



House of Commons  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans**

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FOPO • NUMBER 011 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, November 30, 2004**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Tom Wappel**

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## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Tuesday, November 30, 2004

•(1110)

[English]

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

I apologize for starting late. This is an important issue and I don't want to insult the witnesses, because I know they're ready to go.

Today, colleagues, we have with us Jean-Claude Tétreault, executive director of the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors, who has been here before; George Schlagintweit, of the Canadian Hydrographic Service; and Jacques Grondin, head of policy with the legal surveys division of Geomatics Canada.

Without further ado, Monsieur Tétreault, I'm going to ask you to make your presentation. Since I see this bright light in my face, I'm assuming you're going to do a PowerPoint presentation.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault (Executive Director, Association of Canada Lands Surveyors):** Good morning. Thank you for inviting the association this morning to bring you up to date on two very important issues.

This morning the ACLS will be represented by the people Mr. Wappel mentioned, but I would just add that George Schlagintweit is also the chairman of the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors offshore issues committee. Jacques is here replacing Jean Gagnon, who is also a member of the offshore issues committee. We are all Canada lands surveyors.

In terms of the agenda this morning, I will introduce you to the ACLS and talk about its interest in the offshore property rights issue and developments since this committee's February 2003 hearing, at which I was a witness. George will brief you on one of our two issues, the status of offshore seabed mapping in Canada. Jacques will explain how the marine cadastre fits in.

Briefly, the ACLS is a federally enacted, self-regulated profession. It has close to 570 members, making it the third-largest surveying association in Canada. The CLS profession is multidisciplinary and includes, among others, hydrographic surveyors.

The ACLS jurisdiction is surveying activities on Canada lands, which includes, among others, offshore lands that are not under provincial jurisdiction. You can see the area in blue on the map. This is obviously the largest portion of the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors jurisdiction.

The association has a number of concerns. Another one is the diminishing capacity in hydrographic surveying due to the lack of funding for seabed mapping.

Since the February 2003 hearing at which I was a witness, the ACLS, in partnership with NRCan, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Canadian Hydrographic Service, and other partners, held its second offshore issues consultation workshop. It was in Calgary in October 2003. What came out from that workshop is definitely that the marine cadastre should be an integral part of an effective ocean resources management strategy.

At this point, I will pass the microphone to George.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit (Canadian Hydrographic Service, Association of Canada Lands Surveyors):** Thank you.

This slide before you really is a summary of the status of ocean mapping. When we say ocean mapping, we're talking about seabed mapping or mapping of the ocean floor in Canada. You'll note that only the top sliver, the 1%, is surveyed with modern survey equipment. I also have some exhibits of what modern hydrography or modern seabed mapping truly looks like. Perhaps at the end of this meeting you could take a few moments to look at them with 3-D glasses to see exactly what is deliverable from modern sea-floor mapping, what you end up with.

Modern surveys are truly a quantum leap forward from any previous way by which we did seabed mapping, in that we sonify 100% of the seabed and we collect more than just bathymetry, we collect backscatter information that allows us to determine the geology of the seabed and a number of other important features. Our stakeholder group has grown significantly as a result of that.

You will note that two-thirds of the pie chart represent essentially unsurveyed water in Canada. A significant portion of that two-thirds is in fact in the Arctic. From a global perspective, it may appear somewhat ironic that we know more about the surface of the moon and also the surface of Mars, I believe, than we know about our own inner space.

A lot of government departments have been experiencing cuts in the past, and here is just one example of the impact that such cuts could have. From the ACLS's perspective, this is a considerable concern, because the Hydrographic Service hasn't let contracts to the private sector for some years—at least 10—for offshore seabed mapping, simply because there are no funds to do so. In fact, the Hydrographic Service itself doesn't have the funds to do seabed mapping. The only work the Hydrographic Service now does is for other government departments—which is a good thing—and those exhibits are examples of that type of cooperative work. But this is a concern from the ACLS's standpoint because the private sector capacity to do this type of work is greatly diminished and threatened.

Also, the core expertise within the Hydrographic Service is now getting to be a little bit of a concern because of an aging workforce and no new employees. In the event that we did ramp up, there would need to be that expertise to be able to let contracts, to assure the quality of the information provided from the contractor, and so forth.

Turning to the next slide, to quickly summarize the benefits of this modern ocean floor mapping, we have UNCLOS, of course. I'm sure you all are aware that Canada ratified the UNCLOS last November 7, so the clock is ticking to submit our claim to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Further to that, we have economic benefits—and I won't expand on each bullet, in the interests of time—we have defence, sovereignty, and sustainable resource management.

One example of where this modern sea floor mapping bears fruit is with marine protected areas—and I must apologize for this slide, because it's not a potential MPA, it is a designated MPA as of May 14 of this year. The data was collected and we have the 3-D bathymetric information, the depths for the area. As a result, you can interpret the geology, and from that you can also establish habitat with some further sampling.

As far as the MPA process goes—and I just looked this up on the Fisheries website the other day—the process is really a four-step process. First, you identify the area of interest, and then you do a series of assessments. You then develop regulations, and then you designate the area if it meets the criteria from the previous steps. How can you possibly identify the area of interest if you don't know what it looks like? That's just a case in point.

● (1115)

With that, I will pass the presentation over to my colleague, Jacques Grondin.

● (1120)

**Mr. Jacques Grondin (Head of Policy, Legal Surveys Division, Association of Canada Lands Surveyors):** Good morning, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity.

Of course, there's an increasing realization that the offshore interests of nations need to be managed effectively where a large amount of information exists. As you can tell from the slide, the federal government is responsible for many different types of rights and restrictions in the offshore.

