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Chair

Mr. Fabian Manning

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• (1340)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC)): I call the meeting to order and welcome everybody here today. We're delighted to be in Port Hardy.

As many of you would be aware, we are the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans from the Parliament of Canada. We are in the process of completing a study on the small craft harbours program of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Our study has included bringing people to Ottawa to hear from them there; hearing from people within the department; travelling to the east coast of Canada, which we have done; and now being on the west coast of Canada. We've heard from many stakeholders and are certainly delighted to be here today to hear from you also.

Our committee is made up of all the parties of the House of Commons, including the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Bloc, and we're bringing along just a token of our appreciation for the NDP down here in the corner—just to make sure we cover all the bases.

We had a great time this morning. We visited a couple of harbours here in the area. I have to compliment you on the beauty of the area. I think we struck a great day for it, too, because many people we talked to this morning told us that we had a great day to tour the area. Certainly it's a great opportunity. A lot of the things that we see in our travels are similar in many parts of Canada, but as usual, there's always something that's a bit unique. There's no doubt there are some unique circumstances here on the west coast also.

I'd like to take the opportunity to recognize a former member of the committee, Mr. John Duncan, who has joined us here today. I'm sure many of the members of the committee know John from before. He was of great assistance in helping us set up here today, so we thank him for that.

Our process is that we have the opportunity to hear some opening remarks from some of the witnesses at the table, we open up the floor for questions, and then we go around the table and we do a round of questions, and we time slots for those.

The first thing I'd like to do is ask each and every one of you to introduce yourselves and the organizations that you represent, and then I believe it is Mr. David Schmidt who will start the presentations.

Mr. David Schmidt (Director, Quatsino First Nation): My name is David Schmidt. I'm here representing the Quatsino First

Nation, as well as the Quatsino Community Society, which manages the Coal Harbour wharf. Out here we have many different hats. I sit as a director on the society and as a biologist for the band.

Chief William Cranmer (Chief, 'Namgis First Nation): I'm Chief Bill Cranmer, 'Namgis First Nation, Alert Bay, B.C.

Mr. Pat McPhee (Harbour Manager, Port Hardy Harbour Authority): I'm Pat McPhee, one of the harbour managers for Port Hardy.

Mr. John Tidbury (Councillor, District of Port Hardy): I'm John Tidbury, councillor, District of Port Hardy.

Mr. Rick Davidge (Chief Administrative Officer, District of Port Hardy): My name is Rick Davidge. I'm the chief administrative officer for the District of Port Hardy.

Mr. Rod Sherrell (Chair, Regional District of Mount Waddington): I'm Rod Sherrell, the chair of the board of the Regional District of Mount Waddington.

The Chair: Thank you.

In terms of translation and the piece of technology that's in front of you, channel one is English and channel two is French. We have a couple of people here who converse in French, so we'd ask you to use that. The translation's happening at the same time as you speak, so sometimes you may have to slow her down a bit. That's not good advice coming from a Newfoundlander, because I usually do about 70 miles an hour myself. But most of the time we try to have the translation happen at the same time.

With that, I'd like to ask Mr. Schmidt if he would make the first presentation. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr. David Schmidt: First, let me thank you for inviting me to this meeting. This took me kind of unaware, as I was only informed last week, so I wasn't exactly sure of the purpose and what I was supposed to say.

I'll start off by saying the Quatsino First Nation recently took over the Coal Harbour wharf through the divestiture program. That was in 2005, I believe. Since then, we've managed to keep things operational and just recently completed most of the major renovations that have been identified during the divestiture process. We've also managed to secure some outside funding to actually expand facilities and reinstall a fuel facility that had been taken out prior to our takeover.

When the Quatsino First Nation was first approached to take over the wharf—probably in 1999 or 2000—at the time we weren't prepared or set up and didn't have the management capabilities to do so, and it was turned over to another group. Unfortunately, they couldn't manage it themselves. Thus, in 2005 we ended up taking it over.

We thought this was extremely important for the north island communities, as it provides one of the only links to Quatsino Sound and provides a vital transportation link to the small village of Quatsino, as well as providing the Quatsino First Nation itself with an access point they previously did not have. The Quatsino are one of the only first nations without a major reserve on water in B.C.; as such, some of the history and traditions have been lost. So when the opportunity came up again to take over the wharf, we jumped at it.

To date, we have actually had no problems in dealing with Transport Canada or small craft harbours directorate. In reality, we're not exactly sure where we fit into the picture of the whole wharf community. There is some feeling that the wharf still belongs to the federal government on the public's behalf, and we feel it probably belongs to the Quatsino Nation. There is a kind of juxtaposition here that we're not really sure about. Clarification on that kind of issue is definitely required. We have some users of the wharf who aren't sure themselves and feel it's a free public dock for their own use.

Recently we attended a wharfingers meeting in Squamish, and while we received some answers there, it is still not exactly clear how we fit in the picture. That definitely needs clarification. If we're on our own, that means we have some serious digging to do to find funding to maintain and possibly replace the dock down the road when it does need replacing. If we still fall under the small craft harbours authority, then maybe we can talk.

For now, that's about all I have to say. Things seem to be going quite well for us.

Thank you.

• (1345)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Schmidt.

I believe Chief Cranmer is next.

Chief William Cranmer: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to present to you and your committee the situation we find ourselves in at Alert Bay.

I'm not sure if you all know, but Alert Bay is an island not even a quarter mile off Vancouver Island. It's split into two parts: one half of the island is the municipality of Alert Bay, and the other half of the island is the Indian reserve, the 'Namgis First Nation.

A brief history is that in 1958 the original Alert Bay boat harbour was constructed in front of 'Namgis Indian Reserve 1A. This was a small craft harbour, a DFO-supported facility.

In 1969 a new boat harbour was constructed by small craft harbours directorate, DFO, on the boundary between the village of Alert Bay and 'Namgis Reserve 1. The lease for the old Alert Bay harbour was abandoned by the federal crown.

In 1969 the 'Namgis First Nation had no option but to assume operational control of the old Alert Bay boat harbour, and it has

consistently attempted to maintain the facility. Limited funding has periodically been made available from federal sources for maintenance of the harbour, but never for costly improvement of the original A-frame breakwater, a wooden breakwater that is really starting to fall apart.

In 1974 a ferry terminal was constructed on the east border of Alert Bay boat harbour, limiting the ability to expand the facility. In 1976 the plan to extend the new Alert Bay boat harbour to the west was not supported by the 'Namgis First Nation; the expansion would have blocked access and water circulation in a riparian zone and would have impinged on existing water lot leases.

In 1990 and 1993 major feasibility studies were completed for the rebuilding of the old Alert Bay boat harbour floats and breakwater, but no federal funding could be secured for implementation of the plans.

In 1994, \$7 million in funding was supplied for the upgrade of small craft harbours on north Vancouver Island, but we could not access any of those funds for Cormorant Island.

In 1995 the new Alert Bay boat harbour was divested by small craft harbours, DFO, to the village of Alert Bay. Substantial levels of maintenance funding have been available to the facility. In 2001, \$100 million was made available for further maintenance and upgrades by small craft harbours of DFO facilities. Again, no money was available for Cormorant Island.

To date, the 'Namgis First Nation is still seeking support for an upgrade and expansion of the old Alert Bay boat harbour.

