think it's clear new entrants to the fishery started coming in at 36,000 tonnes or so—I can't recall, but it was at 35,000 or 36,000 tonnes that new entrants started coming into the fishery. While the 17 original licence holders did benefit—their share has gone up—they have obviously not benefited to the same extent as those who've recently entered the fishery and who have a larger portion of the share of the fishery. The percentage held by the original people now is somewhere in the vicinity of 50%, or thereabouts, and obviously those people who entered afterwards gained substantially.

We are not looking at the probability of further increases in that fishery. I think we have to recognize that it's at a peak now, and we don't want to add further entrants or go up any further. But clearly there's going to have to be some thinking about what happens in the downturn. These are stocks that go up and come down, and as we've seen in crab, you can have a stock that can go to one-third of its former abundance, as in the gulf. We don't know where shrimp will go, but it came from very little to quite a large amount. If it goes down, we need to think about how to balance the interests of all the various players who are now in that fishery.

The Chair: Thank you. We've very close to the end of our time, but I'm going to give Mr. Stoffer one question, and then Mr. Cummins wants to give us a notice of motion.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Adams, as you know, there's been a big move afoot, including our committee's report on a recent coast guard report that was resubmitted, regarding a substantial increase for coast guard for capital expenditures as well as operating and maintenance costs. One of the concerns, of course, being raised is about \$350 million over a

certain period of time for fleet enhancement, as well as about \$160 million for operations and management of the coast guard.

These are increases; they aren't, Monsieur Da Pont, decreases. So keep John McCallum away from your office.

I'm going to give you, sir, the opportunity to be Santa Claus now—and if you can't say yes, then nodding your head would be a good thing—to say to the members who work in the coast guard, the people you know so well, whether you have had the opportunity to push not only your own minister but those in your department and in the Treasury Board and the finance minister concerning the importance of this request to the future of our coast guard?

Thank you, sir.

● (1300)

The Chair: Let the record show that he was nodding in the affirmative.

Mr. Jean-Claude Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, the commissioner doesn't have to push his colleagues in the department. We're all on side.

The Chair: As are we.

Mr. Cummins.

Mr. John Cummins: Can I ask another question? I had another one.

The Chair: No, you're out of time. Do you want to move a motion?

Mr. John Cummins: I have two things, Mr. Chairman. One is that I would like the department to provide written answers to each of the points I raised earlier in questioning.

The Chair: What points?

Mr. John Cummins: There were seven points that I raised. The evidence from the minutes concerning—

The Chair: Mr. Cummins, I'm sorry, you asked if the department was aware of these points, and the answer was no, they weren't aware.

Mr. John Cummins: The answer was that these gentlemen here weren't, and I would like to know just what advice was given to the minister by the department on these issues, if any.

The Chair: We asked Mr. Bouchard whether the minister was aware of these issues, and he said he would undertake to ask and to get back to us. I think that's sufficient.

Mr. John Cummins: I think we would like that in a timely fashion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, we would like it in a timely fashion. They're back on Thursday.

And your notice?

Mr. John Cummins: I have a notice of motion, Mr. Chairman. It falls from my questioning and the concern surrounding Mr. Williams chairing this committee.

My motion is that the committee recommend that Bryan Williams be removed as chair of the Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee and that a neutral chair be appointed in his stead.

The Chair: That's 48 hours' notice. Are there any technical things we have to receive, something in writing?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. James Latimer): I just need to see it written.

The Chair: Do you have it in writing, Mr. Cummins? Signed? Dated? We'll take that up 48 hours from now, on Tuesday, I guess,

because 48 hours from now is 1 p.m. on Thursday, after our meeting, so we'll take it up on Tuesday. Very good.

Gentlemen, madam, we'll see some of you or all of you on Thursday. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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