It's administered by several departments within the federal government, as well as the provincial governments—for example, aquaculture involves two levels of government—and sometimes you even have the municipal governments involved because of the fact that some of the municipalities are neighbours to offshore land. It's important that a proper property rights infrastructure in the marine part of Canada be implemented.

When we talk about a property rights infrastructure, we mean a management system, a survey system, and a registry system. In other words, you need some form of register to register the rights; the extent of the rights needs to be properly defined through the service system; and of course these two will feed into the proper management of the resources in the offshore. At this point in time, there is no integrated marine cadastre to demonstrate the spatial

interrelationship between these existing rights, and there's an increasing potential for environmental disasters, litigation, and serious accidents in the offshore.

A typical marine cadastre, well prepared, would look like what the slide shows. It would contain a public inventory of all data concerning all legal parcels and rights in the offshore, including all relative descriptive data related to the interests—namely, who owns what where, and what it is used for. You can see that it's three-dimensional, in the sense that it's not necessarily X and Y, as it is on land. There's, of course, the water column; you have the seabed; you can go into the seabed for resources that are in there—oil and gas furnish one example—and you have the fisheries; and also it's not independent from what occurs on land. You have to take account of what occurs on land for aquaculture, for example, which is near land, and so on. It's just not one simple cadastre.

The outcome is the ability for the users and stakeholders to describe and visualize and manage spatial information in the offshore to allow effective and efficient resource management. The marine cadastral system integrates the survey and registry components to provide the foundation for marine resource management.

As the next slide shows, the role of the Association of Canada Land Surveyors, as a profession, is first of all to assist this government in establishing the cadastral system in the offshore, which includes creating the land registry and the survey system and also determining the extent of these legal rights and interests.

This government has approved funding to determine the outer limits of the continental shelf, which is essentially the external boundary of Canada. They have allowed \$70 million for that. We ask this government that they ensure the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors is part of the team that will survey that limit. For example, you'll have geophysicists and hydrographers, and you need Canada land surveyors to determine the legal extent of that limit.

The recommendation is to establish a legal framework and infrastructure. We need some legislation to be put in place to be able to manage the offshore properly. We need to invest more in seabed mapping. Obviously, in the establishment of any cadastre, the basic principle to start with is to have good mapping so as to be able to integrate the geospatial information, including all of those rights.

Finally, let me address establishing the appropriate mechanism to settle jurisdictional issues. Right now, along the coasts, which are Canada lands to a certain extent, there are some conflicts between provincial and federal jurisdictions. This creates inefficiencies, where the managers in fact apply to the federal and provincial government just to make sure they're covered in both cases. This creates a waste of resources.

In essence, we see a marine cadastre as providing a precautionary approach to effective ocean resource management. We need to use a decentralized co-management approach that is inclusive of all stakeholders.

Thank you very much for the opportunity. I look forward to your questions.

● (1125)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Before we get into actual questioning, allow me to say for the benefit of members of the committee who were not members of the committee when you were here the last time, this was supposed to be an update.

You've updated us a little bit, but I want to ask you this specifically. You had brought your concerns—again, you've reiterated these concerns and these observations—to the attention of the Minister of Natural Resources in 1996, and you didn't get anywhere. You came to our committee. Among other things, we recommended that you try to get in touch with the Minister of Natural Resources again and get in front of what was then—whatever the name of it was—the committee that dealt with natural resources.

I'm wondering if you would bring us up to date since your appearance before us in 2003. Have you been able to meet with the Minister of Natural Resources about this issue and/or with the minister's representatives, and were you able to get in front of the natural resources committee to give your evidence?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** We made a request at the same time we made a request to appear in front of this committee. If I remember correctly, we got an *accusé de réception*, but they haven't requested that we appear before the committee so far.

**The Chair:** What about the minister?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** We haven't really approached the minister at this time, but we have worked a lot with people from the department and from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

**The Chair:** All right.

You're responsible to the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** That is correct.

**The Chair:** Do you have any comments about whether your association is happy with that? Are you happy reporting to the Minister of Natural Resources, or do you think you should be reporting to another minister?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** We can say we are very happy reporting to the Minister of Natural Resources. We have an excellent relationship with the people of the legal services division and the NRCan staff.

**The Chair:** Good, but no one seems to be taking your concern seriously, since you're not meeting with anyone.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** I think the people we work with at NRCan and DFO have been very helpful. They are aware of the issues. They are aware of the problems. But we believe they don't have the tools—and here we're talking about legislation and regulations—to advance, and they have limited resources, as we mentioned also, to be able to move forward on this issue.

For example, the legal services division has invested in some research on the issue, but that's, I think, as far as they can go at this time with the limited resources they have.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Colleagues, as of yesterday, Mr. Kamp is now a permanent member of this committee.

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** Very good.

He's no longer substituting. He is in place of Mr. Greg Thompson. He now fills the responsibility of leading the official opposition off in questioning today, for a full ten minutes.

Mr. Kamp, you have ten minutes. Welcome.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Wappel.

I don't know if I have 10 minutes' worth, but let me...

**The Chair:** You don't have to rag the puck.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** I know.

**The Chair:** When you're through, you can pass it off, and we'll go back and forth.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing.

Just for my benefit, seeing I am new and didn't hear your earlier presentation in 2003, just define for me “offshore Canada lands”. When you showed a pie chart with the percentages, were those percentages of all offshore Canada lands, whatever those are?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** First of all, let's define offshore Canada lands. The way they're defined is within the Canada Lands Surveys Act. They're defined under section 24 of the act, which essentially says they're “any lands under water belonging to Her Majesty in right of Canada”—that's the first part; the second part is—“or in respect of any rights in which the Government of Canada has power to dispose”.