The result is that Cormorant Island has been harmed by the fact that DFO small craft harbours facilities have not expanded since 1969. The lack of adequate marine infrastructure has limited the ability of the 'Namgis First Nation to reduce its crippling levels of unemployment, by building its cultural tourism and fishing industries. Substantial opportunities for ecotourism development are being captured by other local communities.

This is unfair to the 1,500 residents of Cormorant Island. Other north Vancouver Island communities have benefited from substantial levels of DFO small craft harbour financial support for harbour development and expansion. This double standard of support is not equitable or acceptable—which is not to say that we do not support the work being done by our surrounding communities.

As for solutions, it must be accepted that the existing Alert Bay boat harbour cannot be physically expanded. Cormorant Island requires a second small harbour to adequately serve commercial and recreational fleets. The old Alert Bay harbour should receive a substantial level of federal funding support for the replacement of aging floats and ramps and for the head wharf, and for the construction of a new rock breakwater. And the 'Namgis First Nation and DFO small craft harbours should immediately strike a working group to explore ways in which the marine infrastructure on Cormorant Island can be improved. This is an issue of fairness and community survival. We must act together now to do the work that needs to be done.

•(1350)

As I've said already, the economy of Alert Bay, Cormorant Island, is pretty bad. The only future we see is in tourism. Without a proper breakwater, we won't be able to do that.

We see all these ships sailing by. Some come in and have a look, then keep on going, many boats that could be tying up in Alert Bay. The present breakwater that's managed by the municipality of Alert Bay is basically full at all times.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Chief.

Rick Davidge is next.

Mr. Rick Davidge: Thank you very much.

On behalf of the District of Port Hardy, I'd like to welcome the committee to our community. Despite the rumours, it's always beautiful here on the north island.

Port Hardy has had a longstanding relationship with small craft harbours directorate. We became the first harbour authority on the B. C. coast in 1986, and prior to that we actually enjoyed a lease for a number of years with the department.

Since that time we've been involved with many different projects in the growth of our harbour. We now operate three different sites here in the community. I believe the committee had an opportunity to visit two of them. In 2000 we also acquired, through divestiture, the Transport Canada wharf known as the Seagate Wharf here in the community. The district operates a seaplane base as well.

Today we've embarked on a major project with small craft harbours directorate. They are investing about \$3.1 million in our waterfront with new concrete floats that I believe you saw. As well, we've been able to go out and look for contributions to the project. Right now, we stand at close to \$3 million in planned improvements that we're planning over the next two years.

All in all, it's been a great relationship, and we look forward to working with small craft harbours directorate in the future as well.

•(1355)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davidge.

I believe our last presentation will be from Mr. Sherrell.

Mr. Rod Sherrell: Thank you very much.

I guess the first point I would make is that small craft harbours are really key to all coastal communities, historically, culturally, economically. I think Dave Schmidt spoke to a classic case of what happens when things break down and you lose that kind of facility.

Dave and I both came on the scene at about the same time that the divestiture of the Coal Harbour dock was in progress. It was clearly ill-planned, and the end result was that the entire area of Quatsino Sound lost, basically, a functioning dock, plus they lost the fuel capacity. It has been some time, but we're pleased to see that it's coming back.

I think that one of the key problems at the time of the divestiture, and Dave has really spoken to it just now, is this question of ownership. We were certainly given direction and indication from Transport Canada that the manner in which the divestiture would occur would provide for effective communication with all members, all stakeholders within Quatsino Sound.

This was the problem with the initial group that was given the responsibility for the dock. Essentially, they acted in isolation. By the time the Quatsino First Nation took over the facility, they had lost the fuel, the repairs were in considerably poor shape, and a number of things had happened.

We're pleased to hear and we've seen the progress that's occurred on the dock, but I think the Coal Harbour facility was an example of where all three things broke down. That is the historic value of the dock and the fact that it was the development of the settlement of much of the area for Europeans as they came here before the turn of the century, plus first nations. That was lost.

I think what has to be refocused on is that one of the key ingredients of the divestiture program was to develop a communications system with all stakeholders within the area. We're hoping, now that the Quatsino First Nation has had the opportunity to kind of get things back, that we get back to a point... I think that's the first stage that we have to address, because we have equal concerns coming to us from constituents. I am the director for area C, which includes this area, and one of the key problems is that they're not sure of where and what is supposed to be happening.

I think that really goes back to the divestiture program in the beginning, because, frankly, the things that were supposed to be done weren't followed through. I don't think it served either my constituents or the first nations well, because it has left us in the position we're in.

I'm hopeful that out of these hearings, or whatever, this could be a key focus. How do you establish and maintain that all people who require these docks are part of the decision-making process, or are at least aware of what is going on?

I thank you for this opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sherrell.

I thank you all for your presentations.

I believe our first ten-minute round will go to Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): I will be splitting my time.

I had a conversation earlier with a gentleman sitting in the audience. His name is Jerry Arnet. He's a fisherman, and he had an interesting quote for me. He stated that years ago they had a two-billion-dollar fishing industry and DFO's budget was a couple of hundred million dollars. Nowadays we find ourselves with a couple-of-hundred-million-dollar commercial industry here and DFO's budget is at \$1.4 billion. So in that lies truth—or not truth, but to me it smacks of something we hear a lot, coast to coast to coast.

So that being said, I have some quick questions. I'm going to go down the line, but I have questions for you individually. I also want you to talk about your relationship with the small craft harbours program, whether it is good or bad and maybe a quick recommendation for us.

Very quickly, you said your situation is going quite well. That was your quote, meaning that your revenues, I'm assuming, are at a fairly healthy rate. Is that correct?

• (1400)

Mr. David Schmidt: Just things in general are going quite well. Our revenues are quite small. It's not a very big wharf, so there's not too much to attract the....

Mr. Scott Simms: So you're doing quite well vis-à-vis your relationships with the stakeholders?

Mr. David Schmidt: Pretty much, yes. We're lacking some facilities like fuel that would draw the people in. There is actually no restaurant, grocery store, or fuel station in Coal Harbour, so we're lacking the draw to the community to attract more people.

Mr. Scott Simms: What about your relationship with the small craft harbours program?

Mr. David Schmidt: We actually haven't had one until this last wharfingers meeting in December. We didn't actually know there was some support there for us or if we could even tap into it.

Mr. Scott Simms: Are there any recommendations you'd like to make?

Mr. David Schmidt: I guess I'd recommend a better description of exactly the steps you can follow or what the relationships are, when you take the dock over.

Mr. Scott Simms: The divestiture process.

Chief Cranmer, you mentioned no expansion since 1969. Of the \$100 million that was put in for 2001, you said you were denied funding at the time. So what was the reason they gave you for not receiving more funding for the expansion?

Chief William Cranmer: It's hard to say. I guess the other communities had a better pitch than we did.

Mr. Scott Simms: Did they specifically cite why?

Chief William Cranmer: No. In 1993 the Alert Bay breakwater replacement conceptual design alternative study was completed by Government Services Canada, for us. We actually had a committee with representatives from the Department of Indian Affairs, the small craft harbours program, and Employment Canada, and we were really going great guns with the planning, but there was no money.

Mr. Scott Simms: What is your relationship with the small craft harbours program today?

Chief William Cranmer: Very little. We don't really have any resources coming from them for management of the old breakwater. The Municipality of Alert Bay of course have their continuing relationship with them, as they are now responsible for the new breakwater in Alert Bay.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Davidge, very quickly, regarding this big project you said you're working on, coming up very soon, you did seek and receive other funds from other sources. Is that correct? Could you expand on that a little and also on your relationship with the small craft harbours program?

