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Chair

Mr. Gerald Keddy

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•(1115)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC)): I call the meeting to order, pursuant to Standing Order 108 (2), a briefing with the ambassador for fisheries conservation.

I welcome our witnesses. From the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, we have Ambassador Loyola Sullivan, Office of the Ambassador for Fisheries Conservation, and Mr. Wendell Sanford, director, oceans and environmental law division. From the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, we have Mr. David Bevan, assistant deputy minister, fisheries and aquaculture management.

Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for coming. I know everyone has a busy agenda today, and we're starting a bit late, so I'll ask Mr. Sullivan if he'd like to begin.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan (Ambassador, Office of the Ambassador for Fisheries Conservation, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here and for the committee's ongoing interest in overfishing.

As you mentioned, I am accompanied by two officials here from the departments as representatives. David Bevan is assistant deputy minister of fisheries and aquaculture management with DFO, and Wendell Sanford is a director with DFAIT in the ocean law division.

I just want to touch very quickly on some of the particular areas I have been dealing with since my appointment in late January. We'll follow the deck you have there, and I'll make reference to the slide numbers as we move through so that you can follow it.

I have participated in a variety of briefings with DFO and with DFAIT over the past number of weeks. I have been meeting with numerous Canadian stakeholders, and also with key players on an international level.

I participated in a meeting with Minister Hearn and the EU Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Prince, and in fact I had another bilateral meeting with him yesterday. I met with the director of the United States National Marine Fisheries Service, Dr. William Hogarth, and with Mr. Petar Cobankovic, the Croatian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, which includes fisheries in that area.

I met with European journalists on a study visit to St. John's in February. I had an opportunity to meet with representatives of eight different countries, and at the International Boston Seafood Show I

had an opportunity to meet with many Canadian seafood producers, numerous other stakeholders, provincial fisheries ministers, and senior officials in other departments. I had individual meetings with different provinces on their particular issues, and I also participated in numerous round tables with industry there. I had a second opportunity to meet with Dr. Hogarth on issues of concern between Canada and the U.S.

Tomorrow I will be meeting with the Danish ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Poul Erik Dam Kristensen. I had an opportunity to take a first-hand look and fly out over the NAFO regulatory area with enforcement officials to take a look at what's happening, get a personal view of enforcement measures, and be briefed on what's happening on that particular front.

We are on slide 2. We're meeting at a very crucial time in international fisheries. Many stocks continue to decline. I have witnessed personally the devastating social and economic impacts this had on Newfoundland and Labrador back in the early 1990s. There is strong public pressure to combat overfishing. Since that time parliamentarians, the provinces, stakeholders, the environmental organizations, and the Canadian public in general have been calling for fundamental changes to the way the world manages its fisheries. There is increasing momentum to address shortcomings in international fisheries governance, but there is also a growing recognition of the importance of not only managing fish stocks but also the ecosystems and the biodiversity that support those stocks.

One important tool for that is the regional fisheries management organizations. Canada and other countries are seeking to make these more effective at what they do, particularly with combatting illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing in international waters, but especially within the RFMOs. A commitment to tackle overfishing and to increase international cooperation in this regard is central to my mandate.

We need to work within a broader oceans agenda, and I want to emphasize that this is not just a regional issue. It's an area in which Canada can play a major world leadership role—not just to end overfishing, but also to deal with our marine ecosystems and our ocean protection in general. We must work collaboratively if we are going to remain credible with our key allies across international forums.

Next is slide 3. Canada has developed a strategy to strengthen international fisheries and ocean governance under the direction of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in cooperation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The strategy is composed of several elements: managing sustainable fisheries for the future, and also managing for marine, environmental, and ecosystem sustainability. This involves strengthening regional fisheries management organizations and other governance adherence in order to achieve sustainability on high-seas fishing.

We have to be sure we take into account high-seas biodiversity in the ecosystems, which are an integral part of that process. We have to ensure that the management approaches we use on the high seas complement those we're carrying out in our own domestic waters and in the domestic waters of other coastal states.

Building an understanding of fisheries and oceans involves making much needed investments. Investments in science on the high seas are very important for these stocks and the ecosystems that generate this data that's so important if we're going to have sustainable and responsible decision-making. This research and reform will certainly help Canada to implement a precautionary and an ecosystem approach on the high seas. Such research will ensure the sustainability of the ecosystems and associated resources both in national waters and within RFMOs.

For Canada, an ecosystem approach has impacted on other marine sectors too, particularly on fishing, shipping, oil and gas, and also on ecotourism, and it must recognize the sustainability of coastal communities.

Turning to slide 4, our mandate will include a number of responsibilities, such as a leadership role in Canada's efforts to reform international fisheries governance and management, as well as on other key files. I will act as the personal representative of Minister MacKay and Minister Hearn on fisheries issues internationally. I will work to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation with other countries and influence, including at the political level, any resolutions on any bilateral fishing irritants with other countries.

We must generate awareness and political will. I will raise awareness, in Canada and abroad, of our strategies to strengthen fisheries governance on an international basis, and I will obtain commitments from other countries to address a number of the challenges that we have out there today, including combatting both overfishing generally and illegal, unreported, and non-regulated fishing on the high seas. I will work to ensure that we have timely implementation of reforms in NAFO and other RFMOs, ones that emphasize greater adherence to scientific advice, compliance and enforcement measures, and the adoption of ecosystem and precautionary approaches in fisheries management.

We must get other countries to sign on to implement other international instruments like UNFA and to take a greater responsibility as port states, as flag states, and as market states. We must be proactive and exert influence to solve those specific problems. All of my dealings with other countries will be very important.

We recognize that Canada itself does not have a perfect record in fisheries management, but we're striving to improve that record. We're not expecting other countries or RFMOs to do more or take on more responsibility than we would expect of ourselves. It is pertinent that Canada lead by example by strengthening bilateral fisheries relations and cooperation. That's slide 5.

Developing and maintaining close bilateral relationships with key countries is crucial. Recently government has tailored efforts to strengthen bilateral relations particularly on fisheries and sealing issues. We need to resolve bilateral fisheries issues with the United States, not only in terms of bilateral issues dealing with them, but also in terms of gaining their cooperation in dealing in the international fora where we share so many of the same common objectives.

It's also important with other key players in regional fisheries management, such as the EU and Japan. We must build confidence with countries that are traditionally opposed to our objectives. We have to build trust and confidence with EU member states, especially Spain and Portugal. We must also walk with like-minded countries so that we can solve international fisheries issues that are common to all of us, such as working within the North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference to develop closer links on North Atlantic issues with countries that have objectives similar to those that we have here in our country. As ambassador, I will be active on those files also.

• (1120)

In modernizing fishing governance, there are challenges. Arguably, NAFO no longer faces as many serious challenges as many other RFMOs around the world, particularly on overfishing, but if we are to achieve the results we're seeking, to rebuild stocks and have sustainable fisheries, we must be unwavering in our pursuit of improvement, and people must comply with the rules. We must modernize RFMOs.

Canada has emphasized the need to bring RFMO management practices into line with modern instruments and tools, such as the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. We have made progress with NAFO, but many other RFMOs continue to lag behind. Fishing overcapacity also exists in many fleets. On the high seas, fishing states need to reduce capacity. It is important that we manage to conservation goals, not manage to capacity.

On increased cooperation among RFMOs, conservation management measures need to be consistent between the different RFMOs. Also, we need greater coordination among all RFMOs to eliminate loopholes that facilitate IUU fishing. The estimates of the value of IUU fishing range anywhere from \$4 billion to \$9 billion U.S. annually.

Canada has made combatting IUU fishing a priority in its strategy to combat overfishing generally and is committed to talking with all nations to build a credible management regime on the high seas. With the other members who participated in the high-seas task force, we have committed to advance a number of initiatives. Among these, Canada has taken the lead on developing an international performance standard for RFMOs. This will help address and have mechanisms to reduce IUU fishing. These will be available for RFMOs to use as an assessment tool.

