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**Chair**

**Mr. Tom Wappel**

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## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

• (1535)

[English]

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

Today we have what is entitled a briefing session on the report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the House of Commons for the year 2005, one presumes as it relates to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. So we have with us the actual Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Madame Johanne G  linas.

Welcome.

**Ms. Johanne G  linas (Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development):** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Committee members will remember that the Auditor General's Office has been helping us on this file and on estimates. From the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, we have Neil Maxwell, principal, and he's been here many times; and Kevin Potter, director, audit operations branch.

Welcome.

I understand, Madame G  linas, you have an opening statement.

**Ms. Johanne G  linas:** A very short one, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** However long it is, within reason, please go ahead.

**Ms. Johanne G  linas:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm delighted to be here again today to present the results of our audit of Canada's Oceans Management Strategy, which we reported on last September, as you mentioned.

Kevin Potter, whom you've introduced, is the Audit Director from our Halifax office. He has many years of experience in this field. Neil, as you mentioned, is a long-time member of the Commissioner's team.

In this chapter, we concluded that the promise of the Oceans Act has not been fulfilled. Indeed, implementing the Act and the oceans strategy has not been a government priority.

Our oceans are an important source of food, transportation, recreation and natural resources, such as fish and oil and gas.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has estimated that the economic impact of ocean activities is about \$23 billion annually.

In 1994, the government recognized that Canada's oceans policies and practices had been short term, piecemeal, and fragmented. This contributed to over-exploitation of the fisheries and the degrading of the ocean environment.

The 1996 Oceans Act established Canada as the first country with comprehensive oceans management legislation. The Act's purpose was to conserve and protect our oceans' environment, ecosystems and resources, while managing those resources in ways that were economically sustainable and environmentally acceptable.

We focussed on Fisheries and Oceans Canada's implementation of the Oceans Act. Specifically, we examined the Department's role in developing and implementing a national oceans strategy, oceans management plans, and marine protected areas.

In addition, we examined the actions taken on oceans commitments made by the government and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. These include commitments made internationally and in response to this committee's 2001 report on the Oceans Act.

[English]

We found a failure to deliver on commitments. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has fallen far short of meeting commitments and targets for implementing key aspects of the Oceans Act. In 2002, the department released Canada's oceans strategy, which specified 55 activities to be undertaken by about 20 departments over four years.

The results of what the strategy was to achieve were not well defined, and there has been no consolidated public reporting on what it has achieved. No oceans management plans have been finalized. These plans were intended to manage ocean industries sustainably and resolve increasing conflicts between ocean resource users in specific areas.

Little progress has been made in establishing marine protected areas under the Oceans Act. Such areas would protect marine habitat and biodiversity. For the areas we examined, it had taken between five and seven years to complete an evaluation. At this rate, it will take many years to put in place a national system of marine protected areas. We are concerned that Canada will not meet its international commitment to establish representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012.

We also found that the department's reporting to Parliament on the Oceans Act responsibility has been generally poor, although we did note improvement in 2005. The department has had many requests to produce state of the oceans reports, including a recommendation from this committee. Eight years after the Oceans Act came into force, a state of the oceans report, which would provide information on the health of our oceans' ecosystem, communities, and industry, has not yet been produced.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, the implementation of the 1996 Oceans Act is a story of unfulfilled expectations and commitments. Canada's oceans action plan, released in 2005—in fact, last May—comes with new commitments, including some made in response to recommendations in our chapter. This new action plan raises many interesting questions. How does the department plan to deliver on its new commitments given the department's poor report on meeting past commitments? What is the status of the 2002 oceans strategy given the new oceans action plan? When will the government report on the strategy's 55 activities?

In our view, the department should report on the strategy's results and on results achieved under phase one of the oceans action plan before phase two of the plan is approved and funded. This is scheduled for the fall of 2006.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening statement. We will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

• (1540)

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

We'll follow the usual questioning order. In this case, we'll begin with Mr. Keddy for 10 minutes.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I certainly welcome our witnesses here today.

I have to tell you that on the initial read of your report on the environment and sustainable development, it's discouraging—and I'm sure it's even more so for yourself—and a bit shocking.

I'm going to quote into the record some of your statistics, which I think most of us were aware of, and I think most Canadians are aware of, but perhaps we don't think of enough, and that's the fact of the three oceans. We have “the world's longest coastline at over 243,000 kilometres”, and an extensive marine area of “5.87 million square kilometres—more than half of our land mass”.

We're a day late and a dollar short with just about everything we're professing to do with the marine environment. Certainly we've been concerned at committee—I know a number of us have, certainly in the Conservative Party and in other parties—about the lack of willingness of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to deal in a realistic manner with timelines on a number of issues.

Your comments support a number of things we've been saying for a long time about a strategy that's “short term, piecemeal, and fragmented”. Quite frankly, I couldn't agree more.

I think some of your other comments were that there was little progress in resolving conflicts, a lack of any real constructive plan for marine protected areas.... There's been a huge study time: five to six years to study putting a protected marine area in place, and then a further lack of resolving conflicts that may be surrounding those areas. I find it disheartening that we've got an oceans management strategy that I think has said some of the right things but is not doing a number of them.

I'd like to narrow in on one area—and we've discussed this before when you've been at committee—and that is the lack of ballast control regulations and enforcement on marine shipping. We have a spread in contaminating organisms from foreign oceans and foreign lands. We have a relatively inexpensive methodology that's readily available to deal with this, but we have no legislation in place in Canada to govern or regulate ballast control for ocean-going vessels.

We still have a lot of oil dumped at sea. We have the pictures in the newspapers, the slicks are seen on the ocean, and no one is being sentenced. There's no follow-up.

But I want to come back for a second—I don't want to take all of my time here—to the invasive species—

**The Chair:** But you've already taken your ten minutes.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** That's the way I work.

Regarding invasive species, quite simply the technology's out there and it's cheap. We can literally cook the ballast water and put it through a machine—I think they call it “boil and chop”, or something like that, the slang term...and ultraviolet rays. Without using chemicals or anything fancy, there are a number of solutions available that would treat all your ballast water coming out of a ship.

I fail to understand why on such a simple matter we can't convince the government to take a leadership role.

Would you care to comment on that, Madame Gélinas?

• (1545)

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I don't know how much I have to add, Mr. Chair, but I will be brief.

We haven't looked back on the progress made on ballast water and invasive species. As you will recall, we did an audit on invasive species in 2003, if I'm right. It would be interesting to see how much progress has been made so far, and that might be something we will do in the near future. On your side, it might be also interesting to ask the department some questions about progress.

But if I may come back to this year's chapter on the oceans, I think there is a momentum, and we should build on that momentum. It's not to say that the department is not putting the right things in place, at least in terms of documents. We had the Oceans Act first, and then the department came with the ocean strategy and now an action plan.