Mr. Rick Davidge: Certainly. Approximately two years ago the provincial government set up various funds around the province. I believe they were in the neighbourhood of approximately \$50 million each in our region. It's called Island Coastal Economic Trust, and communities in that region were able to apply for various economic projects in their area. We knew the small craft harbours program was going forward with this project. We were able to use the project dollars there as leverage to access more funds with ICET, that particular group.

Mr. Scott Simms: That was my next question. Your ICET is primarily an economic development engine—is that correct?

Mr. Rick Davidge: That's correct, yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: And very quickly, how is your relationship with small craft harbours directorate?

Mr. Rick Davidge: It's very good. We have good communication.

Mr. Scott Simms: Thank you.

I'd like to pass to Mr. Matthews.

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

I'd like to welcome our witnesses.

I just want to follow up, if I can, on the divestiture issue. It seems to me that the issue of ownership hasn't been settled. David, from your point of view, that certainly jumped out loud and clear. Wasn't there any documentation or anything associated with your divestiture and the decision about who the rightful owner of the property is, or is that still in limbo?

• (1405)

Mr. David Schmidt: There were three or four different contracts signed describing the turnover of the dock, the use of the moneys, and a bunch of different things. But to me, it doesn't say that this is your dock and you're responsible from here on in. We've been told that we can go to small craft harbours directorate for various things, but other people have told us no, the dock is our own. So it's kind of one of those situations where it's not black and white. Do we still fall under small craft harbours directorate? Are we allowed to access some other funding? Or are we on our own?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I guess that's what puzzles me. Who originally owned the property, then?

Mr. David Schmidt: It was a Transport Canada dock.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Okay. So it was Transport Canada.

Mr. David Schmidt: Whether it was small craft harbours directorate, I'm not positive.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Okay. So you have a situation, it seems to me, that was similar to Mr. Sherrell's, I believe.

You had a Transport Canada wharf, I understand.

Mr. Rod Sherrell: We're speaking of the same wharf.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Okay.

Mr. Rod Sherrell: Actually, I neglected to mention that in my area, the hamlet of Quatsino, there remains the last Transport Canada dock maintained by Transport Canada.

In answer to your question, it's my understanding—and I spent a lot of time with this with the previous group—that after a certain period of time, I believe, ownership goes directly over. But there were requirements in the agreement that there would be communication and there would be a user group and there would be this kind of thing established. Frankly, we haven't pursued it. I think the Quatsino First Nation inherited a very difficult situation, and I think we are just now starting to hit the point. But I think that's key to it.

I believe, and I'd have to go back and check, that at the end of the day, ownership is directly transferred over to the parties. It indeed could have been transferred over. It was one of our great concerns expressed to the group that previously had the dock.

Mr. Bill Matthews: So there were dollar figures, obviously, associated with that wharf.

Was the wharf brought up to an acceptable standard before it was divested, or were you given money to bring it up to standard?

Mr. Rod Sherrell: First of all, the regional district wasn't given any money. The community club, the Coal Harbour Community Club, was given, I believe, \$550,000 originally. That was the agreement, and they could use the interest. Dave spoke to the process. It's my understanding that the final decision at the time the Quatsino First Nations took the dock over... I believe it was \$1.6 million. That is the number I recall, but again, Transport Canada, if I may, seemed most concerned with simply getting rid of the dock. There wasn't much follow-up as to how they would assist whoever took it over to help them get an operation under way and look after the needs of the greater population.

I can appreciate Dave's comment that there are some people who think it's a dock and it's theirs and that nobody should have any say about the rates or whatever. They think it's still the way it was thirty or forty years ago when it was a Transport Canada dock. So I think that's the fundamental problem.

Mr. Bill Matthews: You said that there was small craft harbour funding of \$3.1 million approved.

Mr. Rod Sherrell: No. Neither the Coal Harbour nor the Quatsino docks were part of the small craft harbours directorate.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Somebody said that there was \$3.1 million. It was Mr. Davidge, was it? How long ago was that, Mr. Davidge?

Mr. Rick Davidge: The agreement was signed in June 2000. It's a ten-year program. In the document we have, Transport Canada also gave the district \$795,000 that was to be used for maintaining the

infrastructure, not for any improvements. Again, however, we were able to use some of those funds to leverage other funds to make that dollar stretch.

That being said, this is a \$2-million facility that the district will run on its own now. It's a financial liability for a community of under 5,000 people, there are no two ways about that. I can understand the bit of mystery the other folks here have, in terms of understanding their relationship with the Transport Canada process and the whole divestiture rationale. I think it's a challenge for all the small communities. It will be a challenge in our futures, as well, to try to maintain these docks.

• (1410)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Blais, seven minutes.

[Translation]

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

Good day. On the same subject, I would like to better understand the way you designate your organization. Reference has been made to district and the regional district. Does district imply municipality, and regional district a group of municipalities?

[English]

Mr. Rod Sherrell: The Regional District of Mount Waddington includes pretty much the northern end of Vancouver Island and over onto the mainland. It would include the communities of Sointula, Alert Bay, Port Hardy, Port McNeill. As far as the geographic area, Quatsino Sound, we start—

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: But it is a provincial organization?

[English]

Mr. Rod Sherrell: We're a regional level. There's federal, provincial. We're regional. We would be municipal, I guess, if you put us in a category.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I would like someone to explain that to me.

[English]

Mr. John Tidbury: You have the federal government, the provincial government, and then local government. We have regions in our local government, and each municipality is part of the region. Rod is the chair of the Mount Waddington region, which consists of north of Sayward and also goes onto the mainland. It's quite large, if you look at it on the map.

We make up the government, which is made up of the major towns, plus we have directors who don't have municipalities, who look after certain areas.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: We are talking about a Transport Canada divestiture program and a Fisheries and Oceans divestiture program. These are two completely different programs, but both have the same goal. Is the problem that we learned about in Quatsino due to the fact that both departments are no longer talking to each other at all?

[English]

Mr. Rod Sherrell: I think that would be my conclusion. That was the big problem: one group was getting rid of docks and the people who needed to use the docks, fishers and others, had no say in it. So if you had a DFO dock, you were in a lot better shape than if you were just a Transport Canada dock.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: At one time, Transport Canada or Fisheries and Oceans had alluded to a divestiture program, but they weren't saying that they were necessarily looking out for their own interests or speaking on behalf of Transport Canada or Fisheries and Oceans. Ultimately, this leads to confusion among the stakeholders.

In light of that fact, Mr. Smith, given the history of this file, have there been any written communications from Transport Canada or, after seeing for some years that this hasn't worked, have you had to react in a certain way? Have you been able to follow the history of this file through written communications?

[English]

Mr. David Schmidt: No, there wasn't that much communication. I guess when the dock was supposed to be divested in the first place we found out through rumour or gossip that the Coal Harbour Community Club was going to take it over. No, to put it short, the communication was lacking, and it was only when we came forward after the dock was to be divested for the second time that Transport Canada started to talk to us.

• (1415)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Mr. Cranmer, earlier, you mentioned that the federal government, and I don't know by which means exactly, had made an offer of \$100 million. I would like you to tell us who made this offer. Was it the federal government in general, or a department or departments? What is the story behind that \$100 million?

[English]

Chief William Cranmer: I think it was small craft harbours directorate that was making that amount of money available for development on the north coast.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Is it supported by written documentation? What is this based on? Who advised you of that amount? Was it provided in writing? Was a promise made by someone?