On reforming NAFO, we are making progress, and 2004-05 initiatives on international governance have increased monitoring and enforcement activities. These have resulted in improved compliance in the NAFO regulatory area. Increased compliance is especially visible in areas in fishing effort—in the number of days, the fleet size, the number of vessels that are there—the catch of moratoria species, and the excessive catch of Greenland halibut. The NAFO annual general meeting back in December has laid the groundwork for permanent changes through modernization of the convention and through improved governance. We hope to finalize this at NAFO's meeting in Montreal in April.

Canada will build on the success it achieved at the 2006 annual meeting of NAFO. We look to improved governance and also an ongoing introduction of new monitoring, control, and surveillance measures that are capable of addressing non-compliant behaviour in the NAFO regulatory area.

Maintaining change in behaviour on the water is critical if we are going to have success. Canada is adamant in its resolve that it needs to manage fisheries in the NAFO regulatory area in a manner that is consistent with how we manage fisheries within our own area of total jurisdiction, rebuilding fish stocks over time in the NAFO regulatory area to a level that ensures the sustainability of those stocks for future generations in every country that fishes those stocks. We must broaden application with an ecosystem approach.

In summation, these actions create conditions that would provide a stronger course if we are to rebuild our fish stocks in this area.

Slide 8 is dealing with “Promoting Canada's Sealing interests”. It's a source of great frustration to me personally, and I'm sure to the government—and I know the committee has discussed this on previous occasions—that we are targeted by misguided animal rights groups and by people and governments who bow to their campaigns instead of dealing with other governments.

• (1125)

We must have a proactive sealing campaign. I've been very active on this file since taking over this position. I met with European journalists on a study visit to St. John's back in February to discuss the hunt, and I'll be leaving next Saturday to five European countries over a period of 13 days to push this issue in a more proactive campaign, commencing next week.

I will be working bilaterally and exerting strong influence where required on behalf of Ministers Hearn and MacKay to defend our interests. We must work with like-minded countries, and over the coming weeks and months I will be creating a network of like-minded countries, those who can work together with us to have innovative solutions to the challenges that face all of us.

We must continue the message. The message hasn't changed. The seal hunt is sustainable and humane. It's been a part of the culture and the economic fabric of many parts of this country and parts of other countries.

We must advocate for sustainable communities. However, I'll be advocating and promoting the seal hunt as an integral part of those sustainable communities. We have the Inuit, for example, in our country, and Newfoundland and Labrador, Atlantic Canada in general, and in Quebec the Magdalen Islands are an important part of this approach to sustainable communities. I expect all Canadians to lend their support in the promotion of our seal hunt.

Once again, I want to mention that I appreciate the work the committee has done in this regard in the past.

Turning to the final slide, as we move forward, in recognizing my priorities in the short term, we'll have to focus on establishing key relations, strengthening the relations we have with critical allies, and promoting Canadian interests as strongly as is required.

This slide outlines some of these priority actions. I've made reference to advocacy in Europe on the seal hunt. I just recently met again with Dr. Bill Hogarth, director of the United States National Marine Fisheries Service. I've had two occasions to deal with him on issues that are common to both our countries.

I'm meeting with the Danish ambassador tomorrow. I'll be representing the government in supporting Canadian seafood producers at the international seafood exhibition in Brussels later on in April, and I will be attending the North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference that will be held June 20 to 23 in Greenland, pushing those issues. Those are some of the short-term things.

I'll stop at that. I thank you for your attention. I'm open to any particular questions or comments you have.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you for that briefing, Mr. Sullivan. You are welcome at the committee. We appreciate your showing up today.

Before we go to our first questioner, who will be Mr. Simms, I'd like to bring you up to date. The committee is continuing. You mentioned several times our working on the sealing issue in the past, but we're certainly working on it in the present as well.

It's an issue that's been near and dear to this committee. We've worked hard to reach consensus and to find some new ways of approaching this age-old problem. Certainly when we finish this report on sealing, we'll have some recommendations in it that should be very useful to you in your approach with the Europeans and on this issue in the future.

We'll go to Mr. Simms.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I thank the ambassador for coming, and members of the departments respectively.

This is a motion we brought forward a few weeks back, and I appreciate the expediency of this.

I want to delve into strengthening of relations. You talked about the fact that you hope to strengthen bilateral relations and, if I paraphrase you correctly, seek out the irritants by which these relations have been strained. Can you give me an example of what some of these irritants are to you?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: My reference to irritants wasn't necessarily to building relationships. One of the goals was to work with irritants between different countries. Resolving irritants has strengthened relations, no doubt. Both of them mesh there.

I'll throw out an example of an irritant. The Machias Seal Island lobster fishery would be an irritant between us and the U.S., and we're working on that issue—or whether there will be a renewal, hopefully, of the Pacific salmon treaty. While it may not be an irritant, it was very successful. There are five chapters coming up. If it's necessary for me to be involved in that issue, I will be, but we're optimistic on that one that it's moving well. There is very much cooperation and very common—

Mr. Scott Simms: But by which form do you seek these irritants? To you, if you say there are so many irritants in the species you've mentioned, you go to Europe. How do you plan to address this with the European Commission or the European Union?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I certainly will address that, but my reference to irritants was in bilateral irritants that are occurring with countries. I have to work with these to get a resolution to those irritants—

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay, let's go back to the syndicated—

•(1135)

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Overall, if we look at NAFO, for example, and if you wanted me to elaborate on how we might deal with that, one of the areas in advancing governance in the NAFO area was last September agreeing to changes in enforcement and management, which came into effect on January 1, and also changes to the convention, which will be discussed in April in Montreal.

If we advance these issues and get agreement there, and I think all the countries right now that are parties to NAFO, except two—and one has no fishing and will limit fishing—have agreed with the instrument of UNFA. So in other words, they've been buying into, getting people to—

Mr. Scott Simms: Can I ask you about that? They've been buying into NAFO. Let me focus on NAFO and all the things you've mentioned, the improvements over the past year, two years.

In the past, you have been a strong advocate of custodial management. Do you think we have achieved custodial management today?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I'd like to indicate that in the past I have never personally rendered an opinion on custodial management overall, but overall, I feel the situation that's important is that we

have to manage fisheries in our FMOs, which are in areas on the high seas that all countries have a right to, in the same manner that we would manage our fisheries inside our exclusive economic zone.

If we could bring that same management to NAFO—and I feel we're on the path to doing that—April will certainly give us some indication of whether the resolve is there with the other NAFO states that are contracting parties to NAFO to do that.

Mr. Scott Simms: If a citation is served to any particular vessel—for lack of a better term, I'll use a pirate vessel on the open seas—and we know who they are—They are the usual suspects. You've toured the area; there's a fairly long list of them. When a citation is served, whether it be mesh size, moratorium species, overfishing, bycatch, whatever, in your opinion, what should happen then?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: First of all, I think we have to look at two periods, prior to September NAFO and post-September NAFO. During this period last year, for example, there were 28 on-board inspections and seven violations. This year, with 30 since September, there have been no violations or no citations.

So I'm confident, and time will certainly tell, that the improvements brought in at NAFO in September—and I hope agreeing on changes to the convention to look at more responsible management—will involve the precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, dealing with objection procedure on our part, which would change the NAFO convention. We've already initiated and moved forward on enforcement measures. They're already in play and they're—

Mr. Scott Simms: Such as—

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: They're in play. Enforcement measures would be if there's a violation, a serious violation, some repeat offenders, fishing for directed species in these areas, you would have to go and report.

Mr. Scott Simms: In your opinion, what is a just penalty?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: A just penalty would be a penalty that's going to be a very, very significant deterrent to fishing in that area.