The question is, what has the department been able to achieve? Unfortunately, I cannot tell you, since the department cannot tell that, because there's no real measurement on progress and no reporting mechanism. You had asked for that way back in 2001, if I'm right, and you have repeatedly asked for a progress report. We are all still looking for some sort of reporting that will tell us where to go.

My concern—and this is clearly highlighted in the report—is that we have a strategy that should have been implemented, and the end of the implementation will come in 2006. We don't know what has been achieved, and we are ready to move ahead with something new, which is called the oceans action plan.

So we need to take stock of what has been achieved so far to make sure that whatever we put in place will put us on the right track. We're not there yet, and this is really one of the key messages that came out of this year's report. I really count on the committee to help us hold the department to account and help us become clear with respect to what has been achieved and what we have to do next to make sure we will achieve the objectives of the Oceans Act.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** My follow-up question to that would be, respecting the difficulty the government has in dealing with a huge area containing a number of competing factors—declining fishery, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which, with respect, is probably underfinanced, overstretched, and unable to do its job.... In your point 1.11, you say: “No new funding was provided for the implementation of the Oceans Act, Part II....” But what you don't say is there has been little political will to implement the Oceans Act since 1994, and that's 11 years. Frankly, without trying to sound too partisan, that's not acceptable. Eleven years is far too much of a timeframe to have an act on the books, to which we're signatories, and we're not somehow implementing.

You go on to say Canada estimates that over the past eight years, “it has redirected \$100 million from its other operations”, which affects other operations and is taking from your operating budget. Instead of allocating real money...we found billions of dollars to put into foundations in this country—and some of them may even be worthwhile, although we'll never be able to get an audit on one or access to information, so we'll never find that out—but somehow we had to steal \$100 million from other operations.

How problematic is the funding issue? Is it the key to this problem?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It's not often in an audit we clearly highlight the fact that funding has been an issue. We said that in this year's report, and we said it in last year's report when we looked at wild salmon. So obviously this is an issue. Is it the only thing that will affect the implementation? I guess not, but we have clearly mentioned that.

What we have also highlighted here is the fact that in the last budget, which is quite recent, the government put \$28.5 million to do the implementation of phase I of the oceans action plan. There are 20 departments—DFO is not the only one, as I stated—involved in the implementation of the Oceans Act. On its own, that is a huge challenge. It would be interesting to see how much has been accomplished with that \$28.5 million. If you want, Kevin may give you more details on that.

Also, it was crystal clear that the oceans action plan and phase I of the oceans action plan cannot be achieved with the \$28.5 million that was given to the departments. That was clearly stated by the department itself.

• (1550)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Do I have time for another question?

**The Chair:** No. We'll have another round.

*Monsieur Roy, s'il vous plaît, sept minutes.*

[Translation]

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

Welcome, Ms. Gélinas, Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Potter.

Some of what you've just told us can be found on page 13 of your report. You state the 20 departments are affected by the Oceans Act. You also say that the department's role has become unclear, in that it lacks the necessary leadership to coordinate interdepartmental committees entrusted with implementing the act's provisions. Is it a question of leadership, or a matter of poorly defined responsibilities, or a question of will? Undoubtedly, it's a combination of all these factors, but I don't believe the department's role has been made sufficiently clear. For instance, I cannot easily imagine Fisheries and Oceans Canada negotiating with Transport Canada. I realize that this is its job, but it is on the same footing as Environment Canada, Transport Canada and the 17 other departments. It has certain responsibilities, but has it really been made clear that it is responsible for implementing the act? The department may not have made its role sufficiently clear at the outset to gain credibility in the eyes of the other departments.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** No doubt that would be a very interesting question to put to Fisheries and Oceans Canada. However, I'd like to talk about the obstacles that you've identified to implementing the act's provisions. You mentioned two in particular, and Mr. Keddy added a third one. There is the matter of funding, obviously, the matter of leadership — I'll come back to that — and the question of accountability.

The Oceans Act clearly spells out the leadership role of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. That's my first point. Now then, when we look at the horizontal management structure in place, we see that 20 departments have shared responsibility and that there is no framework in place for implementing the objectives of the Oceans Act. Needless to say, everyone is responsible and ultimately, no one is responsible.

This is one of the issues that we identified. We recommended that oceans be recognized by the government —and not by DFO — as a horizontal issue and that accordingly, an accountability framework be developed, one that clearly spells out who is responsible, and for what specifically. Thus, any party that fails to assume its responsibilities could be clearly identified.

I mentioned leadership. DFO shouldn't be wondering if it plays a leadership role, since the act clearly confers that role on the department, along with the role of coordinating efforts to achieve long-term objectives.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** You're not saying that DFO is unaware of its position, but rather that it was given this responsibility without there being a proper framework in place. Wasn't the department responsible for establishing a legislation implementation framework and for asking other departments to account to it on oceans management? That's not what happened.

• (1555)

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** No. This should be a government initiative and that's not what we are seeing right now.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** What exactly do you mean by a government initiative?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It's the government's responsibility to decide who is responsible for implementing the Oceans Act. It must define roles and responsibilities clearly and give DFO the power to ensure that objectives are attained. Such authority has not been granted to the department. It may well make the effort and want to take on a leading role, but it cannot impose its views on others or force other departments to work with it to attain the goals set out in the legislation.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** If the responsibility for taking on a leading role is assigned to DFO in the Oceans Act, then why do we need anything further?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It would be a good idea to put that question to the department and to government officials. You're correct in stating that the act is clearly worded, but the government has failed to make it clear that DFO is obligated under the act to ensure that all parties responsible for implementing the provisions contribute to the attainment of results.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Therefore, something needs to be added to the legislation.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** An accountability framework for all parties responsible for meeting the act's objectives must be defined.

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

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

We now go to Mr. Stoffer for five minutes.

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

[English]

Merci, Madam, for coming with your officials today. I have a few questions for you.

First, have you ever had a chance to work with DND in terms of the dumping of wartime chemicals into our oceans during the fifties and sixties?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** This is something we covered through a petition. As well, although we didn't look particularly at sea-dumping sites, in a previous audit we worked with DND on contaminated sites.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Is there any evidence that there may be some nuclear spent rods, or anything of that nature, coming out of Point Lepreau or other activities that may have been dumped in the ocean in the fifties or sixties?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I cannot answer that question. I can look back at the work we have done and the responses we have received from the department. I can share that with you—it's in the public domain—but I cannot go further on that specific question.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Do you recall what your recommendations were to government in regard to the DND dump sites in terms of identification, finding out where they are and what they contain, and what's best to do in order to mitigate the concerns, such as preventing either fishing or the oil and gas industry around those sites? Should they be cleaned up or should they be left alone? Can you recall what your recommendations were at that time?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It doesn't come to mind. Neil was involved in that, and he may have a better memory than I do.