[English]

Chief William Cranmer: It was a public announcement. I think it was in all the newspapers.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: In what year?

[English]

Chief William Cranmer: When was that?

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Was this done by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

[English]

Chief William Cranmer: It was in 2001. It was small craft harbours directorate and DFO.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Right. At that same time, in 2001, if I am not mistaken, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans announced that it would be investing a little bit more money in the Small Craft Harbours Program. It was allocated over a five-year period, and the budgetary envelope was \$100 million, but for all of Canada. I am trying to understand where that \$100 million came from. Is it the same thing or something completely different? This is only for your community. It was a public announcement of \$100 million for Vancouver island. That is what I have understood.

[English]

Chief William Cranmer: I believe it was for the whole coast.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Okay.

Now, I want to come back to Mr. Schmidt. You said that things were going relatively well right now. What does that mean, relatively well? You mentioned that your facilities were perhaps not as large as they appear. What is it that makes you say that, today, things are going relatively well?

[English]

Mr. David Schmidt: I guess right from the beginning we assumed that it was our dock to maintain and upgrade and up to us to do the various things that need to be done. It wasn't in horrible shape when we took it over. There were lots of repairs to do. To date we've done over \$800,000 in repairs. But the dock was still quite usable—and safe, I should add. In taking the attitude that it is ours to look after, we have gone out and sought additional funding to do expansion projects—to reinstall fuel, to add some more moorage space for boats. Basically, we're trying to run it on our own as if it is our own, and I sure hope it is. That's why it seems to be going so well, I believe.

The people we do talk to at Transport Canada are quite helpful and will answer whatever questions we do have.

That's about it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blais.

Just for a point of clarification, if you could, the Transport Canada wharf that's being used, is it fishermen or pleasure craft, or both, using that facility? Who are the users of the facility at the present time?

Mr. David Schmidt: Primarily it's fishermen who use it, but in the past three, four, or five years, tourism has become quite a bit more popular and they are looking for more space at the dock. We're trying to accommodate both sectors here through our expansions and by getting the fuel back at the dock.

• (1420)

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer, you're on for five.

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

Thank you to each and every one of you for your presentations today.

I'll start with Mr. Cranmer.

I understand that DFO officials from small craft harbours directorate do sort of patrol the small craft harbours throughout British Columbia. They come and visit, and they see how things are going. When was the last time you had a visit from somebody from small craft harbours directorate?

Chief William Cranmer: We haven't had a visit from small craft harbours people for quite a while.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: When you say quite a while, is it a few months, a year, a couple of years?

Chief William Cranmer: It's probably been five or six years, from the time we had the study. Actually it was in 1993, when we had the design studies done. That's not to say they don't come and look at the harbour that the municipality manages.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: From that study, do you have an estimate of what it would cost to do the work you're asking for or that needs to be done?

Chief William Cranmer: We need a rock breakwater.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Do you have any idea what that would cost?

Chief William Cranmer: It would be very costly, probably \$5 million to \$6 million.

We're doing some of the priority work that we feel needs to be done. We're getting engineers to start redesign work at our own expense. We don't have a marine fuel station in Alert Bay now. That was taken out two years ago. At one time Alert Bay had three marine fuel stations, and now we don't have one.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Okay.

Mr. Cranmer, I think the easiest way to get the answer to your concern is to, later tonight, write a letter to the clerk of our committee asking who actually owns the wharf. I know that small craft harbours directorate has nothing to do with it; it's a Transport Canada role. But the question is whether, after a certain period of time, it is officially divested to you or your organization, and then you're questioning who has the legal ownership of that particular infrastructure.

It wouldn't take that much to find out. A letter to the transport minister would give us that answer. If you wish to write to us later on, asking us to figure that answer out, then we could at least figure out who owns it, and then we could move forward from there.

Mr. McPhee, today you took us to the Port Hardy wharf, and you showed us the new concrete wharves that were coming in. I was quite impressed by that. I'm wondering if it's possible for you to tell us how that all came about, and why that particular concrete wharf is on a foam platform. I was quite impressed by that.

Also, sir, you had mentioned that things are going quite well. It's good to hear, as we have in previous presentations yesterday and today, that overall the relationship with the front-line small craft harbours people is quite good.

You talked about surveillance cameras. I haven't heard about that before on other wharves we've been on. I'm wondering why Fort Hardy would want to request that, and what advantages there would be if indeed you were able to have those installed for your harbour. Would you answer that if possible, sir?

And thank you for the tour this morning.

Mr. Pat McPhee: You're welcome.

One of the questions that was asked was how we got along with the small craft harbours people, and whether we had a good working relationship with them. Then in the same question was what you could look at as improvements. One of them was closed-circuit TV or surveillance cameras down there.

Basically with the surveillance cameras, one thing is to try to offset any thefts that may go on down there. You advertise it to let them know that they are under a camera system, and it may curb the thievery that's going on.

We're not saying we have a huge amount of thievery at one given time, but when you add six or seven different incidents up, it becomes a significant amount of money. When you can grab a whole platter of halibut hooks—individually they're not that expensive, but when you consider the items themselves plus the time it takes for the fishermen to make this system up and what have you, it becomes a very costly thing.

The other thing would be the safety aspect. You're watching who is down there. You have a lot of undesirables down there, and we could end up having people falling in and drowning.

• (1425)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Calkins.

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

It certainly is wonderful to be here.

I appreciate the fact that some of you have travelled some way to get here and bring testimony to our committee. We take our work very seriously, and we certainly appreciate the input.

I'd like to start by asking Chief Cranmer a question. The testimony you gave was pretty quick, and I tried to make as many notes as I could. You gave us a great history, going back to 1958. Am I to understand that the harbour that was built in 1958 is gone now—it basically doesn't exist any more? Do I have that right?

Chief William Cranmer: The old harbour?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Yes.

Chief William Cranmer: No, it's still in place. But as I said, the A-frame breakwater is falling apart and there's no protection for the floats on the boats.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: All right. And that was built on the coastline adjacent to the reserve lands. Do I have that right?

Chief William Cranmer: Yes. Alert Bay is shaped like that. It's built right in this part of Alert Bay. The other breakwater is right in the middle of Alert Bay, which is operated by the municipality of Alert Bay.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: We all know that a bay is generally a horseshoe shape. So half the bay is adjacent to the reserve land and the other half is adjacent to the Alert Bay municipality.

Chief William Cranmer: That's right.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: The 1969 wharf was built right on the dividing line. Is that right?

Chief William Cranmer: On the dividing line, and it angled off towards the reserve.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Okay. And boats are still using both wharfs. Is that correct?

Chief William Cranmer: Yes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: What kinds of boats are we talking about, Chief? Are we talking about fishing boats?

Chief William Cranmer: You're talking about fishing boats, sailboats, small pleasure boats, gillnetters. When they come in to visit Alert Bay, they try to tie up at the breakwater—the rock breakwater run by the municipality. Sometimes they tie up at the other breakwater, but as I say, it's not protected by a rock breakwater.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Right. It's a creosote wood one that over time has been taken out.

You talked about it being a hindrance to economic development because you're not capturing tourism opportunities with the number of vessels that are going by. They pull in, they poke in, they look around, they don't see what they want as far as being able to tie up safely, and they move on to some place else.

Do you have ideas about this? Have you commissioned a study, any type of report, or anything that would tell you what a breakwater would do for you as far as economic development? Have you had any consultant work done on that?