Mr. Scott Simms: Such as what?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: It would inflict such hardship on them that it would discourage that fishing in the future.

Mr. Scott Simms: How?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: That would be a just penalty in my estimation.

Mr. Scott Simms: Indeed, and I agree, but elaborate further.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Overall, each country has its own system of jurisprudence. If a case is brought before any particular country, we can set legislation in our country, and our courts could render penalties in line with what we do.

Mr. Scott Simms: To them? Do you think they should be penalized to our way of thinking? To our—

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: We would like to see a common system of penalties and punishment doled out to whichever contracting party in NAFO was there, regardless of where, but we don't have jurisdiction over the court system in other countries. We just don't have that. That's fundamental. I mean UNCLOS—

Mr. Scott Simms: But that needs to be improved. Would you agree?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I think we need to get those countries—And that's what I mean. I mean building cooperation, building this to encourage those countries to adopt the same levels of punishment or to give it a higher priority when in their states, when in their jurisdictions.

Mr. Scott Simms: And are you happy enough with the direction of NAFO to say that that will happen?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I'm never happy with anything until I see the final result.

Mr. Scott Simms: True.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I will say that I think it was a significant step forward. Bringing countries together and contracting parties to adhere to principles of conservation and proper management sets a tone. It sets a different atmosphere. It makes them responsible fishing nations. If we don't get some—

Mr. Scott Simms: But some have not been responsible.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: They haven't. That's why it's so important that we keep working on it.

Mr. Scott Simms: I'm trying to explore the idea of what tools we use to take these people to task.

• (1140)

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: First of all, the bigger picture, I guess, is the NAFO Convention. We have conservation enforcement measures that don't need changes to the convention. Overall, it is getting countries to agree to UNFA. There are now 65 countries that have signed on to UNFA, as of March 7. They're important in setting that. There are ways to control them: rule vessels out for fishing, deny access to port, deny market access for illegal products. Those types of things, I think, are impediments to pursuing illegal fishing.

IUU fishing in the NAFO area, for example, is not an issue anymore. Overfishing and IUU fishing are two separate entities. IUU would be overfishing, but it could be legalized overfishing, where you set your own quota if you disagree with it. If the objection procedure is brought in now, it would be agreed that they would have to go to a third independent party to indicate whether there's justification for ignoring the scientific advice.

Mr. Scott Simms: If Denmark said to you that they don't think they've overstepped their boundaries in getting more shrimp—which has happened—and they feel they deserve more and therefore will fish for more, through your position as ambassador, what action do you take?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I guess there's one aspect overall.

We're aware that the Faroese have been fishing in 3L shrimp in an amount that, as you've said, while it has been reduced, is still not down to a level that's within the quota based on scientific advice.

So we have to stress, number one, the importance of adherence—that's one aspect—by getting an objection mechanism in place so they do not have the sole power to unilaterally set that quota. They have to justify that in front of an independent party and put forward their case. If there's legitimacy to their case—that they got an unfair share in the beginning, that it should have been a higher amount, that we were conducting fishing in that area back in the nineties, whether it was experimental or what it was—and there are certain arguments, their issues must be resolved within the NAFO realm, not bilaterally. They wouldn't be resolved bilaterally. They're issues for NAFO to deal with and they're issues that our country, as a contracting party to that, would be pushing for a resolution of that issue—

Mr. Scott Simms: What if as a single nation we object—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. Simms.

We'll go to Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Good morning, Mr. Sullivan.

We were very much looking forward to meeting with you today, but to be honest, we were also quite apprehensive. I don't really understand your mandate and how you will go about doing your job. I wouldn't want to see the ambassador for fisheries conservation block any concrete initiatives aimed at resolving international problems. I wouldn't want you to have to answer to the fact that progress isn't being made on some files, namely overfishing and the seal hunt. We'll come back to the seal hunt during the second round, since I don't think I'll have time to broach the subject during the first go-round.

You were appointed to this job only two months ago. New appointees are always given time to get up to speed, but you will have to get results and prove your mettle fairly quickly.

First of all, I'd like to know the name of your actual employer? Is it Foreign Affairs and International Trade, or Fisheries and Oceans?

• (1145)

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: *Merci.*

My position is 50-50 shared through Foreign Affairs and DFO. I report to both ministers through the respective deputy ministers on the position.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I'm far from being reassured by your answer. If a country with whom we are on good terms were to violate fishery laws, I get the feeling we would find ourselves in the same boat as we were a few years ago, that is we would hold off before fining or admonishing the transgressor for overfishing.

If in fact you have two employers, namely Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Fisheries and Oceans, I have a feeling that at some point, one might ask you to do one thing, and the other, the very opposite. At worst, you might end up doing nothing at all. That's why I'm very apprehensive.

You have a lot of work to do to bolster our confidence in a position of this nature. It's nothing personal, because you have a solid resume. However, as you so aptly stated, you're taking on this job at a time when one crisis seems to follow closely on the heels of another.

Since your appointment, have you met with anyone from Quebec? If so, with whom?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: With reference to the first question, Mr. Chair, when I bring information and I deal with the international community, I speak with one voice for Canada. There are no two voices I speak with; Canada has to speak with one voice.

I would bring to that an emphasis that we have to be on the one page. In my past, referencing your preamble, any task I have taken on before—I have worked in probably three different careers. I spent 20 years in a classroom as a science teacher. I spent 20 years in the fishing industry and 15 in politics. I think I'd be safe in saying that I brought a commitment to those positions, and no one has ever doubted my commitment to doing the job ever before. I hope at the end of the day you could say the same about this position, and there will be only one voice in it.

I have not had an opportunity yet to meet with Quebec. I met, at their request, in Boston with the British Columbia government and their officials. I had a request from Nova Scotia to meet with them and I met with them at their request. I've met with both these provinces to date. They are the two requests I had, and I am open and prepared to meet with any and all provinces.

I think I'm here to represent the entire country in this job. I'm accessible and I am prepared to meet with anybody who wants to put forward a view to give me an understanding of the issues with their province and particularly how it impacts on international issues.

In particular in your province I know the sealing issue is one specific one. I know the value of Quebec in the export of seafood products there. It is significant. I think it is within the \$400 million range, and that is very significant.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: My colleague Mr. Asselin and I are interested in meeting with you to discuss our concerns and your work at greater length. We want to help you carry out your mandate by giving you a chance to meet with us. My schedule is very flexible.

My other question concerns your budget. You have two employers. Is your budget also shared equally by the two? What is in fact your budget?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: The overall budget is \$550,000, shared equally between both departments, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: You have a budget of \$550,000?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Yes, about \$550,000. If you look at history, back in 1989, when the position was first instituted, there was a \$3

million budget. The budget at that time, 18 years ago, had \$3 million, but about \$2.5 million of that was for advocacy. That was a part of the position at the time, but it is not the case now. When you take that off, the budget is roughly the same as it's been from 1989 to 1996.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Is travel also included in that \$550,000 budget?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Yes, the budget includes my position, two staff positions, and all travels costs.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan, for that brief answer.

We're going to move on to Mr. Stoffer.

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

Thank you, Mr. Sullivan, for appearing today, and the departmental staff.

Sir, just to back up a bit, you mentioned the seal hunt twice in your presentation. As you're aware, this committee is about to finalize its report on the seal harvest, and we're very, very cautious not to use the word "hunt". So I respectfully ask that in your position you refer to it as a harvest. A "hunt" just brings up so many red flags to those, who we call environmentalists, who are opposed to any hunting, period. The sealing, in our view, and any fishing of stock out there, is a harvest. I respectfully ask that you use the word "harvest" in your deliberations, especially in international discussions.