What that means to us is all waters beyond the base line, and all internal waters not within provincial jurisdictions, and everything outside the low-water mark around the provinces—except that there could be a caveat there, in the sense that some of the provinces that were part of Confederation may have additional rights that go as far as three nautical miles offshore; but the federal government's position has been that it's the low-water mark unless proven otherwise—and beyond up to the 200-nautical-mile limit. It could extend as far as 350 nautical miles, because it's either 200 nautical miles or the limit of the continental shelf. In essence, that's what represents the offshore for Canada.

• (1130)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** And that's what you want to survey.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** The idea is not to survey everything. For example, look at pipelines and cables. There are tens and hundreds of kilometres of cables and pipelines under the water that haven't been mapped and for which rights have not been defined. Under UNCLOS companies are allowed to lay cables and pipelines. The problem is, no one knows exactly where they are once they have been established.

In addition, the federal government has issued nothing except perhaps a permit to construct it, but no ongoing rights like those you would have on land. If you're on land, for example, look at a power commission and a transmission line. They have an easement to go over your property so they can go fix the line, etc. There's no such thing in the offshore.

What we want to do is establish a cadastre similar to what's on land but applicable to the offshore and integrate all the information into one system that will allow proper management of the resources. Of course, you will realize that there are complexities. There's a whole matrix of rights that are three-dimensional because you have rights to fish, rights to lay cables and pipelines, and rights to extract. For example, if you have dredging and all of a sudden they dredge where there's a pipeline, you could have a disaster there, etc.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** There's another thing to add. I don't think we should have a cadastre that covers all the offshore. I think it should be concentrated where there's activity because there's a cost, an astronomical cost. It's like you see on land in Quebec: it's not the whole province of Quebec that has a cadastre; it's only where there's activity.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** And not beyond Her Majesty's borders.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** No, of course not.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thanks for that clarification.

I see that in the notes from your earlier appearance in 2003—I think this relates to that—it refers to an absence of regulations for aquaculture operations. Can you just comment on where that's at, how you see that being a problem, and what the solutions are to that?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** First of all, in New Brunswick—I'm from New Brunswick so I'm a little more familiar with it—with aquaculture, for example, what happened there was that there was an MOU between the federal government and the provincial government to allow the provincial government to manage aquaculture. In New Brunswick they established a survey system. There are survey standards for aquaculture leases, to establish the extent, etc., so in New Brunswick, a small province in Canada, they've done to a certain extent some groundwork to move to a marine cadastre.

However, in other areas what they do is apply for aquaculture leases with both the federal and provincial governments to make sure they have all bases covered, because they don't know who's supposed to manage it. Strictly speaking it should be Canada, but on the other hand, because of the complexities and because it's nearshore to a province, the tendency is to go to the province. And of course, provincial governments want to be involved to a certain extent.

This is a co-management issue, where we need to work together to bring about this marine cadastre. This is not the sole problem of the federal government, obviously. This is a co-management, co-stakeholder issue.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** I just have one final question. What's your position on the moratorium on offshore exploration? I'm not sure about drilling; let's not go that far. But would you be in favour of lifting the moratorium on offshore exploration for oil and gas?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** I think this is beyond our reasons for being here. I don't think we're in a position to offer an opinion one way or the other. This is not really an issue related to what we did, what we want, or what we—

• (1135)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** If it were lifted, how would it affect your organization?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** In a sense, it would probably increase the demand for a marine cadastre if nothing else, but other than that, I don't think we can comment on this issue.

**The Chair:** Or if it didn't, you'd be urging that it should, because people would be drilling without proper land surveying. Isn't that correct?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** Well, one way or the other, yes. People shouldn't drill without proper land surveying and shouldn't lay cables, etc., without properly establishing the extent of the rights they wish to have. Whether it's in an area that's controlled or otherwise by different means, whatever occurs should be part of an overall management strategy that includes the marine cadastre and the establishment of the extent of the rights—and the registration of those rights, of course.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** That's what I think the B.C. government is talking about, not going the whole nine yards in terms of exploration, certainly not in terms of drilling, but just doing the sonar testing. Is that the kind of thing your agency also has an interest in? Would it provide some of the same information you're interested in as well, or is it just totally apples and oranges?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** It's totally apples and oranges.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** So you don't have an opinion one way or the other on whether that should be permitted to proceed.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** No, but the seismic work that's done for offshore oil exploration provides information about the sub-bottom. Sea floor mapping is about the actual bottom. We just tickle the surface.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

[Translation]

You have five minutes, Mr. Roy.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm very familiar with the situation, since we've already met. The Association of Canada Lands Surveyors has 570 members. What percentage of the overall profession do you represent? I have no idea of the total number of surveyors in Canada.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** I don't have an exact figure, but I would guess that there are about 3,000 land surveyors in Canada.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** How is it that the profession in general is represented by an independent association?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** It's a unique arrangement. Ours is a federally enacted association whereas professions, as a rule, are provincially regulated. Why is our association different? Because we carry out our work on Canada lands.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** You say that you work only on Canada lands. Correct?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** We work on native reserves, in federal parks and on lands located offshore and in the three territories.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** However, you are not federal government employees.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** Some of our members work for the Legal Surveys Division of DFO or for certain municipalities or provinces, but most are private sector employees.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** What is the nature of your ties with the Canadian Hydrographic Service?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** Some of our members work for the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** They are Service employees.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** That's right. One feature of our association is that it is truly multidisciplinary. Members include land surveyors, hydrographers, photogrammetrists and experts in the field of remote sensing.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** I don't recall which one of you mentioned earlier that in Quebec, land is surveyed each time an activity is undertaken. Let me give you an example. Right now, a fibre optic cable is being laid between Chandler and...

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Between Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Were any surveys done in advance of the laying of the fibre optic cable? If memory serves me correctly, this project is being funded by the federal government.