Chief William Cranmer: We are working on that now, but we know by witnessing how many boats come in, slow down, and then take off out of the harbour.

We have a world famous cultural centre in Alert Bay that people stop in to see. We have pocket cruise ships that tie up in Alert Bay to come to see the cultural centre.

One of the things we'd like to do is to make the breakwater large enough so we can accommodate the larger yachts—the 200-foot and 300-foot yachts—that really want some place to tie up. And they pay for the moorage.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I also heard from you, and correct me if I'm wrong, that those small craft harbours were both DFO. The wharf that was built in 1958 was basically abandoned by DFO. Did I understand that correctly? And the one that was built in 1969 has been divested to the community. Did I get that right?

Chief William Cranmer: Yes. The one that was constructed in 1957-58 was actually constructed by Public Works Canada. In 1969, when the other boat harbour was constructed, Public Works Canada cancelled its lease to that particular site. It wasn't until 1988 that we officially took over the lease and started maintaining that harbour and doing the small repairs, just to keep it operational.

● (1430)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Given the fact that it has been divested—and the whole purpose of a divestiture program is to basically get it out of the responsibility of the Government of Canada, in this particular case, into the realm of responsibility of another organization or another level of government or whatever the case might be—what expectations do you have of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as far as this is concerned?

Chief William Cranmer: Well, what we're hoping to do once we've completed our study, our engineering, is to approach the small craft harbours program again and ask it to support the building of a rock breakwater and the expansion of that particular breakwater. This is because the existing breakwater that is run by the municipality can't handle any excess boats because normally it's full with local boats.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: So you're missing out on opportunities then?

Chief William Cranmer: Yes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Mr. McPhee, thank you very much for the tour today. I certainly appreciated it.

I think it's the first time I've heard about installing security cameras to keep an eye on the harbour, and I'd certainly be interested to see how that turns out. I think the Department of Fisheries and Oceans requires fishermen to have cameras on their boats. I don't know if we've ever had it in such a way that we've required cameras to overlook the harbour.

I want to get the question I have for you on the table as a matter of public record. I'm going to ask you the same question I asked you on the harbour today, or on the wharf, and it deals with derelicts. I was quite surprised to learn at previous committee hearings out here on the west coast—and I believe we were in Richmond when I asked this question of the Harbour Authority Association of British Columbia—what percentage of berthage space is used up by derelict vessels or vessels that can't be removed given the current circumstances, the way the law is interpreted and read. I was told it's anywhere from 10% to 50%, depending on the particular harbour. But the number I got from you this morning was quite a bit different, and I am wondering if you could just basically restate what you told me earlier today as a matter of public record for this committee meeting.

Mr. Pat McPhee: I should have made notes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I asked you how many derelict vessels you have, what percentage—

Mr. Pat McPhee: I think our percentages are low compared to the number of boats we have in the harbour at any given time. The year we took over, I think there were three boats taken out and a couple more that should have been taken out or were in the process of being removed from the harbour, but we're not up to 50%. What you looked at this morning would have been 40 to 44 boats down there if it were at 50%. No, it wasn't that high. It's not that high.

You asked how the boats were removed. Again, there is the legal process that we have to go through or is to be gone through. The problem you have there is with the documentation. Most of what's required is non-existent. Then you talk to various people, one of them being a lawyer who attends the conferences down there, and, yes, it's all "We have these contracts, we have this, we should do this, and we should do that". Then you talk to the other side of the table and they say you can have all the contracts you want, but they're not going to be worth anything when it goes to court.

The problem you're looking at is that you could have all this stuff, but the people who are reading it—and I would assume right through from the crown prosecutor in this municipality to the magistrate, and I'm not knocking them—their knowledge of that particular type of law is very limited. The people who are trying to manage it or to enact those laws into the municipal bylaws aren't going to understand a lot of that stuff, because it's going back to the old maritime laws and the like.

What I was stating was that somewhere along the line this process has to be streamlined so that the average lay person can understand it and use that documentation and enact these regulations into the municipal bylaws. But it has to be streamlined down to a layman's working level. It can't go with maritime laws that date back to the old Brits and stuff like that.

• (1435)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: As someone who is directly involved in the management of that harbour, could you give me your definition of a derelict vessel?

Mr. Pat McPhee: You could start with not being paid for its moorage—and I'm not talking about three or four months—I'm looking at years in the past. The owners, or whoever, have not attended to that vessel over a long period of time. I won't give you a date or time limit, but again, a year or six months that the person has not attended to that vessel. The harbour people are constantly having to pump it out. The last vessel we had in there, we were pumping that vessel out every two days.

A lot of these old vessels are wooden vessels and the caulking goes on them. There's a lack of maintenance and the wood starts to separate, the caulking is no longer there, and the vessel starts to sink. For a lot of these derelict vessels, the equipment on them doesn't work any more; there's no more power in it and the engines aren't working. That would be what I would call a derelict vessel. It's totally unfit to even leave the bay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calkins.

Committee, we have time to do a three-minute round if we stick to our guns and the time. We need to allow time to clear the table to get ready for our next presenters. I'd ask for your cooperation on that. Three minutes includes your question, and leave room for your answers, because I will be sticking to it.

Mr. MacAulay, you're on for three.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I thank everybody for coming.

Mr. Schmidt, I'll continue with that line of questioning. I expect what you want on the record is that you want something done in a legal fashion. You want it in the report, and I'll let you word it, but you have a small problem compared to some with derelict vessels. Also, if somebody doesn't pay their fee for tying up, what do you do about it?

Mr. Pat McPhee: Right now, we will deal with not paying fees down at our level for a period of time.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: You want something in a recommendation that would come in on this report, would go to the minister, and that would make it easier for you to handle this. You're talking about the legal problems? That's what I'm trying to get at.

Mr. Pat McPhee: Off the top of my head right now, I can't answer you. I'd have to do some thinking about it. I don't want to say something and it not be the proper stuff to come out with. It would have to be something that would be looked at in conjunction with the district office. They're ultimately the people the money is going to, and we'll get involved in trying to collect those moneys.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Sherrell and Mr. Schmidt, if I understood you correctly, you took over a harbour that was divested a second time. Is that correct? Somebody took it over and there was funding that came the second time also. Is that correct?

Mr. David Schmidt: Correct.

• (1440)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Do you have any trouble in this area? Is there enough room at your wharf? Do you have trouble with vessels that are abandoned? Would you have any recommendation on record for the committee to submit to the government in order to handle these situations, because you lose money in this situation?

Mr. David Schmidt: Number one, our wharf is very small and there is a constant fight for space. We are trying to address that through some expansion. Like Mr. Davidge, we have been successful in getting funds from ICET and the Coast Sustainability Trust as well.

As far as derelicts go, we don't seem to have that much of a problem. There seems to be a good network within the community itself that lets people know when there's a boat coming that shouldn't be there. Definitely the regulations on how to get rid of them needs to be streamlined. I guess a better definition of derelict would be nice, and a definition of a time period.

The Chair: Mr. Lévesque, for three minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's the first time that we have seen so many abandoned boats in British Columbia harbours. In fact, we have not seen any similar cases until now. You are suggesting that you be given the power to resolve legal problems, a kind of state power that would allow you to establish and implement regulations and legally collect entrance fees into your harbours.

When a fishing licence is issued, a deposit could be required. This could be valid until the licence expires or until the licence holder leaves that wharf. The deposit could then be returned. Otherwise the deposit could be used to cover the expenses of the harbours in question.