The second part, sir, is that you were previously finance minister in the Newfoundland and Labrador government. Is that correct?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Sir, when did you leave that position?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I left that position on December 29.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: And when did the position of fisheries ambassador come available to you?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I got a call on January 23, when the position became available.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: So roughly within a month then?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: That's correct.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Very good. Thank you.

Sir, one of the concerns dealing especially with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and that of Quebec is the issue of the irritant of the 20% tariff on cooked and peeled shrimp. Have you been dealing with that issue at all, or have you had an opportunity to discuss it with the European nations?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Yes, Mr. Stoffer, I have, to a great extent, as late as yesterday with the EU ambassador to Canada, and I've stressed very strongly that we need very, very significant changes in the ATRQ. I anticipate that in the next four to five weeks there will be a recommendation to the EU to deal with that issue.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Okay.

Sir, when you were in the provincial government, as you may or may not know, your premier at that time received a letter prior to the last election in January of last year, stating that if the Conservatives had formed the government, they would move towards custodial management. As you may know, Minister Hearn was a strong advocate of custodial management when he was on our committee in opposition. In 2002 and 2003, this committee did unanimous reports on custodial management. We were assured that custodial management would happen. In fact, the all-party committee from Newfoundland and Labrador came down here to request custodial management. I'm just wondering, in lieu of the question from Mr. Simms, is custodial management still on the table or not?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I think the question by Mr. Simms was on whether I have supported custodial management. I haven't made a statement on custodial management. The government, which was a member, made a statement. I just wanted to clarify that, because I think that's where the question came from.

On custodial management—and this is the Government of Canada's position as conveyed to me—we want the same management regime in place outside our exclusive economic zone in NAFO as we apply inside it. We expect the same in the world community as we expect from ourselves.

Right now, all countries in NAFO have signed on to UNFA except for two contracting parties: Korea, which doesn't fish in the NAFO region, to my knowledge; and Cuba, very limited. The rest have agreed with the principles of UNFA that would bring responsible management to the NAFO area.

We're certainly confident that with the changes enacted and the changes, hopefully, with the NAFO convention, we will have all like-minded countries moving together with the proper conservation needed as we would apply inside our exclusive economic zone.

• (1155)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you.

In lieu of my question for Mr. Blais on whether you have met anyone in Quebec yet, have you had an opportunity to meet any people from Nunavut yet?

As you know, there is concern among fisheries in Nunavut about Greenland and others coming in under so-called flags and having fish processed in other countries. Are you aware of those concerns? Have you had an opportunity or are you planning in the future to meet with those individuals?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Under my mandate I would certainly like to meet with everybody who has a stake in dealing with that and any impact on it.

I spoke with representatives—not official representatives of the government—at the seafood show in Boston. Nunavut is engaged—and hopefully Premier Okalik—in this mission I'm going to Europe with. We're looking at partnering with the premier there. I can't say whether the premier will be there, but there will be representatives from Nunavut, and we've engaged them in this issue.

I'm familiar with some of their pressing issues. I've had discussions with people in Nunavut on the catching and processing.

Some of them are domestic issues. I'm not going to weigh in on domestic issues—that's not my responsibility. But I will certainly be tuned in on issues that impact international fishing areas.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. Manning.

Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly want to welcome Ambassador Sullivan here this morning and the people from the departments. For those who may not know, I have known Ambassador Sullivan for many years, and I think the position is very fitting. I look forward to some positive news from his new role.

In a previous answer to Mr. Blais, you alluded to your history in the fishing industry. Can you clarify exactly how you were involved in the fishing industry over a 20-year period?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I became involved in the fishery in 1974, and with another partner I spent 20 years in industry. I was an owner-operator of two fish processing plants. One in particular was primarily for groundfish, but it also did pelagics, tuna, salmon—just about anything that swam and was available to be harvested and purchased.

We marketed deboned and individually wrapped packages to a variety of different markets—several different types of products. We marketed primarily in the United States. We had a significant demand for skin-on cod fillets in the U.K. market, tuna in the Japanese market, and squid in the Japanese market and other Asian markets. We dealt with salmon when it was on a commercial basis to domestic markets here in Canada. We also operated a salt fishing operation that marketed salt fish primarily to European countries.

We had reasonably extensive operations at that time and significant volume, with a daily capacity for groundfish of about 130,000 pounds a day and a capacity on pelagics of about 140,000 pounds a day. That was the maximum volume of the operations there.

• (1200)

Mr. Fabian Manning: Thank you.

Realizing that you're the ambassador for Canada, I want to zero in on my problems and yours in regard to Newfoundland and Labrador. As the ambassador, what do you see today as the most important issue facing the fishing industry in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I see this as domestic probably more than international, because Canada's fishing on the high seas is very limited. We don't do extensive fishing on the high seas, maybe because we developed a strong coastline, a continental shelf that has sufficient resources within our area. Overall, I see controlling overfishing as being very significant.

Dealing on the international side is advancing the ball to ensure that other countries of the world take this business seriously, that we're going to have a resource around for future generations. We have to use whatever pressure is necessary. It would be in varying amounts, depending on the particular state, to ensure we're going to have that fishery there and what mechanisms we need.

There are some ongoing ones related to your question on Newfoundland and Labrador, and that's getting nations to sign on to UNFA. As an example, there are very strong measures in UNFA. As of March 7, 65 have signed on. There are another 38 that are landlocked or shelf-locked that don't have a direct interest in signing on, so that would only leave about 40 more to sign on, if you look at the 152 that have signed UNFA.

So it's close to 60% of the ones with a direct interest. Getting those countries to advance and sign on—We've had some interactions, even in my short seven weeks in the job, to try to advance the ball in those areas too. I think they impact us all; they impact every single province, not only Newfoundland and Labrador, because when nations take on a fishing responsibility, that benefits everybody. I think one of my roles is advancing that issue and using whatever leverage or mechanism and support available to be able to achieve that goal.

Mr. Fabian Manning: I would like to follow up on that. The high seas task force released in 2006 a fine report outlining measures they would like to combat the IUU fishing. The task force was formed, as you're fully aware, back in December 2003, and it includes fishery ministers of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Chile, and others, as well as representatives of the WWF International, the World Conservation Union, and the Earth Institute.

What will Canada's specific role be in implementing some of these measures?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Overall, there were seven recommendations in the high seas task force report. Four of these were ongoing. There are three specific ones, I think, in which Canada is certainly playing a leading role.

One is to have a model RFMO—in other words, having a model fisheries management organization there—and we're making significant strides in developing that. I made reference to it in my overview at the beginning. Moving this on and using this as a tool by people who can refer to it as a benchmark in other countries is very important.

A couple of other areas, in particular, are ones that the FAO has taken on, like an international vessels database and a proper monitoring, control, and surveillance system. Registry vessels have better tracking at sea, appropriate monitoring.

Those are the three key things we're playing a role in, from the high seas task force, to advance this issue. I would say those are the three key ones. There are some other ongoing ones that have surfaced before, but we're playing a lead role in advancing the model RFMO. That would be the key one I would single out.

Mr. Fabian Manning: Do I still have time?

The Chair: Yes, you have had three and a half minutes.

Mr. Fabian Manning: You're very generous today, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: At ten minutes I'm not generous.

Mr. Fabian Manning: NAFO is currently engaged in a reform that will hopefully improve the fisheries outside Canada's 200-mile limit. We've discussed it over the years, and we've all been party to those discussions, and certainly party to the concern we have as Canadians about the overfishing outside of the 200-mile limit.

In regard to the NAFO reform—and the minister has put forward and been successful in creating some wonderful reforms at NAFO—I'm just wondering if you could tell us about the status of some of those reforms at the present time.

• (1205)

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I alluded earlier to some specific areas that were part of the NAFO conservation and enforcement measures. Three of the ones I alluded to earlier came into effect on January 1. I guess the significant change to the convention that will be on the table in Montreal in April at a meeting for discussion is the objection procedure. In particular, for example, as we alluded to earlier, if we set a quota for the Faroe Islands of 3,000 tonnes and they fish 8,000 tonnes, they would have to go through an objection procedure—that would be through an independent—to justify their case. That's one specific aspect.