**Mr. Neil Maxwell (Principal, Office of the Auditor General of Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You're asking me to reach back for old audit work. That's quite welcome; thank you....

The work we did actually focused very much on this idea that the department had to proceed based on risk. They needed first to get a very clear idea of where these sites were potentially, what the nature of the risk would be, and, as you mentioned in your question, the types of uses around that area, the depth and such.

The actual audit work we did, as the commissioner mentioned, was based on a petition that raised concerns about this. The response from the department committed to actually embarking on a risk-based approach to analyze these things. We really looked to see what kind of progress was being made. As of a year ago, when we did that work, we said they were progressing, although we had some concerns around whether they would meet the kinds of timeframes they had committed to.

So that was the nature of our work.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you.

We hear consistently the statement that DFO's mantra is the protection of fish and fish habitat. Do you believe in that statement?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I won't respond directly to your question, but I will read a quick paragraph, Mr. Chair, if I may, from our report:

The role of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the implementation of Canada's Oceans Strategy and Canada's Oceans Action Plan has become unclear. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has a leadership mandate....

I'll come back to that point.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Madam Gélinas, what page is this on?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Sorry, it's page 10, paragraph 1.29.

In the last portion, we just ask this question, which we don't respond to:

Can a department that has historically dedicated most of its resources to managing one of the key ocean-sector industries—the fishery—transform itself to represent and integrate a broader oceans interest?

That is, in part, an answer to your question.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Part of the reason I ask that question is that, as you know, on the east coast we have a thing called the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board. Many times when we ask the minister a direct question, he'll say, "Go see the board for an answer", when it comes to, for example, seismic testing within our inshore waters.

Do you have any concerns here, that the government may, either through design or by neglect, be giving some of its authority over to this quasi board that is shared between Canada and Nova Scotia?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Mr. Chair, that I cannot answer, but this is why we have said that one of the tools under the Oceans Act, the integrated management plan, is so important. With that you are in a position as a department to negotiate with the different users on how the ocean will be managed in a sustainable way.

You have diverse interests, we all know that—fisheries, recreation, aquaculture, oil and gas—and that's the purpose of the integrated management plan, to get together, sit around the table, and figure out how we're going to manage that area in the ocean so that everyone can have his fair share and at the same time protect the environment of the ocean.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Let me ask you this question, very simply: who should have the ultimate authority on the protection of our oceans?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It's clearly stated in the Oceans Act that it's the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** So it's the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It's the department and ultimately the minister.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you.

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

Mr. Cuzner is next.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses today.

I'm going to pick up on a couple of themes that have been put forward over here, first by Peter Stoffer, around the seismic testing. Would the commission come in following a decision made by CNSOPB? Would you do an assessment of their decision, or just the department's role in that decision-making, or would there be an assessment made in line with any decisions made by the federal government on whether or not to go ahead with the seismic?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Kevin knows this area pretty well, so I will let him answer.

**Mr. Kevin Potter (Director, Audit Operations Branch, Office of the Auditor General of Canada):** Mr. Chairman, that's not an area we specifically examine in this audit. Within the federal government, the responsibility for the audits of the overall framework of oil and gas ultimately falls somewhere with the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, but I don't think these specific decisions automatically call for an audit to be done.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Mr. Chair, this is a very good example of a situation in which the petition process can be used. Ask a very straightforward question, or a few questions, and ask who has the

authority—can we revisit the decision made by the commission, and so on? Within 120 days you will have a written response by the minister himself, because he is responsible for the petition process.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** The petition could be presented by...?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It could be anybody in Canada.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** It could be anybody in Canada. Okay.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** It need not be a resident; it could be a company, a municipality, or an organization of some sort. It doesn't matter.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** As Mr. Stoffer indicated...I don't know so much if it's neglect, but when we're looking for the bottom-line responsibility on decision-making, I find it somewhat mushy myself, for lack of a better term.

It can be frustrating, trying to dial down, and that indicates to me that maybe what's lacking is that solid framework. We're not in a position yet to determine what the solid framework is.

I think we're experiencing something fairly similar with the ocean munitions. I believe the status right now is they're still doing the clerical audit on what they believe is.... Have they gone beyond that? Have they broken the surface of the water and gone down to see what's been in these dump sites? I know they've called for anecdotal evidence from any former mariners who may have been aware of any kind of dumping; I think they engaged in that. Has it gone beyond anything...? Mr. Maxwell might be able to answer that.

• (1605)

**Mr. Neil Maxwell:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not entirely current with where they are at. Certainly, as you said, a lot of this involved going back and doing historical research on where these things might be, because it's not evident where you might find them. A lot of it was archival research and such. I believe they've been doing some site surveys, but I'm not certain. I think the point Johanne made earlier was a really important one—that this is a really good example of why integrated management plans are so important. This is one of those cases in which you've got various competing uses, and that's one of the reasons it's such an important tool within the Oceans Act.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Has your overall impression of the management plan enacted in 2002 for the eastern shore been fairly favourable? Is it moving ahead fairly well?

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** We examined the eastern Scotian Shelf initiative. It's the most advanced of all the initiatives that have been undertaken to date. There's a draft plan that's been prepared in consultation with stakeholders on a sector-by-sector basis, and my understanding is that they are now going to bring all the stakeholders into one room to see whether it's a plan they agree to in that particular area.

To add to what the commissioner has just said, beyond the idea of doing integrated management planning at the local area level, we talk about governance arrangements across the federal government—sectoral approaches to integrating, if you like, here in Ottawa at the policy level. That was called for in the 2002 oceans strategy, but had not come about and is starting to emerge, as part of the oceans action plan, with the interdepartmental committee process.

We've talked about it and said perhaps there have been these interdepartmental committees through the long history of this oceans initiative, but they've come and they've gone. We question whether there is a need for some more permanence in these types of sectoral arrangements so that they can delve into the types of issues you're talking about in more depth.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** I would think that built into these integrated management plans would be evaluation processes, so that recommendations can go forward to the minister as to what worked, what didn't work, recommendations on governance, recommendations on areas of responsibility. Would that be your...?

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** What it allows you to do is ensure that all the knowledge and good resources of all the different departments are brought to bear on particular issues as these are identified as key risks in that particular ocean area.

If ocean dumping is identified as a key concern, the departments that are responsible in that area will know they have responsibilities to follow through.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Is there time left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** There are three minutes.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Great.

In a couple of your answers you replied that upon request from the commissioner, the response would have come back through the minister from the department. Do you have the resources to challenge a position that's put forward by the department? Would you solicit independent study, consultants' opinions, seek second opinions on any points, or is it pretty much that you rely on the information provided by the department?