[English]

Mr. Pat McPhee: Well, I know there are no provisions for going after the person who has the fishing licence for that boat. That would certainly help a lot if you were able to go after that licence. It would be no different from getting a bunch of speeding tickets and before you go to get your licence again next year, they have to be paid up. There is a reciprocity there that means that ticket has to be paid up before they issue your licence. That would certainly work with a fishing licence for the ones who are getting a fishing licence each year. If there were any back debts to be paid, those debts would have to be paid up prior to.... In other words, it's like putting a lien against their licence.

Mr. John Tidbury: We also have a small problem, and I'm sure it's the case elsewhere on the coast. For some boat owners, we don't know who is registered to the boat. So we have a great problem trying to find out who owns the boat. And I'm sure that happens up and down the coast. It happens here.

I think you're on the right track in saying we need some regulations or some sort of system so we can remove these boats from the system or get them out of our dock areas.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lévesque.

Mr. Stoffer.

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

I always say that a quick way to find out who the owner is is to burn the boat, and that person will show up in a hurry. But that's off the record, of course.

First of all, Mr. McPhee, thank you for your services. You're an RCMP officer, by the way. And my best to your son, as well.

Mr. Cranmer and Mr. Schmidt, are your organizations part of the Harbour Authority Association of British Columbia?

Chief William Cranmer: No, I don't think we are.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: You're not. And may I ask why?

Chief William Cranmer: We probably didn't know about it.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Okay. Yesterday we heard from the president of the organization. I was quite impressed by the fact that all the harbour associations that are part of it actually talk to one another, and they have meetings once or twice a year. They exchange information on best practices. That way if somebody is having a problem in one harbour, they can ask someone else about it.

I would highly recommend that you get in touch with them to become part of their organization, because I think a lot of questions and a lot of concerns you have they can answer for you. And they'll also help you and point you in the right direction.

I asked the question earlier about those floating docks. How were you able to achieve that type of construction in Port Hardy? I was quite impressed by that. It looks to me like the wave of the future for wharf construction. I'm just wondering how you were able to

identify the work that needed to be done, the work you did with DFO, and what we saw today.

● (1445)

Mr. Rick Davidge: We had an opportunity to work with our harbour commission and with stakeholder groups in developing that plan. It came down to being able to service the fleet and then some of the larger vessels in the fleet as well in a reasonable way. And it provided a mechanism whereby the service industry in our community on the north island would be able to get their vehicles right down onto the floats and get right alongside and get a welder or an electronics person or anybody in the service industry.

We looked at it from a maintenance perspective as well. The maintenance on this looks great, as opposed to the old timber structures.

So it seemed to be a win-win all the way around.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

We'll go to Mr. Kamp.

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

Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing. I appreciate being able to be up here. I'm from British Columbia, so it's good to be home.

I just have a comment, and then I need a couple of points of clarification.

At the Port Hardy wharf, I was pleased to see that you've put in place some environmental innovations to address spillage and runoff that shouldn't end up in the water. It's very good to see that. I know that there are a few wharves moving in that direction. I'm pleased to see that.

In terms of the derelicts, I think we heard in other locations that the buyback programs in the past have kind of contributed to that increase in the number of derelicts. I wonder if that's your view as well. People decided to sell their licences, but they still have this boat that nobody wants, so they just let it sit there forever. Is that contributing to the problem, do you think?

Mr. Pat McPhee: I wouldn't be able to say if it's a contributing factor there at all. The boats we're dealing with belong to people who have basically tied them up there and literally abandoned them. They're not working any more. They're not serviceable any more. And they just literally abandon them. They're down in the dumps, and they're not going to bring them back up. They themselves are financially strapped to the point that they will never see daylight as far as raising that boat or getting it up and running again or ever owning another boat.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Davidge, could you just clarify for me, sort of, the management-ownership model of the Port Hardy wharves? Is it a harbour commission, as such, that holds—

Mr. Rick Davidge: That's correct.

Mr. Randy Kamp: —the lease to these properties? How does that work?

Mr. Rick Davidge: Yes, the actual agreements are with the District of Port Hardy. The harbour authority is Port Hardy. Our advisory group, our local planning commission, also has a mandate to look at harbour issues on an advisory basis for council. So they review policies and procedures in relation to the small craft harbour.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Does this structure, having the harbour authority basically be the district municipality, work well? What benefits do you see that structure providing, as opposed to having sort of a complete volunteer harbour authority?

Mr. Rick Davidge: I think it allows more depth in the organization. We have our harbour managers on the ground down there, but we also have a public works department that can bring equipment in to help them. And we have a number of other resources within the town that we can call on, as well.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davidge.

Go ahead.

Mr. John Tidbury: Can I just add to that? Volunteerism does work, as in Sointula, when you went there. That's a volunteer group over there. It depends on the community you're dealing with. In our case, the municipality works well with us in that way.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

That will clear up this session.

I just want to remind Mr. Stoffer that everything is on record here. If you want to make burning boats a recommendation, it would go forward in the report. You need to add dark, stormy nights to it, according to your testimony earlier.

With that, I would just say thank you to all our witnesses for your time here today. It certainly added to our study.

We're now going to adjourn for five minutes or so to prepare our next list.

Thank you.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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• (1505)

The Chair: I'm calling the meeting back to order.

Just to let our witnesses know, we're going to have the opportunity to call upon some of you to make opening remarks. Our process is very straightforward. After we receive some opening remarks—we like to give four to five minutes each for opening remarks—then we have an opportunity for a question and answer period, where we go round and each party of the committee has an opportunity to ask some questions. I'd say to you to feel comfortable; we're here to listen.

I'm not sure if all of you were here when we started the beginning of our last session, but we are the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans for the Parliament of Canada. We are in the process of conducting a study on behalf of the small craft harbours program of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We have travelled to the east coast of Canada, and we're here this week hearing from people on the west coast. Certainly, even in our discussions thus far, while

there are many similarities, there are many differences also—different concerns, different issues—and it's a learning experience for all of us on the committee. So we certainly welcome your input here today. We thank you for coming forward and participating in the hearings, and ask you to feel quite comfortable. Don't be worried about the mics in front of you. Just sit back as if you were at home in the living room having a chat with your best friend, and be quite comfortable.

When it comes time for some members of our committee to converse in French, you have the opportunity to don your earphones here, and English is channel one on your dial and French is channel two. I'm glad we're only dealing with two languages; I have a job to keep those straight. But certainly we'll advise you of that anyway and make sure everybody is aware. We're having translation happening simultaneously as we speak, so I would just ask you to remind yourselves of that when you are speaking.

So on behalf of the committee, what I would like you to do first is to introduce yourselves and the organizations you represent. Then we will start with Mr. Wainwright, who will start off our testimony. Before we do that, I would ask each of you to introduce yourself, please.

Thank you.

Mr. Phil Wainwright (Chair, Winter Harbour Harbour Authority): Good afternoon. My name is Phil Wainwright. I'm the chair or president of the Winter Harbour Harbour Authority, and I'm glad to be here.

Ms. Lorraine Williams (Harbour Manager, Malcolm Island Lions Harbour Authority): Good afternoon. My name is Lorraine Williams. I'm here from the Malcolm Island Lions Harbour Authority in Sointula.

• (1510)

Mr. Jack Masterman (Chief Financial Officer, Keltic Seafoods): My name is Jack Masterman. I'm representing Keltic Seafoods.

Ms. Gwen Hansen (Secretary-Treasurer, Quatsino Residents' Organization): I'm Gwen Hansen with the residents' organization in Quatsino.