The other part that would change the convention I think for all countries, all states, is there would be an ecosystem-based approach and a precautionary approach. In other words, these send fundamental messages to people that, in the precautionary approach, we adhere to science. If we're going to fish stocks, there's a certain reference point, and a reference point dictates a certain level of fishing effort and quota, and adhering to these.

Those are some of the fundamental changes. We're certainly hopeful that the April meeting will bring positive results so that we can see some real, meaningful action by countries. You can forever and ever run your surveillance and do your monitoring; you have to change behaviour on the high seas. I think I alluded to that earlier. There has to be a fundamental awareness by countries to accept responsibility as flag states in carrying that out, and UNFA is one of the instruments that addresses that, in carrying out that responsibility. That's why it's so important. And in NAFO we had just about all the contracting parties agree with UNFA, except the two I alluded to earlier.

Mr. Fabian Manning: I just have a couple of quick questions, if I could, on the seal harvest.

In your role, would you be—"expecting" might not be the right word. Would you be in a position to make recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in regard to quotas for the seal harvest?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: That wouldn't be my responsibility. My responsibility will be to advance Canada's efforts internationally on the sealing issue and to defend the seal harvest on an international basis. And not necessarily just to defend; I think it's to promote the seal harvest, not defend it, because it's sustainable, it's humane, it has an economic value, and it has a cultural value. It has, in fact, a constitutional value with treaties and that.

They're the types of issues. It's not to influence. It's not my role to be an adviser on setting domestic quotas, and so on. That's not part of my mandate.

Mr. Fabian Manning: When you mentioned in your opening remarks—

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Manning. That's just a little bit over time.

The next questioner will be Mr. Matthews or Mr. Cuzner. We have two names down.

Mr. Cuzner.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Blais feels I should give you a couple of minutes to settle after you've been rattled from the searing questions from the other side.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I don't get rattled.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Thank you for being here, too, Ambassador.

Could you give me an indication? Let's look at NAFO. At a NAFO meeting, do you become part of the official delegation, the Canadian delegation? You sit beside the minister, shoulder to shoulder with the minister, at the NAFO table?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: As to what role I play with the minister, I haven't had discussion on that. The NAFO meeting, of course, is not coming up yet. What has been the customary thing in the past, I can't allude to. I am going to defer on that, because I know the minister is the official representative of the country.

Mr. David Bevan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Actually, the minister has delegated that to officials. Generally speaking, at NAFO meetings we go with a mandate from the minister, and we obviously check in with the minister, but we have two commissioners and an official who would represent the country at the table. So there are some changes being contemplated in who the commissioners should be, but right now it would be me as the head of delegation at the NAFO meeting. We have to look at the makeup of commissioners at this point in time.

• (1210)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: So the primary function on the part of the ambassador would be to address, through the NAFO process, some of the irritants that you have identified. He would engage in bilateral meetings outside of NAFO to try to address some of those and set the table prior to NAFO meetings? I'm just trying to get a sense as to what the role would be there.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I'll certainly answer. If you want more specifics from Mr. Bevan than I would have, I'll certainly defer to him.

There is no doubt about it. I met with the EU ambassador on two occasions. I'm meeting with the Danish ambassador on areas of mutual interest to us overall in this area. Of course, Denmark—the Faroe Islands and Greenland are aspects. I'm not going to pre-judge our meeting, but there are issues that we would want to discuss. This is my initial meeting with the Danish ambassador on this issue, for instance, but there are issues that are of concern to us as parties. My role generally would be to push to try to resolve those issues at my level.

Officials will meet and try to iron out issues. If they need a higher level of intervention on behalf of the minister, as it's not practical for ministers to intervene in every single bilateral case, I will make representation with the appropriate people at that level, the minister or the specific ambassador, to do that and hopefully resolve things on a bilateral basis.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Is it common that the NAFO nations or other nations of the world would have ambassadors for the fishery? Is it a common position?

Could you or Mr. Bevan answer?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I'll give my personal view of it.

It's not necessarily that nations would have ambassadors in specific areas. For ambassadors to other countries, there have been various ambassadors in the past who were appointed for special purposes, and Canada had three previous ones. For other countries, to my knowledge, it's not a normal part to have an ambassador for a specific purpose. There are probably a small number of countries that have significant investments in the fishery, as we would have.

I don't know if there is anything specific.

Mr. David Bevan: It's not common. It reflects the interest of the Government of Canada in trying to move ahead on this agenda.

In reference to the NAFO meeting, we aren't going to resolve all the issues of NAFO in one week. It's a body that looks at the management of a number of stocks but with lots of interest. We require the bilateral resolution of many outstanding issues or coming to a resolution, prior to the meeting, on numerous factors that might be under discussion during the annual meeting.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I'm sure I have time for another one.

Could you share with the committee some of the initiatives you have undertaken on the seal harvest to date? I understand there is an initiative coming forward as well, if you could comment.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Probably five days after being appointed, I met with European journalists in St. John's to hear more on the seal hunt and to educate them. I spent an hour or an hour and a half answering questions from the European journalists, in order to penetrate the public of Europe in those regards.

Over the last three weeks or so, we've been looking at a very comprehensive advocacy plan, a trip that would take us to five cities, in five countries—Brussels, London, Berlin, the Hague, and Vienna. It will be over a 13-day period. We're leaving on the 24th or the 25th of this month, at the latest, and we're not getting back until the sixth.

A variety of activities will be held within each area, in conjunction with our people overseas arranging this. There will be participation by Nunavut. They've had discussions with other provinces and other stakeholders in areas on this particular thing. To my knowledge, I think it's funded through the DFAIT budget as an initiative to deal with this.

We've been working on something more comprehensive in that regard for a number of weeks. I would say it has been a significant part of the last three-week period, preparing and seeing what's most strategic, listening to stakeholders here, listening to exporters that may have an impact on it, and those types of areas. It's getting as much input as possible. It's fairly detailed. There's been a fair amount of effort put forward in that regard, and it has taken up a significant amount of time over the last month.

•(1215)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you very much. My questions pertain to the seal hunt.

The first one concerns the European Commission. I will try to be as hard and as difficult as Mr. Manning, but I don't know if I can pull it off. The European Commission has plans to hold discussions with Canadian officials on the seal hunt. Are you in favour of striking a task force with European Commission representatives? If so, what exactly do you have in mind? Have you already discussed plans with the ambassador in Ottawa?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Monsieur Blais, in that regard, right now the European community, the European Union, is looking at doing a particular in-depth, very comprehensive look at the seal hunt. They have rendered a verdict on the sustainability of that hunt; they've indicated the hunt is sustainable.

In two different meetings I've had with Ambassador Prince, the EU ambassador to Canada, we've raised that particular issue. I pressed strongly on him yesterday in a private meeting that if we're going to look at the humaneness of the hunt, we will stack our seal harvest up with anybody. We would like it to be all-inclusive—any countries that harvest seals.

I think it's safe to say that's being looked at in the terms of reference. That's one important thing I've asked. I can't speak for the European Union, on what they're going to build in there, but they did indicate that they would hear from us when they frame that. It's important that we have it be all-inclusive, that it's not only the hunt or harvest of seals. I've indicated, I think very strongly, that I feel we should be comparing any animals that are harvested out there in the wild, whether it's the wild boar, whether it's the deer, which I think Mr. Simms referred to. We have to look at a measuring stick of what's humane, within the harvesting of seals and within the harvesting of any wild animals. We would like to see that in their terms of reference too, when the European Union does their comprehensive study. They're certainly interested in putting independent expertise on this. I'm sure it would go out to a public process to get that expertise, and the necessary veterinarians obviously would have to be a part of that.