• (1610)

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** We do not challenge the minister's response. We make sure, though, that all the questions have been addressed. That's one step. A petitioner can always come back as many times as he or she wants to ask for more questions. That's one thing. On the other hand, we can audit some of the commitments that were made in the responses. This is what we can do later, down the road.

To take the dumping site, for example, we got a response. Some commitments were made there. We may follow up on those commitments to see where the department is. It can be done through a petition to ask again where they are on it, or it can be done through us, and then we will audit some of the commitments. But we have to have something to audit. If we have a kind of response that is quite foggy, it's difficult to audit them, but we can certainly do some follow-up work.

I have to say finally that so far, the responses we have gotten and the audit work we have done over the last five years show that we have very thorough responses. When we audit, basically the

commitments that were made prove to have been respected and to have moved forward to some extent—maybe not fully and totally, but...

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Have the responses been fairly timely, too?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I would say yes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Maxwell.

**Mr. Neil Maxwell:** I might just add a little bit of trivia—perhaps it's trivia—about the petitions process, which you might be interested in. At least as of two years ago—I'm not sure whether we recalculated this—fisheries-related issues were the most frequently petitioned issues, which we think, first, says how important they are to Canadians and, second, says a lot about how powerful the Fisheries Act is in terms of federal environmental protection.

We've looked at quite a number of those, at different times. Last year we looked at the regulation of genetically engineered fish, for example. That was one of our audits, you may recall. There was some work on the quality of the environmental assessments that were being done. There are quite a few things there.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Well, if I'm asked that trivia at the Christmas party this year, I'll be armed with the answer.

**Mr. Neil Maxwell:** You can thank me then.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** I appreciate your sharing that with us.

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

Mr. Kamp, five minutes.

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

Thank you, witnesses, for appearing.

I don't have anything too profound to ask, so let me begin with some trivia.

I don't know if you've read the book *Death Sentences*, by an Australian author. It's not about capital punishment; it's actually about the killing of the English language by business and bureaucrats, mostly government bureaucrats.

Your language is quite readable here.

**The Chair:** Sorry, Mr. Kamp, this is an Australian writing this book?

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** It is, yes. You should read it. Everyone should read it. I recommend it to all.

The Fisheries and Oceans responses in this chapter are good examples of the death of the English language. For example, read the response on page 26; it's so full of jargon and incomprehensible language, which we've gotten pretty used to. So in addition to environmental audits, I think we need linguistic audits as well.



Let me get to the real question. I would like to summarize your opening comments. If you could put it in a sentence or two, it would probably be something like, “This appears not to be a priority of the government; therefore, it has not met its commitments”. That’s the way I read this chapter, and your comments as well. And I’m still a bit unclear about why you think that is.

Now, on page 2, in the second bullet, you say the department has had difficulty developing and implementing a workable and consistent approach to integrated oceans management.

Difficulties can come from a variety of sources. It could be just a too difficult task—impossible, perhaps. Or it might be for lack of commitment, or it might be just disinterest, or a variety of things. And when you get to the fifth bullet, it says the oceans action plan is the government’s framework for sustainably developing and managing our oceans; however, it does not address all the barriers to implementing a national oceans strategy. Then you list some barriers...translating them into the opposite language. The barriers you list are weak leadership, lack of coordination, inadequate funding, and lack of an accountability framework. Now, are these the real barriers? Is this why the government has not met its commitments in this area? Or is it impossible? Could it not be done in the timeframe that we were looking at?

•(1615)

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** First of all, on the same page, Mr. Chair, under the first bullet, we said that the implementation of the Oceans Act has not been a government priority, so that will add to the root causes or the barriers.

So far, in the course of the audit, that’s the four we have come to, in terms of who causes....

There is something else I would like to add to that in terms of barriers or root causes. In the overall conclusions of this year’s report, which goes way beyond just oceans, we have covered a wide range of issues. We came to the conclusion that turf protection...and working in silos was another barrier. We have also said that accountability at the senior level—ADM, DM—was not there. We have also said that the government keeps reinventing the wheel.

You have an example here also. You start with the Oceans Act, then you move on with a strategy, and then you move to an action plan, and you will have a phase one of the action plan, a phase two. One of the questions I raise in my opening statement is this. How does the oceans strategy—and I have to make sure I use the proper words—fit or link into the oceans action plan?

We started in 2002 with the strategy, with 55 activities that should be implemented by the end of next year—so it’s almost tomorrow—and now a few months ago the government came forward with the action plan. What are the linkages between the two? How can we know if the action plan is the right one if we haven’t assessed and evaluated where the strategy is at? These are more, I would say, the fundamental root causes, which may also explain what is happening on the oceans side and within the department.

Now, I should also add that it’s complex and it’s a difficult task—I will not say impossible, though—having to deal with 20 departments to achieve some clear objective, because the objectives of the Oceans Act are crystal clear.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Blais, s’il vous plaît.

[*Translation*]

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

Good day, Ms. Gélinas, gentlemen.

I’d like you to explain one thing to me. Parks Canada uses the expression “marine conservation area”. The subject interests me a great deal, since we are in the process of establishing one such area in my riding of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

I realize this isn’t part of the study, but could you tell me what distinction you make between a marine conservation area, and a marine protected area?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I’m very pleased that you asked me that question. I’ve tried very hard to understand the difference between the two expressions. It’s a laborious process. I’ll let Kevin Potter give you a detailed explanation. First, however, let me just say that the distinction is based on the wording of the pertinent legislation, for example, the wording used in the Parks Canada Act and in the agency’s stated objectives.

The objective is fairly similar in the case of all protected areas. Parks Canada uses the word “conservation”, while DFO uses the expression “marine protected area”. Both expressions correspond pretty much to the same reality. In the course of our study, we observed that in any event, the same players were involved, namely Environment Canada, DFO and Parks Canada. These departments work together to establish such areas. How these areas are designated depends on the legislation pursuant to which they were established. If you like, I can ask Kevin to explain in further detail the differences between these three entities.

I might also add that the Saguenay-Saint-Laurent Marine Park is jointly administered by Parks Canada and the provincial government. To avoid jurisdictional disputes, different designations are used. The ultimate objective remains to protect biodiversity in marine areas.

•(1620)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** And that park has its own specific legislation that is separate and apart from the ones we’ve talked about here. Parks Canada has its own legislation that indicates that it’s protecting areas of Canada’s marine heritage. They call them marine conservation areas.