Mrs. Mary-Ann Smith (Harbour Manager, Port Hardy Harbour Authority): I'm Mary-Ann Smith, District of Port Hardy Harbour Authority.

Mr. Pat McPhee (Harbour Manager, Port Hardy Harbour Authority): I'm Pat McPhee, District of Port Hardy Harbour Authority.

Mr. Gerry Furney (Mayor, Town of Port McNeill): I'm Gerry Furney, mayor of Port McNeill.

Mr. Albert Sweet (Administrator-Treasurer, Town of Port McNeill): I'm Al Sweet, administrator for Port McNeill and for the harbour authority.

The Chair: Thank you, everybody.

I believe we're going to have our first opening remarks from Mr. Wainwright. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr. Phil Wainwright: Thank you.

On behalf of the harbour authority, I will describe Winter Harbour. It is the most western port on Vancouver Island, approximately an hour and a half drive from Port Hardy.

Our harbour authority is made up of five individuals, volunteers from our community. We run a facility that's roughly 100 metres long. We have a wharf head and we have floats. It is all maintained through small craft harbours directorate. We run the business of the harbour by collecting fees and looking after the facility on behalf of small craft harbours directorate.

Our clientele at the facility for 12 months a year are commercial fisheries; approximately three months a year it is recreational fishers. We have transient boats that travel the coast from all over the coast. They can be travelling from the United States, to the United States, to Alaska from American ports, or there are Canadian vessels that come through. We have international fisheries, tuna fisheries that use our facilities periodically, and we have government vessels, be they small craft harbours.... The navy vessels come and stay in our harbour. I think that's it for who we are.

I would say the facility has been in place for at least 40 years. It's a wood pile-driven wharf with wood deck and wood floats. There are other facilities in Winter Harbour. They're all private facilities. We have a store, fuel, hydro, and we have volunteer water. We're a community of approximately 20 to 30 people in the winter and 200 to 300 people in the summer, when the recreation fishers and tourists are in our area.

That's it. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wainwright.

Ms. Williams.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: I am currently the manager at the Malcolm Island harbour in Sointula. I have been working with the harbour authority since 1989, which is 19 years now, I guess.

There have been a lot of changes since then, the biggest one being with the implementation of the so-called Mifflin Plan in 1996. I think our repercussions are ongoing; we haven't seen the end result of that. However, today our docks are full. All winter our docks are full. Per capita I would say we have the largest fishing fleet on this coast out of Sointula. We have a large lucrative pleasure craft clientele now, who come every summer to the harbour for the two months.

As much as we've experienced a lot of the grief and uncertainty and turmoil from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the small craft harbours program has worked really well with us. I think we have a good relationship.

Being on an island, our harbour is really critical for other services, including the ambulance, police, and fire. Hydro recently erected a building to be close to the harbour so they could service the community in power outages, which of course is usually in a big storm.

Our harbour is really the heart and soul of our community, and I cannot imagine our community without the public docks. Without our public docks, I think we really wouldn't have a community.

I think that's all I'm going to say for now.

•(1515)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Hansen.

Ms. Gwen Hansen: Our community doesn't have any formal harbour committee, but I do have a written report.

Our community is located along the northeast shores of Quatsino Sound, 24 kilometres from the open Pacific Ocean. It was originally settled by Norwegians in 1895 as part of the B.C. government's effort to help colonize the remote west coast. We had a population peak of just fewer than 200 during the 1930s, but for the past three decades, Quatsino has had around 60 year-round residents.

We now have a fast-growing population of summer residents, and numerous fishing lodges are opening up. Our public facilities are very minimal. We have a one-room school with just five students, a historic Anglican church, a tiny full-service post office, and the centrally located government wharf.

While we haven't achieved the lofty goal of becoming the main harbour terminal between Canada and the Orient, which our first settlers had hoped, we are content to maintain our unique rural lifestyle. As we are without road access into our community, the water is our highway. The 12-kilometre stretch of water to the nearest wharf facility in Coal Harbour is our access route to the outside.

Our wharf was originally built in 1912 for off-loading freight and passengers from steamships. A float and gangway were added years later for private boat access and moorage. There are now 50 metres of well-lit moorage space along the main float, plus 26 metres along an adjoining float-plane dock. The heavy-duty hand crank winch is an essential part of the facility and is well used by residents and summer folks who need to move high volumes of goods and supplies in from town.

The wharf was almost lost in a fire five years ago. The community worked through the night and managed to control the blaze and kept it from spreading into nearby buildings and forest lands. The structure was downsized slightly and rebuilt within two years. The new smaller wharf shed offers shelter for those waiting for drop-off or to be picked up by boats and water taxis. Inside the shed, we've added community notice boards, a fire extinguisher, an emergency stretcher, and a two-wheeled wheelbarrow donated by Transport Canada for moving goods and small freight. There's no fresh water or electrical service available at the wharf, and volunteers maintain a small garbage receptacle.

Less than half the moorage space is taken up by small private boats, which use the facility year round. During the summer the floats are often full, and rafting, when necessary, is approved by Transport Canada.

We keep the loading zone clear for water taxis that drop off and pick up passengers constantly during the day. Currently, there are no commercial fishing boats tying up at the wharf.

While we have never had a resident wharfinger, the community does its best to ensure the wharf facility is safe and well maintained.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Hansen.

I'll reiterate somebody's comments from earlier. I realize, listening to you and others, that some of you have travelled a long way to be here today, and we certainly want to show our appreciation for that. You can't just hop in the car and drive up here. It takes a little bit of effort, and we certainly appreciate that.

Mr. Masterman.

Mr. Jack Masterman: I represent Keltic Seafoods. Keltic Seafoods is right alongside the new floats that were just put in by the District of Port Hardy.

We have real concerns that we're not going to be able to get our boats in to offload. The two docks are too close together. We're now faced with moving our docks over about seven metres to the north, which is going to mean we're going to have to pull pilings, move electrical and water services, etc. If the boats can't get in to offload, there's a tremendous potential loss of income for Keltic Seafoods, approaching a million dollars a year. I guess our question is if there is any assistance from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to move our floats over.

• (1520)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masterman. I'm sure through our discussions we'll get into some of that debate.

Mr. McPhee.

Mr. Pat McPhee: I'll be brief. It's fairly redundant to go through what everybody has seen this morning.

I just want to state, though, that as far as the users of our docks, we have everything from commercial fishing vessels to commercial boats—that being tugs, charters, work boats, barges, and the like. We also have pleasure vessels in our docks year round. Of course that number increases starting about now and going to about mid- to late September. They can range anywhere from 10-foot dinghies to 120-foot dinghies. Also, the coast guard utilizes two of our docks. They have a lease contract with the District of Port Hardy for the third dock, which you didn't see this morning. That is the Seagate or the government dock. There are different names for it. The coast guard has a lease agreement there, a building, and they also have leased space.

We were at the fishermen's wharf this morning. The coast guard also has leased space down there, as does the RCMP and B.C. Parks. The navy was in on a number of occasions last year. They have been in there with their frigates tying up out there. It's a year-round facility. We don't have the winters you have back east with the heavy ice and everything.

I can't think of anything else offhand that would assist you right now, other than that you saw the same floats this morning. Some of you didn't ride in the truck going down. The ones who did, though, had a good walk around. You can see the facility that's being built, which is right next door to Keltic Seafood, Jack Masterman's facility there.

That's about all I'm going to say right now on that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McPhee.