So I'm not going to render on what the EU will do. But the points I've made have been made very strongly with Ambassador Prince. We will cooperate in looking at our harvest. We want to see it be all-inclusive, and we want to see a broadened base of looking at humaneness within any particular harvest. Those are things we've said very strongly.

•(1220)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Regarding the seal hunt, does your international relations policy with Europe tend to be confrontational, or does the focus tend more to be on promotion, information and public awareness? How would you qualify your approach? Is it

confrontational in nature, or focussed on compromise, information and public awareness?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Well, overall, it depends on who your target audience is. If your target audience is the public, you would want to put your information out, get facts on the table and lay them out. If you're dealing with media, you want to ensure that they have all of the information needed to make an informed decision.

Some discussions that will occur over the next few weeks will be with parliamentarians. There may be NGOs. There could be other representative stakeholders. There are a variety of things that we're looking at. It's fairly wide. It's not finalized. Some of it's finalized. Some of it's at the stage where it's being completed. It's going to be early April by the time we do our last visit. So these things are all being ironed out. But we're going to have an approach that will reach parliamentarians. I think we need to be getting the message out.

I read some of the transcripts, in the Belgian parliament, for example, of how they're killing whitecoats on the ice. Those were some of the statements that were made. My point is that they're more interested in Europe...some of the comments were made that any killing of animals is becoming not so acceptable. My response on that is if that's the case, stand up with integrity and oppose it on that basis. Don't oppose it on myths and falsehoods and those things that are out there. Have the integrity to do that.

They're the types of issues that we have to get out. We have to get out the facts. I think it's important. We have to be able to ensure, in one-on-one meetings with significant ministers and people in Europe, that these are the facts, that what they're hearing is unconfirmed information based on propaganda campaigns that are feeding off ENGOs and other particular groups.

It's not just a one-faceted approach; it's a multi-faceted approach we have to use in getting the message out.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Blais.

Mr. Stoffer.

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

Again, I go back to this process. I'd just like a little history on how the ambassador of fisheries was created. I know there was one prior to 1995. Under program review it was cut out. I don't recall the government, in opposition or in government now, saying they would create a position if they were elected. In fact, I didn't hear any discussion of this at all.

My question is for Mr. Bevan. When the discussion on an ambassador of fisheries was taking place, was this something that happened over a long period of time? Was the posting for it internal or external?

Mr. David Bevan: There was a process. The strategy was called the international fisheries and oceans governance strategy. That included a lot of additional time, certainly in the NAFO regulatory area, more fishery officers, and strategies to create the conditions for change by working in other fora such as the FAO and the UN General Assembly. Part of that process was also to consider the establishment of a fisheries ambassador for conservation.

So that was done some time ago, but it wasn't pursued at that point. Some discussions took place over a period of time on what the role should be, what kind of individual it should be, and so on. That then came to fruition at the end of last year and in early 2007.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Would the posting for that have been something internal, something the ministers and the departments, between Foreign Affairs and Fisheries, would do, or would it be something you'd advertise? For example, would you get a headhunter firm and look for particular individuals?

Mr. David Bevan: The latter wasn't done. There was a long debate between the departments and between ministers as to what kind of person it should be, and it was ultimately a decision by ministers.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Very good.

Mr. Sullivan, on the issue of the recent discussions at the UN General Assembly on the moratorium on bottom-dragging or trawling on the international high seas, you're correct to say that Canada, as far as I'm aware, does not do any international high seas work at all, if I'm not mistaken. You had indicated in your preamble here, "Many international fish stocks continue to decline". You also indicated that the precautionary approach is something we should be taking not just within our waters, but internationally as well.

What is your viewpoint on an international moratorium—not an outright ban, but a moratorium—on bottom-trawling in international waters?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Mr. Stoffer, just to clarify, the point I indicated earlier was not that we don't fish on the high seas, outside our 200 exclusion. I said Canada's fishing is limited in comparison to other countries depending on it. I think that was the reference there.

I'm a strong believer in precaution in terms of quota-setting, the science, and the ecosystem debates approach, all of which are sensitive areas. In terms of bottom-trawling, there are numerous areas that may be so highly sensitive that there should be no bottom-trawling occurring. If that is the case and it's not practical, fishing would have to cease in those sensitive areas.

There are four areas identified now, I think, as being under review over the next three-year period, and there will be a report coming back there. I think those areas are called the New England seamount, the Newfoundland seamounts, the Corner Rise seamounts, and the Orphan Knoll. They're four critical areas that have been designated as sensitive, from looking at the scientific information, and they're going to do more research into those areas.

Overall, there are aspects that, particularly in line with...the resolution in the United Nations wasn't dealing with a banning; the resolution was dealing with something quite different from what was reported publicly through the media, through different ENGOS, and those particular areas.

On the resolution itself, we have to look at mitigating and minimizing any particular damage to those sensitive areas. If that damage can't be mitigated, there will be no fishing. There are ways to control fishing at certain times, fishing with certain types of gear, the selectivity, when, and where. All of these are factors when you look at making a decision.

The degree is a continuum. There's a continuum of marine-sensitive ecosystems out there. Some are at one end of the continuum and some are at the other. At various points on the continuum, I think you have to realize that your effort and what you do and what you use have to be in line with where it's to wind up on the continuum, and you have to do it in a responsible manner.

On your reference to the international, while we may not fish in other areas of the world, we have a very important role to play, as a world leader, in having responsible management within the RFMOs that we participate in within our own waters and in pushing other RFMOs that we're not a party to. In fact, we are a cooperating non-contracting party, for instance, to the IATTC, and there are other ones onto which we should push our responsible management, other areas and other RFMOs that we're not members of. That would be a goal and a role for Canada to play as a leader. That's an area I would be advocating as falling within my mandate as an ambassador of fisheries conservation.

•(1225)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. Kamp, a quick question, and then Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. We're pleased to have you here. And welcome to your position.

I have one question for you. You've already said that you are Canada's ambassador for fisheries and conservation, so I'm just wondering—Of course, Canada is more than just the east coast. We also have the west coast, where I'm from. Some significant international issues are coming up, and we've gone through, over the years, salmon wars with the United States, trying to come up with a salmon treaty there. I believe that's coming due one of these years.

I'm just wondering how familiar you are with those issues and how prepared you are to deal with them.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: First of all, Mr. Chair, I'm certainly prepared to deal with any type of issue that comes up during my mandate.

With reference to B.C., I had an opportunity to have a meeting, at the request of the B.C. government, with their ADM and two of their other senior officials there to hear about their concerns. I'm familiar with some of the issues we deal with when it comes to the U.S. and other nations that border on our waters off British Columbia.

On December 31, 2008, five chapters in the Pacific Salmon Treaty are due to expire. I made some reference to that earlier in my comments. Things are progressing. We're very much on one page in the management of these particular areas, between the U.S. and Canada, and we're looking forward with optimism that this will be done in due course. If there's a need for me to play a role in doing that, or for dealing with people at a higher level on this issue—It's not possible to intervene in every matter, but we're hopeful that things will still move along and we will reach our goals and expectations.

British Columbia is a big contributor. In 2006 the value of seafood exports out of British Columbia was over \$1 billion. It was almost \$1 billion the year before. They were the number one exporter of seafood in Canada last year—ahead of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island, in that order.

So the west coast is a very significant part of this country. There are issues there, not only with the U.S. but with others in the northern areas. We're partners there, in the North Pacific. In terms of the salmon stocks, the commission there is the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. We're also partners with the commission in the southern part of the Pacific, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, formed in the mid-1980s.

So in two particular RFMOs on that coast, we are direct members. We're very much tuned in with that.

When my schedule permits, I have committed to getting out to the west coast to be able to get some further input, particularly from the Government of British Columbia, on those particular issues.