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** And by the provincial government as well.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** No, we weren't involved. I don't know why, but perhaps because we're dealing with provincially owned land.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** It's a distance of 200 miles...

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** The problem right now is the absence of regulations or legislation. We're here today precisely because there are no regulations or legislation in place to regulate activities of this nature. The Legal Surveys Division and the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors were not involved in the fibre optic cable project. We feel that we should have been involved in this initiative from the outset. The cable won't be located in the same area as previously installed infrastructures.

• (1140)

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** That could present a problem for the company laying the cable. Someone could come along and lay a cable over an existing one.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** Exactly.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Great. There's no way of knowing the exact location of the cable, because it has not been mapped.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** Exactly. The risks are considerable. The longer we wait, the greater the risk.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** It's a question of usage rights.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** That's right.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** What do you want the Fisheries and Oceans Committee to do? Do you want us to pressure the government into passing legislation? Could this matter come under DFO's jurisdiction, when of course the sea is involved?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** Correct. In this instance, it would be a case of joint management. For instance, if we decided to bring this under the Oceans Act, there would need to be a reference to other acts, such as the Canada Lands Surveys Act, the Canada Oil and Gas

Operations Act, and so forth. This is a multidisciplinary, multi-jurisdictional field, since the province must be involved as well. As you stated, the province of Quebec was more than likely involved in the laying of this fibre optic cable, because once the cable comes on land, provincial jurisdiction kicks in. Therefore, the two different surveying regimes need to be integrated. We would like the marine cadastre to be an integrated cadastre.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** I understand.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** I'd like to read to you section 31 of Part II of the Oceans Act. Unfortunately, I only have the English version. With your permission, I'll read it to you.

[English]

The Oceans Act, section 31, part II, oceans management strategy:

The Minister, in collaboration with other ministers, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada, with provincial and territorial governments and with affected aboriginal organizations, coastal communities and other persons and bodies, including those bodies established under land claims agreements, shall lead and facilitate the development and implementation of plans for the integrated management of all activities or measures in or affecting estuaries, coastal waters and marine waters that form part of Canada or in which Canada has sovereign rights under international law.

**The Chair:** What section is that again?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** That's section 31, part II, the Oceans Act. That's a very important section about ocean management.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, when we begin our in-depth study of the Oceans Act, I'll make sure that we return to this issue so that we think about it when we're considering section 31 and what the minister has done and hasn't done.

We're over to Mr. Murphy for 10 minutes, or any part thereof.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Thank you. It will probably be a part thereof, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing here today.

I have a few questions on some of the ocean mapping it has been announced will be done on the Atlantic coast regarding the mapping of the continental shelf in response to Canada's ratification of the UNCLOS agreement. As everyone I think is aware, there was \$70 million announced in last year's budget, but I haven't been right on top of it. Has this mapping actually been started on the Atlantic coast?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** From what I understand, it hasn't started, although there has been work done to initiate the process. For instance, there is a government model in place that includes a management board made up of the director of the Canadian Hydrographic Service Atlantic, with the director of the Geological Survey of Canada Atlantic, reporting to the ADM Science, DFO, and the ADM, earth sciences sector, of Natural Resources Canada. This board is responsible for a small three- to four-person project office at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, which will manage the project. Plans are being made to do survey work off the east coast in 2005-06, and in the Arctic in 2006-07.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** Is your association reasonably pleased with the progress made in this initiative so far, or are we behind the eight ball?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** It's not an issue the association has really considered. We recognize that there are a lot of considerations that need to be brought to the fore, but in my capacity, I'm not really prepared, or in a position, to respond to that.

• (1145)

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** What is—

**The Chair:** Monsieur Tétreault, do you have a comment on that?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** No. I agree with George.

**The Chair:** You guys were all uptight and hot-to-trot in 2003 because you didn't think things were going anywhere.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** I made a comment on it at the beginning during my part of the presentation. The comment I would make is it would be important that there is an insistence that members of the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors be consulted and be part of the team that will do the survey of the continental shelf. I think this is where the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors is concerned. We think they will in fact do that when it begins; however, if they don't do that then certainly we'll have a concern, because our members should be part of the team that will do that survey. There will be geophysicists, there will be hydrographers, there will be other experts on that team, and certainly at the end of the day, if we want this limit that we're going to survey and spend \$70 million on for it to be recognized, it certainly should be brought in under the umbrella of the Canada Lands Surveys Act and the plan should be recorded in the Canada lands surveys records as an official plan. That way, we can make an international case that our boundary has been legally determined.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** If I may add to that, I think it's important for this committee to understand that UNCLOS and the ramifications of ratifying UNCLOS really only involve determining the outer limits of Canada lands, the natural prolongation of our continental shelf. So what we're really talking about is mapping the outer fence. We want to know where our outer fence is. Seabed mapping in its full context really talks about what's between the fence and the shoreline. But UNCLOS in itself is really just talking about where the fence is, the outer fence.

**The Chair:** Mr. Murphy.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** You're going to have to excuse my ignorance here, but this ocean mapping is being done and there are a lot of different professionals, hydrographers, you name it. You say the land surveyors have to be involved. I assume the people who are doing it are people who are qualified to do it and should be doing it. I would think it would involve land surveyors.