I think in some instances they could look an awful lot like Oceans Act marine protected areas. Areas of the ocean are very similar in some ways. They could end up being very similar to what would be protected by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

In terms of Environment Canada, they're called marine wildlife areas. They have a long history of protecting these areas, largely around migratory birds. The marine areas go from the land out into the ocean where the birds are feeding, so there's protection given to them in those particular areas. We say in the report that currently they are protecting about 31,000 square kilometres of marine habitat, and this has been a long-standing program.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** As I listen to you speak, I'm growing increasingly concerned. I don't know if you're feeling the same thing. In light of the objective sought, namely conservation, ecosystem protection and so forth, do we not run the risk of getting caught up in a maze? If at times we use the expression "marine conservation area" and at other times, the expression "marine protected area", won't departments merely end up passing the buck? There's a danger that departments will avoid drawing up concrete action plans. Soon, coastal fishing areas could be involved, for example. Environment Canada could intervene in gas and oil exploration ventures.

Be that as it may, these debates are interminable. Isn't there some way of putting an end to this approach? We're in danger of losing sight of our initial objective, namely that of protecting ecosystems and practising resource conservation.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Mr. Chairman, the government never loses sight of this danger that Mr. Blais has so aptly described. Recently, that is several months ago, the government unveiled its Federal Marine Protected Area Strategy. The Strategy calls for all stakeholders to work together to avoid isolation and the functional division of work. The three departments could have opted for this type of approach, but they did not.

This strategy has been long awaited. I mentioned that 20 departments shared responsibility for implementing the provisions of the Oceans Act. That gives you an idea of how complex a matter this is. Here, we're talking primarily about three departments: DFO, Environment Canada and Parks Canada. During the course of our audit, we heard from the three departments how difficult it was for them to work together on developing a plan. There were some miscues and some communication problems, as noted in our report. Officials now seem to be saying that these problems are in the past. We haven't yet checked this out, as the strategy was only recently implemented. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see, in several years' time, what the government has accomplished by adopting this most commendable integrated approach.

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** In conclusion, I'd just like to say that the risk we run shouldn't serve as an excuse for doing nothing. That could happen anyhow.

• (1625)

[English]

**The Chair:** Merci.

Mr. Stoffer, are you ready?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Sorry, I was just conferring with my expert here.

First of all, I want to thank you and your organization very much for reading our reports. It's very nice to know that somebody at a high level actually reads the reports we do.

On page 24, paragraph 1.60, you noted that we had done a report, and the government agreed with our recommendation regarding the state of the oceans report to document the health of Canada's oceans. Then you highlight that Australia has done just that. Canada hasn't done it yet, although we've asked it and you've been watching for it.

If Canada had that, what would you see being advantageous to help the government in their view of the sustainability and diversity of our oceans?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I guess the first step to establishing a good action plan is to know what the state of something is. If we don't have that kind of analysis.... We have some raw data, and the department is doing what we call regional reports, but there are only facts in there. Getting the facts is one step. Then you have to do the analysis and see what the problems are and how you overcome or address those problems. As long as we don't have that, it will be very difficult to identify what needs to be done.

Certainly, when the act was promulgated it was clear that there were two tools that should be implemented to make sure we have better management of the ocean. It was the integrated management plan and the marine protected areas. We still don't have that. We have said that we have one draft of an integrated management plan, as we speak. Three months ago we had only two marine protected areas. There are three new ones that were added about a month ago or so. So in this area we haven't done much.

To come back to the report, we need to know where we are and where we're going to develop a good action plan. We have the action plan, but we don't have the basic information.

That said, the government and the department itself clearly stated—even though all the analysis hasn't been done—that the health of the ocean is declining. That came out in their own document a few months ago.

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** One of the things the Australians are particularly good at is telling a compelling story about their oceans environment that seems to engage its citizens in having an interest. In our conclusions we indicated that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has not communicated a clear and compelling ocean story to develop parliamentary and public support for its activities.

That's a question we can throw back to you. Do you feel that the information you get—for instance, Johanne mentioned these regional state of the oceans reports, which are really technical oceanographic-type reports—is the sort of thing that will compel you and people in the communities to take an interest in oceans management and the issues that we're talking about here?

It's quite a bit different, the level at which we communicate our story from what they do, say, in Australia.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** You had also talked about the concern you had that Canada would not meet its international commitment to establish what you had identified as representative networks of marine protected areas. What do you specifically mean by representative networks? We have, correct me if I'm wrong, two MPAs now in Canada. According to their commitments by 2012, how many would they have to have by 2012 to meet that commitment?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** If I can make an analogy, the marine protected areas are similar—and, Kevin, correct me if I'm wrong—to the national parks. They are there to illustrate an ecosystem biodiversity typical of a region. This is what we have committed to as a country, and by 2012, we should have ten marine protected areas, if I'm right.

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** That's the commitment from the department.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** That's the commitment. As we speak, we only have five. They have revisited their commitment and now we are talking about having...there are 30 sites that represent an interest. In 2002 we committed to have, I think it was three. We came out with....

• (1630)

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** In 2002, there were going to be five sites, and of course we did not meet that particular commitment in the sustainable development strategy. Five are now in place. The latest three came in October.

To get back to the idea of a representative network—that is wording that comes out of the international agreement. Several international agreements, actually, which Canada is a signatory to, say that by 2012 we'll have in place representative networks of marine protected areas based on scientific assessments of what is required for a particular country's ocean area.

What we have done here in Canada with the Oceans Act marine protected areas...these are areas that have been selected through ad hoc means. They were either done through...for instance, in the Beaufort Sea, the one that's going forward there was long identified by the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry, as an area that should be protected. The gully has been protected; it was recognized because of the species at risk. People say these are areas we should select right away because they're known already. People seem to have agreed that they need some protection.

Other areas, and some of the ones that are more recent, were ones where communities asked the department to put in a marine protected area, so a community interest drove it. These were not based on an understanding of the oceans areas to determine what areas needed to be protected to provide for representative cover. In fact, until the most recent strategy, there really was no definition of what our approach was here in Canada. This came out at the end of our audit. The approach here, in the short term, tied into the five integrated management planning processes that they have ongoing, will be to try to identify areas for protection through a process they call ecologically and biologically sensitive areas.

It requires scientific study and input from communities, but it will be part of the process for identifying, in the future, the areas that need to be protected. Our analysis of it is that because this process is targeted to go well into and beyond 2012, it's highly unlikely that we'll be able to meet the commitments we've made internationally.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Any questions for Commissioner Gélinas?

Can I take a round, gentlemen? Thank you.

**An hon. member:** You have 10 minutes.

**The Chair:** I have five actually. I have only a few brief comments.

Madam Commissioner, you said everyone is responsible and no one is responsible. To me, you've struck the motto of the immigration department. That's been my experience. I hope no one else is trying to steal that motto away, because it's not one that should be stolen.

I wanted to answer your two questions in paragraph 1.29 on page 10 in the English version from my perspective. You ask the question, "Is the department, through its Oceans Directorate, properly structured to play this leadership role?" The answer has to be no, because if it was, your report wouldn't be a negative report.