• (1230)

Mr. Randy Kamp: Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins, you have about two minutes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Ambassador. My question is going to change the topic a little bit, moving away from the commercial fishing aspect of things.

You mentioned in your mandate some issues pertaining to promoting the seal harvest abroad and so on. I'm just wondering if any of your mandate includes anything to do with the sport fishing industry. There's quite a substantial sport fishing industry on particularly the west coast. I know there are some issues there as well that they're facing, and there are questions they would like to have answered.

Do you foresee anything in your mandate, whether it be through promotion or in your negotiations and international agreements, with regard to ensuring a strong and viable sport fishing industry?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: The sport fishing industry I think would be a domestic issue. It would only become international to the extent that there was an impact on a stock from others fishing within a certain RFMO. My understanding is that sport fishing—you can certainly enlighten me on this—would be certainly within our exclusive economic zone and solely within our jurisdiction.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Keeping that in mind, when you're entering into negotiations and talking about precautionary approaches, about

ecotourism, and about marine protected areas and so on, I know that's domestic, but certainly there will be pressure from outside forces for us to meet those obligations we have.

I'm just wondering if you could comment on what you foresee for these marine protected areas. When we come to ecotourism and so on, does that involve things like sport fishing? Would that be something you would be willing to consider, or does it exclude things like sport fishing? Are we talking about preservation or conservation when it comes to working out international agreements whereby we have to maintain our commitments to these marine protected areas?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: I wouldn't want to comment, other than just to make a general comment about our areas.

There are significant areas within our exclusive economic zone where there are areas for protection. That's an issue I think would be more appropriately addressed within the department.

But areas outside the economic zone—on the high seas, in other words—would be one where I have a direct role in dealing with other countries. We have jurisdiction within our own exclusive area. We have the jurisdiction to manage and to do it responsibly. That is a domestic issue. It is something that Fisheries and Oceans would have to respond to.

I know Sable Island is one area. I think there are six other areas being looked at domestically. I am aware of that from my knowledge of the issue, but I wouldn't want to comment on these because they are not really within my mandate and I don't feel I should tread on areas that don't fall within my jurisdiction of responsibilities.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

We are going to go to Mr. Matthews.

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

I want to welcome Ambassador Sullivan and the officials.

It is nice to see him here. I have every confidence he will bring his good work ethic to this position, as he's done with other positions in which he has performed in our province. I say that very sincerely and in a non-partisan way.

I want to go back to the custodial management comments that have been made and I guess fisheries management regimes and management systems. In your remarks and preamble, and then in answer to questions, you alluded to trying to get the same kind of management system or regime in place outside the 200 as we have inside.

I think for most of us who have waded in on the custodial management argument over the years, this is basically what we were pursuing. If we could get all contracting partners of NAFO to fish under the same system, especially one that was acceptable to Canada, then we pretty much would be where we wanted to be.

My question on that aspect of it all is this. Do you anticipate that if you can ever get the contracting partners to that point, where we have a system the same outside as we do inside, that they will share the cost of the system, or would Canada have to pick up most of the tab to get us there?

•(1235)

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: On the cost factor at NAFO, for example—and I am sure Mr. Bevan would be more enlightened than me on that—I am familiar with the shares that are being paid now. In regard to how you arrive at that, I wouldn't be able to tell you historically how they would be arrived at. But I'm drawing a conclusion that they would be in line with, first of all, our quotas to a certain extent. There are different areas in determining cost, I think. There is a certain amount divided equally. There is a percentage divided based on your quotas. I think there are three different ways by which it's broken down in costs.

As to how we are going in the future, I'm not sure whether it is on the table for discussion. I'm not aware at this time of how a new payment structure should occur. It is not an issue that I've discussed at this point. Mr. Bevan might be aware of that.

But on the general issue, before we get to that cost you made reference to, we would want fishing to be in NAFO to the same level of governance that we have inside. We have to start with areas that we are contracting parties to in our RFMOs. We have a vested interest not only by paying but by being members there to ensure that happens.

Then we have a responsibility to not only the ones who are not participating but to try to impress on other countries to adopt these responsible ones. That is where we are leading in developing a responsible RFMO that can be a model for others too. We can't just stop when we've satisfied ourselves that we've conquered it within one RFMO. We have an obligation I think to go further.

I will defer on any costs. I think there are three ways the cost is determined. Some are on an equal basis, some are on a percentage basis. I am not sure, if there are any discussions on when we get the ideal situation we want, if there is going to be a change in that. Is that what your question is?

Mr. Bill Matthews: No. Going back over this long debate, the thing about it is that coverage by observers has been an issue of concern for us all. We've argued with some of our contracting partners that coverage hasn't been adequate or sufficient, because in essence, I guess, they put the observers on their vessels. We've argued, really, that they should be ours, that all of the observers outside should be Canadian as well, because we trust our Canadian observers. I'm just wondering if, in all of these concerns, we are going to straighten that out, and if as a result we can move NAFO to a system similar to what we have inside. Will we be expected to pick up more of the tab or not?

I want to continue, because I know we're going to run out of time. You mentioned the objection procedure. We know what's happened in the past; a country could object to a quota and then go and fish and exceed what was recommended. You're now suggesting there be an independent group that will hear or scrutinize the objection.

My question on that end is, if a country objects to a science-based recommendation on quota and goes before an independent panel for review or judgment, will that country be allowed to fish while they're waiting for the hearing? If they do, then we're really back to square one. You know what I'm saying. Before, they could tell us to go you

know where and go fish, and they could exceed what was recommended.

I'm just wondering if this independent group would stop-gap that. That's another question.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: First of all, I don't think there is anything there to indicate that fishing must halt immediately until it's dealt with. There's a period of time when they could be fishing, but—

Mr. Bill Matthews: The problem I have with that, as you ought to know, is that they could exceed what's been scientifically recommended—

•(1240)

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Yes, I understand where you're coming from.

I guess on the other side of that, what right could allow you to demand a halt for a period of time until it's resolved, when it's going through a process? You know, is it a case of guilty until a verdict is rendered, or are you innocent until a verdict is rendered? They're the questions you have to weigh.

Mr. Bevan, do you want to weigh in on that one too?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I know I'm running out of time, but before you answer, I just want to say there is so much suspicion amongst all of us on all of this, it's hard to get us to buy into this when the end result may be the same. That's all I'm saying.

The Chair: The only judgment I'm rendering, gentlemen, is that we are out of time. So you should be very quick.

Mr. David Bevan: Clearly, the track report of NAFO over the last 20 years would lead one to be suspicious. But the process that was agreed to last year was that you could object, and then you start a process. Now that process has timelines in it; therefore, by the time it's finished, there will be a relatively small window available to the objecting party to actually fish, because he must object after the meeting but before the fishing is allowed to start. The start of the fishing season in NAFO is January 1. So the whole process kicks in prior to the start of fishing, and it has a short enough timeline that the fishing can't proceed to any great extent while the process is under way, because it's short.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you for that information.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Asselin, s'il vous plaît.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judging from the background material we received from the Library of Parliament, it would indeed appear that the position of ambassador has been vacant for nearly a decade. A name was put forward in January and it's March already. There seems to be a great deal of work to do. Personally, I'm somewhat concerned, like Mr. Blais. According to Mr. Bevan, there is work to be done. A strategic plan is in place. The action plan called for an ambassador to be appointed at some point in time. This year, someone has been nominated for the position.

If we proceed to appoint an ambassador, then we should also put forward an action plan, since this is a three-year appointment. Priorities must be established, along with goals. A timetable must be set for reaching these goals within a very tight three-year timeframe. Mr. Sullivan's role on the international stage will be to serve as ambassador much more than as a lobbyist for Canada's fishery. Earlier, mention was made of having him travel to Europe to "sell" the seal hunt. That's more in the nature of a lobbyist's job.