How can this committee delve into that sort of debate? You would have to have some confidence in the people who make the decision. If we're going to spend \$70 million going out and mapping the continental shelf of this country on the Atlantic coast, and this would have to go through I assume a competitive bid with criteria, you'd have to have confidence that the people who are doing it are qualified to do it. How can this committee get involved in that? We just aren't qualified, I don't think, to say it should be a land surveyor out there that rather than a hydrographer—I can't even pronounce the word, let alone know what they do. So help us out here.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I think it's important for you to understand that a hydrographer is a surveyor. In fact, there are 34 Canada lands surveyors within the Canadian Hydrographic Service. It's a recognized profession within the field of hydrography. And really, as far as my colleague's comment about ensuring that the Canada lands surveyor is actively involved is concerned, that's really a sensitizing issue, just to sensitize you. Really, it's prescribed in the CLS act that a Canada lands surveyor will survey Canada lands, and Canada lands are the offshore.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** As far as I'm concerned, that would be the end of the discussion, would it not? They have to use Canada lands surveyors.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Yes. But we also recognize that the capacity within the private sector to do that work is severely hindered as a result of the lack of work that has been let in contracts to the private sector because of the lack of funding provided to Canada's charting authority, which is the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** I have one final comment or question for the association.

Can you give us perhaps a 60- or 90-second summary? I assume there have been some tremendous developments in technology in ocean mapping, marine surveying. Where has it gone over the last five years compared to where we were?

• (1150)

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Your assumption is correct. In about the early nineties we went from traditional positioning technologies, using theodolites onshore to position points by which we would then position our vessels, to GPS, to satellite positioning. That was a very significant step to increase our efficiencies. I did a study on that. I think it came to something like a 40% increase in efficiency as a result of using GPS rather than conventional methods.

But at the same time, we were investing in new technology, and that is the multi-beam, which is a significant technological advance, in that you're still using acoustics but you're insonifying 100% of the sea floor. If I can interpret where you're going with this, you're wondering what's going to happen in the future. Who knows, but it's pretty difficult to survey more than 100%.

We've just gone such an incredible step forward from our traditional way. When I started with the Hydrographic Service back in 1985, we were doing single-beam acoustic surveying, which is where you ran a survey launch in a single line and then, depending on the scale of the survey, you would go over and run another line. You just had a transect of what the ocean floor looked like and you interpreted in between those lines what the bottom was doing. There's no more interpretation. We survey and we know where every pop can on the bottom is, what it looks like, and we can look at it from every different angle. We're collecting phenomenal amounts of data. It's providing much more than just fantastic data for charting purposes; it's providing data that can be used for all sorts of other applications, as we've shown in our presentation.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Do you have anything, Mr. Kamp? No.

Mr. Matthews.



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

Thank you for coming.

I have a question on UNCLOS. You talked about the need to survey Canada's continental shelf and to establish where the fence should be. But what are the implications of that for Canada once we establish that? Can you elaborate on that?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Article 76 of UNCLOS prescribes the various ways by which you can claim your outer limit, and it's not a very simple formula. It's not just  $x$  number of miles from your EEZ or your 200-mile limit. There are all sorts of considerations—some of which are in reference to the toe of the slope, some of which are in reference to the thickness of the sediment, and some are with reference to depth. It also prescribes that member states should use whichever principle they can to claim as much as they possibly can, so everyone is on the same footing.

What are the implications? When we provide our submission to the commission on the limits of the continental shelf, hopefully we have a submission that enables us to claim as much as we possibly can to the benefit of Canada.

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** But that would only be, as I understand it, resources on the seabed or under.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Correct, the sedentary species on the seabed and exploration and exploitation, I believe.

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** Right. If there was oil or anything under it, that would be under our jurisdiction and our territory.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Correct.

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** There's an area offshore where it is anticipated there's going to be a fair amount of offshore exploration, and it's called Orphan Basin. Has that been, in your view, adequately surveyed to allow that kind of exploration to take place? Do you even know that, or can you comment on it?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I can't comment on that. I don't know.

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** Well, what about the areas now where the oil wells are producing offshore of Newfoundland and Labrador—Hibernia, Terra Nova, White Rose, and so on? Are you comfortable that the proper surveying and so on was done before that started?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Well, they're well within our 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** Yes, they are, but it's federal. You operate in federal territory. You were very clear about that. That is federal territory. So are you comfortable that adequate surveying and so on was done before Hibernia and the other wells produced?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** Yes. In fact, the oil and gas regulations strictly enforce the requirement for a legal survey for once you go to exploitation. It is a requirement that has to be done under the Canada Lands Surveys Act, and that is happening.

• (1155)

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** So in the Orphan Basin, if there is exploration, as is expected to take place reasonably soon, do you think that's been done? Or if there is a discovery, will it be done then? What's the process?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** The process is that under the oil and gas regulations they must apply for a discovery permit, etc., where they define an area that's usually quite huge and then they go in and explore. Then they get an exploratory licence, and then they bring it down a little further. The legal survey only comes once they've discovered oil or a resource, and then there's a requirement to have a legal survey done. Until then, there's no point, actually, because you'd be wasting resources.

**Mr. Bill Matthews:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Along the lines of what Mr. Matthews has said, you're obviously here to discuss your industry and to look for support in terms of funding from the federal government in order to promote this. As the gentleman has said, we know more about the moon and Mars than we do our own thing. But when you just said to Mr. Matthews that it's a waste of resources, I would think that any time you survey areas you haven't surveyed before, it wouldn't be considered a waste of time.

One of the concerns I have is with the oil and gas leases that are off the coast of Nova Scotia. Most of those leases are granted by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, and in my discussions with them.... If you look at a map of say 1990 to now, those leases just mushroomed, including the inshore of Cape Breton. I don't believe for a second—and they've confirmed it—that complete surveying of all those areas was ever done in terms of what you had just said—they go into an area, check around, and then narrow it down. Once they narrow it down that little part, then it's surveyed, but all the other areas are not.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** No, that's right.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** So all those other areas could contain things like munition dumps from World War II. They could contain fragile fish stocks, coral things, and everything else, and they could be doing damage to those areas and we don't know about it.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** From that perspective, you're absolutely correct. What I meant, and this was a narrow answer to a narrow question, is in the oil and gas industry, if you do it strictly for the oil and gas industry, at that stage of the game you would request a full legal survey that would go through the system that the legal survey for the well goes through, and that would be the way—no. What we're saying is in fact you're absolutely correct. The marine cadastre and the mapping part of it, those rights then would have to be determined.