The second question is, "Can a department that has historically dedicated most of its resources to managing one of the key ocean sector industries—the fishery—transform itself to represent an integrated broader oceans interest?" I would hope the answer to that is yes, provided there is the will to do so. That I think is where the problem arises.

I want to go where Peter was, if I can put it that way, and concentrate on your comments regarding poor reporting to Parliament. This kind of bothers me. You mention that we did a report, which we did....

Oh, before I get to that, Mr. Potter, when you're doing an audit—I'm not an auditor, so I don't know how these things work—it would seem to me you're sitting there in the department doing an audit, whatever doing an audit means, and at some point you determine that the Oceans Act has been around for a decade and nothing has happened. I've got to presume that you turn to somebody in senior management and say, "Why haven't you done anything?" If that is true, what's their answer?

• (1635)

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** Certainly, that is a question that's been asked. I think many different responses have been given, some of which I think Johanne went through in her very first response in the sense that these are new areas that people are trying to undertake. I think they're looking for solutions in terms of trying to find ways to get departments to work together and break down the sectoral barriers, and that has not been easy for them to do.

**The Chair:** Back to Mr. Keddy's question. Did any of them blame lack of money?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Yes, that clearly came up. The answer is yes.

**The Chair:** So that's one of the things they identified that they think is one of their problems with being unable to do what they're supposed to do. Lack of money. Then there's always interdepartmental conflicts and silos and all these things you're talking about. Okay. I guess that—

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** However, before you ask for more money, you should be clear about what it is you want to do with that money—

**The Chair:** Obviously, yes.

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** —and what you want to achieve with that money. That has not always been the case, as that report clearly shows.

**The Chair:** Clearly.

You wanted to bring to our attention that Parliament is being short-changed in terms of information. To begin with, you talk about our report and you say the department more or less agreed with our report in some of these things.

What puzzles me is this: to me, it sounds like when you rang the bell for this committee on invasive species. A decade went by. All the good words were said at all the international conferences. You quote the minister's comments in here about when you were implementing the oceans.... "This is a great thing. We've got to do this. We've got to protect the oceans. We've got to prevent invasive species." Everybody thinks it's a wonderful idea. Nothing happened for a decade. You bring it to our attention. We had everybody here. We had a huge panel, because of course it went from department to department, and the gentleman from Environment Canada—and good for him—said, "We had other priorities; we were concentrating on the Species at Risk Act". So the whole thing went by the wayside.

I have to think that the other priority for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is fisheries. They're so bogged down with fisheries and fisheries-related issues on a day-to-day basis, and all of the management decisions they have to make in that rubric—and, if I may say so, small craft harbours—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** —that they simply have not had the time to prioritize this as something they should be working on. To me, this is just another example of invasive species and how it's not being looked at. How do you respond to that? There's my five minutes.

**Ms. Johanne G  linas:** I have to be supportive of what you have said, because we clearly stated that ourselves, and nothing in an audit chapter is not supported by evidence.

What we found in the main point, the first line, is that implementing the Oceans Acts and the subsequent oceans strategy has not been a government priority.

**The Chair:** A government priority? It hasn't even been a ministry priority, or is that what you meant, those two phrases interchangeably?

**Ms. Johanne G  linas:** No, the government is broader than the department itself. When we were saying earlier that the department had reallocated \$100 million, there's a link between the oceans and invasive species. If you have to rob Paul to pay Peter, you're moving the air, but at the end of the day you're not achieving all your objectives with less money, unless you have a lot of creativity. Some would assume that it's hard to achieve your objective with less money.

In this case, it was clearly stated that the money came from elsewhere to try to do some of the work. We have also said the department has been in a reactive mode for many years, trying to address the more pressing issues, and you all have one that comes to mind.

•(1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think we're probably going over a number of issues that have been raised already, but I'm still trying to track down the money problem. I'm still on that scent, if you will; follow the money.

When you look on page 4, chapter 1, you've outlined great examples: 19,500 metric tonnes of aquaculture in 1988; 151,000 metric tonnes in 2003, a huge increase, a 650% increase; the value of the offshore oil field was \$250 million in 1988, it's \$5.3 billion in 2000, and, I would suggest, more than that today; container shipping has doubled from 12.6 million tonnes to 26 million tonnes in 2002; the commercial fishery is still worth about the same amount of money, and although the fish stocks have been depleted, we've seen a dramatic shift in the fishery, with an emphasis on aquaculture and shellfish; a 185% increase in cruise ship activity, I was quite shocked to see. So we have more and more use of our oceans, of our waters that we have jurisdiction over, a tremendous increase in use, and still no real vision or mandate of how to deal with all these stakeholders in a new ocean, if you will.

You mentioned sectoral barriers, jurisdictional barriers, and you even question whether DFO is able to manage this new ocean. To me, this one page crystallizes more than anything else in your report the demands that are out there. Anywhere in your study, did you come up with some type of corroborating evidence or statistical evidence from Australia or any other jurisdiction on what it would actually cost to implement the Oceans Act, to put forward a real strategy, to fund DFO? We know they spent \$100 million over an 11-year period, but is there any estimate anywhere on what it would actually cost to ramp us up to speed on where we should be in 2005?

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** I'm aware of some elements of the costs associated with the Australian approach. It has evolved quite a bit differently from ours; they've been quite aggressive in moving forward and have done a lot of science to support their initiative, because they quite openly admit that they didn't have a very good understanding of their oceans before they started it.

I think in some ways we are quite lucky here that historically we have done a considerable amount of science in some areas, work that really only has to be brought into this process to help make better decisions. We have some very good science establishments throughout the country.

So these things are already directed towards some priorities—fisheries, and the general oceanographic work they do—which can be used for multiple purposes, including this, but if we are to be able to do new work in some areas, it will require funds. Now, as to what those funds are, I think only the department can really answer that or provide an estimate for it.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I hesitate to interrupt, Mr. Potter, but I guess where I'm headed is that when you look at the various sectors that have a sizable interest in the offshore, at minimum they've increased 175% to 600%. We have far more users, if you will, of our oceans today than we've had in the past. It would only make sense to me that our funding to control that jurisdiction would have to increase along with that, because we've got increased responsibilities.

•(1645)

**Ms. Johanne G  linas:** If I may just add one thing, Mr. Chair, this is the whole purpose of the integrated management plan.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Exactly.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** And we don't have any such plan. We won't even know how much money is needed as long as we haven't developed a plan and haven't seen who the users are, what they are looking for, and how we're going to share the pie. We're not even there yet in this country.

**The Chair:** Yes, exactly.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roy, for five minutes.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** DFO was created in 1979, as I recall, when it was split from the Department of the Environment. You say that you reviewed the international situation. Something you said on page 31 of your report caught my attention. You noted the following in point number 5:

There is not one model that captures where oceans policy should rest within government. However, it should be located where it can have influence across government and be independent from industry sectors and interest groups.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Can you recall the page number for me?