When responding to all of the questions asked this morning, Mr. Sullivan regularly referred to the terms of his mandate. Since he is probably the only person familiar with these terms, in addition to the people who drafted the mandate, I'd like to know, as I'm sure the committee would, what responsibilities Mr. Sullivan has as ambassador. Surely these responsibilities are set out on paper. Could we possibly get a copy of his mandate? I'm asking because you regularly referred to the responsibilities associated with your mandate. This means that you do have a mandate. That mandate must be set out on paper. Could we get a copy of your terms of reference?

[English]

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Merci, Mr. Chair.

Slide 4 of the deck presented to the committee outlines the aspects of my mandate that I alluded to in my opening. I can reiterate some of the key points.

The areas would be to represent the ministers in pressing important issues internationally as a spokesperson for the ministers in international fisheries issues. What issues internationally would we be pushing? We certainly would be pushing responsible fishing practices. I have taken leadership roles in advocating strong governance to advancing RFMOs. One of the roles Canada is playing is in developing a model RFMO so that it can be adopted and used as a tool around the world.

If there are various irritants between our country and other countries that need to be addressed at a higher level rather than at the level of officials for many issues, there is a mandate for us to be representative in that particular role at a high level of intervention. The generalities are outlined here: to advance our fishery management; to encourage, by responsible management, countries around the world to sign on to UNFA, which is a significant instrument or tool in responsible fisheries management; to encourage RFMOs who are a part of NAFO to adopt them; to enhance reinforcement and, in the process, to shape behaviour.

The only thing that ultimately gets results is shaping behaviour and making nations responsible for what they're doing. That's an issue that needs to be advocated, whether it's by me as the ambassador or whether it's through lobbying, or whatever it is. I will use as persuasive terms as needed to achieve the message. Sometimes we require very persuasive messages; sometimes we require more diplomatic messages. When we have a lot of like-minded countries, we can get these together and form a network to achieve our goals. There's a whole variety of things that I could certainly elaborate on at length. I don't want to belabour the point unless there's a follow-up question.

• (1245)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Stoffer.

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

Sir, I'm not sure if you realize, but this committee and members of the committee recently received a letter from the community of Owen Sound, talking about a new invasive species in the Great Lakes. It concerned ballast exchange, not only within our waters. Is part of your mandate at all to deal with or discuss invasive species in ballast water?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Where there are implications on an international basis. If there is a crossing of international boundaries, it would be an issue, but under my mandate I'm not aware of issues that are international in scope within our internal waters at the present. That would be a domestic issue.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Okay.

To go back to that, even though these ships come from other countries, the concern is that they bring these invasive species over. So you have no role in that mandate at all.

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Well, we're living as part of an ecosystem, and I did make reference to the fact that when we're looking at putting in an ecosystem approach there, it's important to look at all aspects, no doubt about it.

If there are implications, whether it's shipping or whether it's oil and gas—and some had reference to ecotourism and other areas—there could be implications on an international basis. If there are international issues, they'll be brought to the table. If it's an issue of the environmental aspects, there are agencies and aspects that would deal with that in their particular forum. Its impact on fisheries would come within my specific aspect.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Do you know how much Canada pays into NAFO? If they have a certain budget, how much of that budget is Canada's responsibility?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Canada pays \$500,000, and there are probably overhead office costs we're picking up in Dartmouth, too, I would say, in addition to that \$500,000.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: What is that percentage of the NAFO cost, compared to what other countries put in?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: It's about 40%.

Mr. David Bevan: It's in the range of half, because we are the ones with the biggest catches in the area. It's about half. The next biggest one is the U.S.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: So Canada pays almost 50% of NAFO. You'd think we'd be the big dog there, wouldn't you, when we go to those meetings?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: Well, I guess setting a fee, a certain amount is in line with your access to the stocks that are there, too.

If you look at, for example, the yellowtail flounder, that would appear to be 97.5% of the quota. Some are much less, but there are significant areas that we fish in those areas.

Whether one particular aspect should be rejigged, we realize that we do bear a reasonable cost, but I think we have a very strong vested interest to ensure that NAFO is responsible. Because of that, that brings with it a high responsibility, too.

•(1250)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Sir, when the previous Pacific Salmon Treaty was done—I believe it was in early 1999, when David Anderson was the minister—those discussions were basically done without the input of fishermen.

I remember arriving at an airport, and on the newscast there was an announcement on the Pacific Salmon Treaty in downtown Vancouver. Fishermen weren't allowed in there. In fact, there was the Governor of Alaska, the Governor of Washington, and some aboriginal groups from the United States. One of the things that concerned a lot of fishermen was that they signed a treaty without fishermen from British Columbia having any input.

When the new Pacific Salmon Treaty is being discussed, which I assume is either happening now or is coming up very soon, will you be advocating, as ambassador, that fishermen and their communities have an input to this treaty and that it be an open and transparent process, as compared to the previous one, which was closed? Or would you have any say in that matter at all?

Mr. Loyola Sullivan: It's dealing with an international treaty, so, yes, that would come within my responsibilities and my mandate, no doubt.

I'm generally aware of the problems in the past by virtue, I guess, of being a Canadian citizen and hearing it.

At this point, I think chapters 5 and 6 are due by December 31, 2008. I think it is in the initial stage at this point. I'm sure Mr. Bevan can tell you exactly where we are in the process and what engagement has been happening. At this point, it hasn't come to my attention at my level, any particular concerns at this point, and we are almost two years away from that.

If there are things, Mr. Bevan might want to comment on that, because I'm not familiar with all the details at this stage of what's transpiring in the renegotiations.

Mr. David Bevan: There are discussions at the Pacific Salmon Commission level that involve, as you know, commissioners from both parties. Decisions have to be made as to whether or not we're going to extend the provisions that exist now or do we want to renegotiate.

Renegotiation has significant risks as both sets of fishermen view that as an opportunity to get more. Both view the fact that they may have sacrificed too much last time around. That's a significant question. Do we want to open that up and risk a fish war with the casualties always being the fish, or do we want to have these arrangements extended? That's a discussion under way right now. If it's based on that determination, then there will be a decision as to

whether or not we set up a process for renegotiation or continue with what we've got.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bevan.

You can ask that question later, Mr. Stoffer. We have another issue to discuss, and that's the trip to Îles-de-la-Madeleine or whether we go to Newfoundland due to ice conditions.

If there are no further questions, I know Mr. MacAulay has a quick statement and question. I would hear Mr. MacAulay, if no one else has a question, and then we'll wrap up.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to emphasize to the ambassador—and I'm sure he's aware of the mussel industry in Prince Edward Island. Peter Stoffer brought up that of course we live in a world community, but we've got invasive species, like the base tunicate and these types of things, that are invading the mussel industry in Prince Edward Island.

Without help from the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of State for ACOA, this invasive species has the potential to destroy the mussel industry in Prince Edward Island. Do whatever you can to put a bug in somebody's ear in these departments, as there are things that can be done and things that should be done. I've made a representation to the departments. All I ask of you as ambassador is please try to persuade the ministers to take a look at this and try to save this very important industry.

We sell mussels, and we are a very small province. You've travelled the world. If you eat a blue mussel, you'll eat Prince Edward Island mussels practically anywhere in the world. I urge and beg you to please indicate to the ministers how important it is that the measures I've asked to be put in place be put in place.

Thank you.

The Chair: We thank you for that short statement, Mr. MacAulay.

Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Bevan, Mr. Sanford, we appreciate your appearing at the committee as witnesses today.

Mr. Sullivan, I wish you good luck with your new ambassadorial job. It's an important job. It's one I'm sure all committee members hope we see positive results from, and given your track record, I expect we will see positive accomplishments.

Thank you for coming today.

I'm going to suspend the meeting, and then we're going to discuss our seal hunt in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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