My point is this. The level of standards and the level of accuracy to which you would survey it then may be different from the level of standards and level of accuracy you would use to survey the final location. That's the point. That's the idea of the marine cadastre. What we're trying to do here is make sure everything that's out there is identified, including the bigger areas that are being explored. Absolutely, you're absolutely correct. Your interpretation is correct.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Sir, how much, as a percentage, has the east coast, in our own economic zone, been surveyed? As a percentage, a ball park?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I have that information, but I don't have it with me. I'd be more than happy to forward it to you.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Would it be less than 10%, more than 10%, 20%?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** It would be less than 10%.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Less than 10%. That's not very good.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I believe it's 5%.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** And what about the Arctic?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** As for the Arctic itself, there are only small postage stamps of modern coverage to the Arctic. Most of the Arctic are track lines, reconnaissance.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** With our proximity to the United States, of course, and to our northern neighbours over the Arctic, are you working in conjunction with other countries and their geographic survey people as well?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Yes, we are. The CHS, NRCan, and DND have met with representatives from the Danish Hydrographic Office and the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland to review the technical requirements and logistics for the 2006 Arctic work that will be conducted from CFB Alert. And that's all about determining the nature of the Lomonosov Ridge, which extends between Greenland and Canada.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Does that include Russia or Sweden or any other countries of that nature, or the Americans as well?

Because of the possibility of lifting of the oil and gas moratorium off British Columbia, there are many concerns with the Alaskan Panhandle. Would you be working with the U.S. in that regard as well?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Preferably, yes, and I believe there is some work in that regard. There is a U.S./Canada Hydrographic Commission that discussed those types of issues. And it serves us, both of our interests, to work on the same platform, collect the same data, for our own independent submissions, although the U.S. have not ratified UNCLOS.

• (1200)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** This question comes right out of ignorance. Are the Great Lakes a part of your mandate as well?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** The short answer is no, as I read the definition of Canada lands earlier on, unless you could find that the federal government has rights within the Great Lakes. But as far as we know, we've never done any work in the Great Lakes and the Great Lakes are not part of Canada lands.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Do you know if anyone does survey the bottom of the Great Lakes?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** I'm not aware, no.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** The CHS surveys the Great Lakes. It charts them for nautical publications. That's part of its mandate. All Canada's offshore and internal waters, anything that's navigable, is charted by the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** You had mentioned acoustic surveys. Does that have any environmental effect at all in terms of sea life when you do that?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** No. The equipment that is used for seabed mapping uses exactly the same frequencies, somewhere from 50 to 300 kilohertz, as what you'd have in your recreational boat. It's a high frequency and there is no harm.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have Monsieur Roy, Mr. Cuzner, and then myself.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** I have one last question. Mr. Stoffer almost touched on this matter.

How are things done elsewhere in the world? Are the United States and Europe ahead of us in this area?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** If I may, I'll provide a partial answer to the question. I'm sure my colleagues will want to add something more.

On the slide shown earlier, you saw the proposed cadastre. It comes from Australia. Jean-Claude alluded earlier to several domestic studies done in association with Natural Resources Canada. A total of \$25,000 or \$30,000 was spent on these studies. In Australia, \$8 million has just been allocated to research and to studies similar to the ones conducted in this country. We are not as advanced as Australia which has already committed \$8 million for research in this area and for the establishment of a marine cadastre.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Is anything being done in the United States?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** I'm not aware of the situation there.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** I know that certain things are being done in the United States and in Holland. I can't give you any details, but various countries are doing some studies.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Roy.

[*English*]

Mr. Schlagintweit, would you in fact give us the information that you said you have, but not with you, regarding the percentage of surveys of the east coast or Nova Scotia, or whatever information you have?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I could prepare a slide that has a small pie graph for the Arctic, the east, and the west.

**The Chair:** That would be great.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** All right, I will do that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Cuzner.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** I have just one question, and it has to do with the dump sites—offshore munition sites, really—off the coast of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. I'm assuming that ACLS would be engaged in that in some way. I believe the lead agency is DND, but I would imagine that you guys are involved in that as well, in the mapping of those dump sites.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** The Hydrographic Service is involved in mapping them upon request, and we'll chart them if that information has been established. If that information has been verified and provided by DND, that information is then charted.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** But as far as just the discovery of them is concerned, would it be DND that does that, and then you guys come in and do the mapping of it? What's the relationship there?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I suppose anyone could discover them while dragging or something, heaven forbid, but when there is an investigation initiated, we—

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Well, there is one ongoing now at DND.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Right.

CHS would be called to survey that, and if it was confirmed, it would then be put on charts, provided that DND verified the information.

**The Chair:** Does DND have its own surveyors?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** No. They have some expertise, but they heavily use us. We do a lot of work for DND. I shouldn't say a lot, but we do some work mapping their queue routes for submarine highways.

• (1205)

**The Chair:** My question is, do they have military people, members of the armed forces, who are surveyors, who survey for them strictly?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** They do, but I am unaware of a hydrographic capability.

**The Chair:** Okay, now there'll be a few questions from me, if you don't mind.

Mr. Murphy brought up the \$70 million that was in the throne speech, over 10 years, to map Canada's Arctic and Atlantic. You were talking about the concept of the fence. If it's going to cost \$70 million over 10 years to define the fence, do you have any guesstimates of how much it would cost to define the land on the seabed between the fence and the shoreline?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** That's why there is funding needed for some research. We're also proposing a pilot project, and that will help, because we're not even sure what this marine cadastre is going to look like. It could be co-management; it could be like the GeoConnexions principle, which is a portal where all this data could be...