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** I'm quoting from point number 5 on page 31 of the English version, from Appendix A, "Lessons learned from international experiences".

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I see.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** DFO is not shielded from the influence of industry sectors because it manages the fishery, among other things. If this approach fails, would you be prepared to recommend in a subsequent report that this responsibility be taken away from DFO and that an entity be created, the role of which would solely be to implement the provisions of the Oceans Act?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Mr. Chairman, in a later report, we will be follow up, among other things, on the recommendations we made and report on the commitments made by the department in respect of these recommendations. Based on our findings, politicians will have to decide if the model put forward several years ago is the appropriate one.

My job is to report on the situation based on audited information. Parliamentarians are the ones who will decide which model they favour. Admittedly, there are different models. I mentioned that the government is committed to developing an accountability framework model. If each party fulfils the responsibilities assigned to him, then we can expect to see some meaningful results.

However, the jury is still out, and we have to see if we will be able to get a response.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Would you have made a similar recommendation based on the findings of the 2005 report?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** At this stage, we confined ourselves to raising the issue of...

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

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** for the consideration of parliamentarians.

**The Chair:** We have a minute remaining, Mr. Blais. Do you have any questions?

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Thank you, no.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you once again.

With the exception of the three people I have here—the next comment is not meant for yourselves—I notice within the department, when I walk around, a lot of folks are nearing retirement. One of the concerns I have is—I'm surprised I haven't asked this yet, and it's probably a rude question—do you feel the department has the people or the personnel to be able to carry out some of the work it says it wishes to achieve?

Money is one thing. You can have all the money in the world, but if you don't have the people to be able to fulfill the mandate and to do it.... Or would it be suggested that the department goes outside to private sources, such as universities and that, to achieve the work it needs to do?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I cannot be specific in my response, Mr. Chair, but I will refer you back to the audit we did, and I hope Neil's memory is as good as it was concerning the dumping site.

When we did the audit of the Great Lakes, we looked at the science capacity, the expertise within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, if I'm right. We stated simply that a lot of the scientists were leaving because of retirement. There was no kind of transition or succession plan, so there was a gap within the science community in the department.

We were told at the time, if my recollection of that information is still right, that it would take 12 years for the department to get a young scientist to the level of a senior one. So if you don't have a transition or a plan to make sure that when senior ones leave you will have younger ones able to take over, you will face a problem. How it is now, I cannot tell.

● (1650)

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** And the department, when it comes to the Oceans Act, is just now defining what it is it really wants from the science branch, the information it needs to provide. It is just going about making the assessment of what skills are actually required and whether it has them in-house.

That wasn't done at the time of our audit, and we say that in the report. In some of the recent departmental performance reports, I believe the department reports the same thing. It is just now getting to the point of determining what skills it needs, whether it has them available, and how it will access them in the future.

That is the answer to your question—it's only being determined now for this particular area.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** One of the concerns a lot of folks have is the effect global warming or climate change has on our far north. In your deliberations with the department, do you feel it's taking it seriously enough in terms of what opening up the far north would mean in terms of shipping, military concerns, etc., as well as fishing opportunities, oil and gas opportunities, and how all of that will affect what basically in many ways was virgin territory, in terms of mass use of those oceans? Do you feel the government or the department has taken those issues seriously, and, if so, what have they done—or what are they prepared to do—to address those questions in the future?

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** We examined the Beaufort Sea integrated management planning initiative in the north, which is the only active initiative under the Oceans Act. It's one of these integrated management initiatives. It was not sufficiently advanced. It had not addressed those issues that you have raised.

But I'm well aware that the government has, outside of that, other ongoing initiatives that are conducted through other branches of government, working with universities. For instance, there's been a recent story about the CCGS *Amundsen* going to the north and doing science work there, but that was outside of our particular examination. That work was not directed and coordinated as part of the integrated management initiatives in the Beaufort Sea.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I'll add one quick thing on that. As we speak, we are doing a full report on climate change. One chapter will deal with science and adaptation, and that might be an area we will be looking at—and I look at Neil because he's responsible for the delivery of that chapter.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** I have one last question for you. In terms of the far north again, in working with, for example, the coastline of Nunavut to, say, Greenland, I don't think Canada would want to do all of this work on its own. Is there close cooperation with other scientists from other countries, like Russia, the Nordic countries, some of the Atlantic countries, the United States, in order to work jointly in order to address the situations of our oceans?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I don't know the answer to that. Maybe Kevin can speak to it.

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** It was not an area that was covered by our audit, but I'm well aware that in many of the voyages when they go north, there are several countries that may be represented on an icebreaker. So you could have Germans alongside Canadians.

There is a network of scientists around the world who are working on these issues, so I have to assume that this would be happening in the Canadian north as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Stoffer, that was an excellent question, if I may say so, and our researcher said so too.

•(1655)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mark it down. Are we on record?

**The Chair:** No, I'm specifically suggesting that you mark it down. If we're here next Wednesday, who knows, but if we are, that would be a very good question—

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** That's the all-party party day.

**The Chair:** Yes, but it's also the estimates and the minister, and that would be a very good question for your opening round for the minister, if you so choose.

Gentleman, anything? No.

Mr. Cuzner.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Yes, I have two quick questions. Mr. Roy had asked about this, and I fully understand it's not your place to recommend other particular models that other countries employ, that other nations employ, but through the course of your work I would think you have an opportunity and make it a point to look at what other nations are doing. Are there any in particular that stand out, that seem to be getting it right, or are there countries that seem to be at least moving a little quicker?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Let me tell you a quick anecdote. When my colleagues started this audit they were planning to look at some countries to do some kind of comparison. Amazingly, one of the things that came out in the course of our work was that most countries in the world who have an interest in ocean management were looking at us to see how much progress we have done because we were the first ones to come out with this very proactive, creative act, which is the Oceans Act.

On their side, they were much more quiet, and they were hoping we would come up with good results, and here we are. On their side, they have started to move ahead, and we may lose—if it's not the case already—our advantage, our leader's position in this area, because of lack of implementation.

It always comes back to the same thing. For the invasive species it was the same thing; we were the first one to come with the biodiversity strategy, and look at what happened in terms of implementation. Almost nothing. This is why I have said in one of my comments in chapter zero that we have to be careful, because we can see in some areas some slippage, and if we don't pay attention to that, we will lose our advantage in some ways or our leadership position.

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** I think it's clear that the Australians have a long history in terms of oceans management issues. It probably comes from their interest in the Great Barrier Reef and the way they've managed that, which is essentially a large ocean area as well as a marine protected area. They have 30 years of experience actually managing that particular area, which is well recognized in the international world.