We don't know. That's why the funding is needed for research and a pilot project. That should help determine, hopefully, what costs are involved in setting this up.

**The Chair:** I can't recall, have you given us a figure? How much money are you looking for, for a pilot project?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** We don't have a figure.

**The Chair:** Has anybody done a study on that? Has anybody talked about it?

If you're asking government to give you more money, presumably you then have a reason. You have to come with some sort of plan that says you would like to do a pilot project and it will cost approximately *x*.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** There have been some small studies done within the University of New Brunswick. However, it's important to understand that there are so many stakeholders that there is no one group within government that can assume the lead. It really needs to be an integrated process where all governments come together in some sort of joint effort to bring their issues to the table.

In all the questions we've discussed so far here today—a moratorium, aquaculture, UNCLOS, cable issues, oil exploration—the full nature of the ramifications of these issues would be very easily determinable if we had a marine cadastre. At present we can only speak to the issues in isolation, without their context, without knowing exactly to what extent the issue is an issue. The marine cadastre brings it all together, and there have to be stakeholders from all government departments and provincial agencies involved.

**The Chair:** But clearly there has to be somebody who takes the lead, some department. We've already seen as a committee, with endangered species, that everybody is interested; there are all kinds of people—federal, provincial, various departments—and unless someone is taking the lead, years go by just in talking and setting up committees that don't even meet, or just meet to set an agenda.

Do you have a recommendation for this committee as to who should take the lead?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** I've mentioned article 31 before, which comes under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We believe DFO should take the lead—

**The Chair:** That's why I'm asking the question.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Tétreault:** — in close collaboration with Natural Resources Canada, which has a lot of the expertise in these matters.

**The Chair:** I don't wish to unduly keep my colleagues here too long, but could you help me interpret your slide regarding the budget decline of the Canadian Hydrographic Service? It says "Constant 1992 Dollars". I don't know what that means. It ends at 2000, and we're almost in 2005. What happened to the last four years?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I believe the decline has been in a continual slope. It has been normalized to 1992 dollars, because you can appreciate that the value of the dollar decreases over time. The slope would be steeper if it were based on 1984 dollars, and less steep if it were based on 2004 dollars.

I just requested this information. It's publicly available. Unfortunately, it was only provided to 2000, but the cuts continue.

•(1210)

**The Chair:** So you're saying the graph is continuing downward.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Correct. You can extrapolate in that trend.

**The Chair:** Exactly.

Just to help us here, so what? What does that have to do with mapping the ocean floor?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** As I said in my presentation, it has a lot to do with mapping the ocean floor, because the Hydrographic Service is unable to contract out any work because there are no funds to do that. So the private sector expertise is severely diminished. They've all gone away, and companies that ramped up for the offshore went broke and had to sell their ships. Further to that, the Hydrographic Service's own core expertise in hydrography is threatened. With no new employees, eventually you just kind of dry up and go away.

**The Chair:** Right, and hydrography is also DFO, because it's within DFO.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Correct.

**The Chair:** We were talking about that during the estimates at the last meeting. So that's another reason this committee should be interested, I presume.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Yes.

**The Chair:** On that score, if I may, speaking of letting contracts, I just noticed, Mr. Schlagintweit, that in your biography it says some of your past activities include research in acoustic bottom classification, which you've talked about, and a recent four-year assignment with headquarters as client liaison with the Canadian Hydrographic Service's private sector partner, NDI Inc., in St. John's, Newfoundland. Could you tell us a little about what that means, client liaison with CHS's private sector partner? What did you do?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I don't see how that has to do with the nature of the scope of our discussions.

**The Chair:** That may be, but I'm asking the question anyway.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Client liaison is really the interface between our private sector partner, the Hydrographic Service, and the public sector. So it's a private sector and public sector interface, kind of completing the triangle between the marine industry, the public sector, and private sector interests.

**The Chair:** NDI's contract was awarded when?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** I believe it was initially in 1993, and renewed in 1998 and again in 2000.

**The Chair:** I believe all these were without public tender.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Does anybody else have any questions?

That's just out there.

You have a couple, Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** I apologize for being late. I really don't want to repeat what has already been asked, but there are a couple of statements in here about offshore Canada lands. On the first one, I recognize the need for

detailed mapping outside the 200-mile limit if we're going to claim jurisdiction out there, and I understand it was mentioned before I arrived that about 10% of our offshore lands have been mapped now. Is that correct?

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** It's 1% to modern standards.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** One percent is not a lot.

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** No.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Have you ever had a legal opinion on the principle of right of way? What is the principle of right of way for offshore lands that are owned by the federal government? There is no private ownership.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** The problem right now is there is no definition of what those rights are offshore. That's what we're trying to do with the marine cadastre. They lay the cable, and there's actually no legal definition of what the right of way is.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I would assume that if it's a fibre optic cable, it's almost at your own risk. They don't own any of the bottom, and they don't own the right of way. I don't see how the responsibility comes back to the federal government.

•(1215)

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** It does to a certain extent. For example, if you think of it on land, we wouldn't think of letting people build cable and transmission lines without providing them with the proper rights of way and easements to do that. You need to protect the public interest.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** No. The majority of the time, you're protecting private interests when it's on land. There is no private ownership under the seabed. I'm not arguing against the principle of mapping, I'm arguing against your arguments for doing this.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** I'll give you another example in the Northwest Territories. The federal government owns a lot of land in the Northwest Territories that is under the jurisdiction of Canada Lands. When someone wants to put in a right of way to have a transmission line go from one municipality to another, and it crosses federal lands, it must be surveyed under the Canada Lands Surveys Act. There must be a right-of-way issue; otherwise, they can't build it. The same is true on Indian reserves that are owned by the federal government.