In terms of the other areas, they are advancing very quickly; they're very aggressive in terms of what they're trying to achieve. I think they would be the first ones to say they aren't completed, it's a work in progress, but they do seem to get some aspects of it done very well in terms of communicating the story. That's one country we focus on particularly.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Just a final one, and it's from what our chairman asked as well. It's about the funding. It's such a catch-all; no matter what group you speak with, whether they're independent agencies or federal departments, it always comes back to, "We don't have enough money".

I had this conversation on the way over. They talk about more money for funding health care. We had two hospitals in Glace Bay. One was Catholic and one was Protestant—pretty progressive, eh? They wanted more money for funding these two hospitals. But the decision was made to close one down. They pooled their resources and we now have access, at far less cost, to far more resources—MRIs, bone densitometers, all that kind of stuff.

To come out and flatly say we need more money doesn't really wash now, I don't think. What specifically are they saying? Where do the investments have to be made in order to address the problems and come up with some kind of resolution?

• (1700)

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** I think one of the unrealized benefits of this kind of planning is that it allows you, using a risk-based approach, to determine what resources are actually required to address the potential opportunities you have in an area. This is not just about protection; it's about trying to do development in a particular ocean area in a sustainable way. So there's not just, if you like, a backward-looking approach to it. It could actually, if applied, say that the resources you have are adequate. But it has to be based on an identification of those high-risk areas, and you have to make some decisions and make priorities. You have to push the lower priorities aside and address the things that need to be done. That is part of these kinds of approaches, and as our reports have indicated, these have not been implemented.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** If I may add something, Mr. Chair, related to your previous point on poor reporting, it was only last year, for the first time, that Fisheries and Oceans Canada reported on some activities and the budgets related to those activities. It was impossible before that to have—in French I would say *une ventilation*—a ventilation of where the money went. You may want to pay attention to that in the next performance report and in the plans and priorities, because in the responses of the department, it has committed to be clearer about where the money has been used to achieve which activities and commitments.

If I may also come back for a second to the responses we got from the department, there are a lot of things that are in motion, as we speak, and certainly in the spring it would be interesting to see how much progress has been made with respect to those commitments. It's in the making. In some cases, we're talking about the end of 2005, the beginning of 2006, and early spring 2006. So you can easily see what the commitments are and do some follow-up on them. As we have said many times—and it's not only for this—the track record is not that good. So if we continue to work together and keep the department's feet to the fire, we may see results come in the near future.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that heads-up.

The frustrating thing, it seems to me, is that these answers and these works in progress always seem to occur after you've done your audits. All of a sudden, the auditors come in, and then before the report is written, you say you're in the process of doing this or you're in the process of doing that. It would have been nice to see a process completed by the time you walked in. I remember the same thing when we were studying your west coast salmon report. The answer is always that you expect something in the next year or something like that. It never seems to be that they've beaten you to the punch, so

to speak, that you walk in there and boom, it's done, and you can actually say, wow, they did something. It's very frustrating to me.

Can I ask you something technical about your report itself? It's dated 2005. I couldn't find anywhere the parameters of the audit. There has to be a stop date beyond which you don't do an audit. You have to write the thing. They have to have a chance to read it; they have to have a chance to respond. I looked in "Focus of the Audit". I looked in "About the Audit". Did I just miss it, or is there nothing in here that says when the stop date of your audit was?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** We don't mention it, but we usually close the books, so to speak, at the end of June.

When we get responses from the department, we do what we call clearance. The department has to agree or the departments have to agree with everything that is in the chapter. It's the last call to provide us with some evidence or facts so that we will make a change.

After that, when we get the sign-off from the deputy minister of the department, we close the book, we get into final writing, and it then goes to the printer.

**The Chair:** That's June of 2005.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** That's right. It's usually three months before tabling.

**The Chair:** That brings me to this question. Please don't take it the wrong way, but this is why I'm asking the question.

You have all these nice pictures on page 4, and Mr. Keddy made reference to them. They're all on facts and figures pertaining to the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003. If you're closing the books in June of 2005, could you not give us more up-to-date information? For example, could you not say that aquaculture has increased by 1,000%, and give us the figure for 2005, or cruise ships have increased by 250%, because as of the end of 2004, there were 2 million cruise ship passengers?

In your pictures, why are we looking at data that is four years old, if you closed the books in June of 2005?

• (1705)

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** It's the most recent data that was available to us. We're restricted.

**The Chair:** I see that the source is Fisheries and Oceans.

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** In some instances, it's Statistics Canada and Transport Canada as well.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Mr. Chair, it's always the latest available information. If we had that information last April and the department came to us with new information, we would automatically update the information. The latest information is put in the chapter by June.

**The Chair:** Which department in charge of tourism only has figures near the end of 2005 for up to the end of 2001? Which department is that?

**Mr. Kevin Potter:** The information on cruise ship tourism comes from Transport Canada.

**Mr. Neil Maxwell:** I might add, Mr. Chair, that here again is yet another implication for the lack of a state of the oceans report. If you had a state of the oceans report, you'd have consolidated and presumably more up-to-date information.

**The Chair:** We'd certainly hope so. We're otherwise going to be basing all our decisions on information that is four or five years old.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** I have to tell you that in the department's response on a state of the oceans report, they told us that they are not committed to that in the near future because of funding limitations.

**The Chair:** Okay. We've heard that song before.

Are there any other questions, colleagues?

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** To follow up on Mr. Maxwell's point, Madam Gélinas, that was the comment I was going to make. The lack of a state of the oceans report, with really no prospect for getting it, is really pretty troubling to me. How can we move forward until we know where we are and where we might want to go? Apart from a lack of money, is that the reason we're not going to get it?

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** You've given me a good opportunity to come up with a closing remark.

Mr. Chair, you said earlier that amazingly or strangely, when we get into a department to do an audit, things are suddenly in motion and you see some results.

**The Chair:** There are promises of results.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Let me take a little bit of credit for that, which I don't usually do.

As I said, if you push, as we do, and keep their feet to the fire on what they have committed to do in the course of the audit and in the good documents, like the two they issued two months before tabling,

they will get into implementation a month afterwards. You will keep asking them where they are at and how much progress they have made, and we will be able to see results. In that position, I have seen results in the last five years.

I can tell you that it works. Keep asking questions and keep asking for progress reports. The committee is doing very well in this area.

Over the last year, Mr. Chair, we have seen that by working together we can make a difference. I think we have to continue doing that.

**The Chair:** Are there any other questions, colleagues?

I think that's a good place to end.

I very much appreciate all three of you appearing today. Thank you so much.

If I may say so, please keep up the good work.

**Ms. Johanne Gélinas:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

We'll see you tomorrow to finish off the cod report at 3.30 p.m.

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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