Obviously, the reason is that these rights need to be recognized so that there is public notice that there's something out there. The problem with rights on the ocean floor not being defined is there is no public notice that those things are out there and there is a potential for litigation problems.

You could run a cable over another cable, as your colleague, Mr. Roy, mentioned earlier, and all of a sudden, you're the manager of the land. Think about it. As the manager of the land, you own a piece of land, let's say it's 200 acres. If you give a right to me that's not recorded and not public, and you give the same right to another person that's not public, then there is encroachment between us.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I understand how it works. I'm not meaning to cut you short, but if you lay a cable offshore, there is a survey of the cable. It is a very accurate survey. If you set up an oil rig, it's all surveyed. If you even abandon a well, it's all surveyed. If you put in an aquaculture site, it's all surveyed. I realize those points could be A, B, C, D, E, and F, and the land in between all those points may not be surveyed, but there is a very accurate survey done of any offshore work.

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** You are correct when you say that they are surveyed when they lay out the cables. There are as-built surveys. The problem is no rights are transferred. That's the first thing.

Secondly, those surveys are proprietary to the company that does the survey and are not public records. Therefore, the public doesn't have access to the records and cannot tell there was in fact a survey done in the area, because it's proprietary.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Is there no public record of offshore surveys?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** No, sir, there is not. The marine cadastre purports to have a public record of everything that's out there. That's the problem. There are no public records, and the federal government does represent the public, I would think.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Well, sometimes. We try.

**The Chair:** Is there anything else, Mr. Keddy?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Yes, I have one more question. Thank you.

I quickly read your brief, but I would concur with, and absolutely agree with, the importance of having a public record. That could probably be done quite easily.

I'm not saying that it's not important to map the offshore lands. Don't get me wrong. I do see a difference between underwater and on land. However, property rights underwater belong to the federal government, and that's what I'm concerned with. Are you in any way advocating ownership of those property rights by private interests?

**Mr. Jacques Grondin:** No, but we are saying that certain rights related to those property rights should be granted to those companies to a certain extent. For example, if we're talking about a right of way or right of passage, we wouldn't transfer the land, the seabed. As a government, I don't think it would be prudent to do that. However, if you're going to allow someone to place a cable, a pipeline, or any other infrastructure on those lands that you manage, you should give them at least the right to be able to put that cable there.

However you define those rights, there is a difference between what happens on land and what happens on the seabed. You are absolutely correct. That's why we're saying the marine cadastre cannot be an extension of the property rights infrastructure on land. I totally agree with you there. That's not a problem. But what we need to do is define what those have to be. That's why it's a co-management, multi-stakeholder issue. You're exactly right, we couldn't do this in isolation.

When we did our two workshops we involved the industry extensively, because this is not only a government issue; it's a federal, provincial, and industry issue. I would go as far as saying that to a certain extent in some cases it could be a municipal government issue for some areas in Canada.

• (1220)

**Mr. George Schlagintweit:** Just for the benefit of the committee, to help it visualize what a marine cadastre could look like if it were really in place, it wouldn't be one big, whopping data set somewhere that everyone fed their information into. It would be a multitude of data sets, a multitude of registry systems in different government departments and agencies—federal, provincial, municipal—that would all feed their information into one portal, which you would then access.

In industry, you would query a particular polygon and say, "What hoops do I have to jump through to get a permit to do something here? Who do I go to? What is the process?" So you would have a conduit to the right place. It's also for administration and management of those rights.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you very much for coming and for bringing us this update. We'll certainly keep your testimony in mind when we begin our study of the Oceans Act, particularly section 31, which I believe you said we should keep our eyes on, and your testimony that you feel DFO should take the lead in this. We very much appreciate it.

Committee members, we have some quick business. Our next meeting will convene at 9:30 a.m. British Columbia time on Thursday at the appointed site in British Columbia. We'll have hearings on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

We'll reconvene here on Tuesday, the 7th, with the fisheries minister of Prince Edward Island, and possibly the fisheries minister of New Brunswick, regarding the dispute they have. If only one of the ministers comes, then we will do committee business drafting the report on the Fraser River.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** When is the meeting with the ministers from Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick?

**The Chair:** That will be on Tuesday. The Prince Edward Island minister is confirmed. If we can get the New Brunswick minister, then we'll hear both sides on the same day. If we can't, then we will start committee instructions to our researcher to draft the report on the Fraser River salmon.

On Thursday next week we will continue with that drafting, unless we can get the New Brunswick minister. Then we'll kind of divide the time. So that's the plan.

On the 14th, Tuesday, we'll be meeting with Deputy Minister Murray; Assistant Deputy Minister Bouchard; Madame G  linas, Commission of the Environment; and Mr. Thompson, from the Auditor General's office. We'll have no meeting on the last Thursday of the session.

Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** I think it's a great idea to invite both the minister of P.E.I. and the minister of New Brunswick to discuss the herring dispute. I also think it would be very helpful to bring in one of the people operating the seiners, to get an industry point of view, as well as someone from the PFIA to get their fishermen's point of view. It's one thing to hear the political side of it; it's another to hear the industry side of it. I think that would be very helpful to this discussion.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-Chair.

We're hearing the minister of P.E.I. because he requested to come here. We didn't want to hear the minister of P.E.I. without giving the minister of New Brunswick the opportunity.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** That's a good point.

**The Chair:** I suggest that after we hear those two individuals, if the committee wants to pursue the issue any further—and it may not want to—obviously I think your suggestion will be appropriate that we hear other witnesses.

Thank you again.

The meeting is adjourned.

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