We'll go to Mayor Furney.

Mr. Gerry Furney: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of our town, I wish to thank the committee for including Port McNeill on your itinerary to northern Vancouver Island. With your membership from all sections of our country, you have a great opportunity to observe how difficult the challenges of governing the different regions are. Being so far from Ottawa, it makes it difficult for us to get our concerns heard, regardless of the hard work of our members of Parliament over the years. That is why I greatly appreciate your hands-on visit.

You have seen our harbour and the crowded nature of each section. The commercial section is close to capacity at the moment, and the fishing season has not yet begun. The recreational and tourism section is well used and will be stretched to capacity over the next few months.

Our harbour is attractive to each type of boat owner, owing to the proximity of our town centre to the harbour, unlimited supplies of the best fresh well water on the coast, and first-class welcoming management by our harbour staff. That's what makes this so important. We see our harbour as an important economic driver as we service local and visiting craft, and work with the people who rely on marine access to their communities and Broughton Archipelago and the adjacent mainland of British Columbia.

With the challenges facing our forest industry, it is necessary for us to avail ourselves of every opportunity to diversify our economy, work with the fishing and aquaculture industries, and position our community to benefit from oil and gas exploration, which I hope will see the development of that industry in our area in the near future.

I have reviewed your list of possible questions, which are listed in your travel schedule, and note the question on relationships with DFO. We have an excellent relationship with the small craft harbours branch, as we realize the necessity of a mutual, practical, cooperative approach to management. Our town council was instrumental in the founding of the harbour authority association some years ago, and has been an active participant ever since. We have found there is a sincere desire to work with us in our ongoing day-to-day operations and in developing our long-term plans. We have never felt the need for a referee or an ombudsman to help in our negotiations with small craft harbours directorate.

Our experience with other levels of DFO has not been as positive and may only be cured by some changes in their approach to working with local government. We have two current examples. In one, we have been refused permission to clear the weeds and undergrowth from a ditch on our main street, which is a danger to traffic and pedestrians.

In the second example, the company that operates the only fuel dock on our waterfront has been refused permission to dredge their dock water lot so they can lessen the distance to their service area. They have had to build and maintain an unnecessarily long floating walkway and piping system to get to deep water. The town supports the project wholeheartedly, but the request for dredging has been turned down. Yet permission has been granted in nearby Campbell River to dredge and construct a huge shopping centre off the waterfront there.

When the locally elected government is supportive of any project like this, I believe there is a need for other levels of government to respect the input of the local government, in this case the town. And the bureaucrat who is representing the higher level of government should have to listen and justify before an ombudsman the decisions that are limiting such a project.

I believe a second look should be taken and that an ombudsman should be available in situations like this. It would not need to be invoked very often, so it could be a respected local or regional citizen with common sense, someone like the mayor of Port Hardy as an example, or any one of the managers you see around the table.

I present this respectfully and with appreciation for your presence. Thank you very much. And I'm trusting that there was Irish interpretation for my remarks.

• (1525)

The Chair: Thank you, Mayor Furney, and I understood you quite clearly.

Before we move any further, I would like to recognize the presence in our audience of Robin Richardson, from small craft harbours directorate, DFO, who has been travelling with us over the past couple of days and I'm sure is familiar to many of you here at the table. I thank Robin for being here again today.

We'll begin our questions with Mr. MacAulay, I believe.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mayor, what you're telling the committee is that DFO in general increases your costs or creates great difficulty when you try to do something around the wharf areas. That's what you want to have on record here?

Mr. Gerry Furney: That is very definitely so.

But the whole concept of cooperating with local government is so important that it needs to be emphasized, with the committee and hopefully by the committee, that there is a need for a situation in which you end up with an immovable object and an irresistible force, which quite often happens when you're dealing with bureaucrats. It doesn't happen with elected people, because we find out very quickly that's not a way to get re-elected. Bureaucrats don't have to worry about getting re-elected.

Unfortunately, personalities creep into something like this, and I'm sure it happens everywhere. It has happened to us in clearing a ditch on our main street, which virtually runs dry in the summertime and has water in it in the winter because it drains the lower part of our community. There are weeds in it that are six to eight feet high, and we've been told we can't cut them.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: But you also mentioned, sir, common sense. Would you like to indicate to the committee that sometimes—not very often, but the odd time—there is an absence of common sense?

• (1530)

Mr. Gerry Furney: I respect this committee, because it's obviously loaded with commonsense people; I talked to most of you this morning. I think it's a great message to take to any senior level of government, and for that matter any junior level of

government, because the same situations can happen at the lower level of government.

Unfortunately, the process for a small community that is a poor community.... We don't have any industrial taxation in our community, as an example, and most of the wharves or floats that we've created in our community have been created by local taxpayers. We have about 7,500 lineal feet of moorage at the present time, and we peak at more than 200 vessels at a time in a busy period.

There's a real need for us to continue to function. The private developer who has spent money building a long walkway to get out to deep water supplies fuel there, but he can't get permission to dredge; yet they've dredged in all sorts of other places. In downtown Vancouver there has been dredging going on there for the last few years in developing a conference centre; obviously there were no refusals there. But a tiny little place like ours, which can't afford to go to court or go to higher levels, or to Ottawa making pleas to the minister, just can't afford that kind of thing. We're being penalized in the meantime by someone who is taking a very narrow approach to their responsibilities and not using very much common sense.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I appreciate your comments.

What you're telling us is that what governments need to do is listen to the grassroots people. That's what you want to portray to this committee: listen to the people who make things happen.

Mr. Gerry Furney: You've explained it better than I could.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: No, not at all; you did an excellent job.

Mr. Gerry Furney: I'll stand by that statement absolutely. I think that common sense must be utilized at every level of government, and there must be as much communication as possible with the people who are right at the coalface. We're at the coalface: we're doing our things—logging, mining, fishing, aquaculturing; hopefully we'll be oil-and-gassing pretty soon, with any luck. But there are some strictures and blockages at the present time that represent a very real lack of common sense.

Common sense is very important to the local people because they depend on it. We're living in a goldfish bowl. We have critics on all side of us at every council meeting, so we have to smarten up and use common sense.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I like your comments, and it's true that you have to listen to the people who make things happen.

Mr. Wainwright, you indicated that you're dealing with a small population, I believe, but you mention that volunteers take care of your harbour. You have a lot of transient boats; in fact, you have international boats.

How do you handle the fees, what fee structure do you have, and do you have any trouble collecting the fees?

Mr. Phil Wainwright: In the winter we caretake. We do share the revenue from moorage with the caretaker—25% goes to the caretaker. What we do is that we just collect the numbers off the boats, and small craft harbours directorate cooperates with us and gives us lists of owners of the boats. We just mail the invoices to the owners of the boats. So there is nobody going down on the wharf and putting their hand out and collecting fees in the off season. It's either the honour system, with them coming to see somebody in the community, or...

In the summer we do hire, but we have difficulty hiring people because of the limited number of people available for that type of work. So we rely on the businesses out there to assist, and one of the businesses in the harbour assists with collecting moorage through its employees or the owner.

That's how we run the harbour. We're so few in number that the people who we use for those also sit on the harbour authority and help us run the harbour.

Our fee structure is 15¢ a foot for commercial vessels per day. I don't have the fee schedule for the recreational fishers. In the high season in the summer, we charge more for the recreational fishers.

We don't catch everybody when they come to our wharf. If somebody pulls in for half a day or a day in the winter, very often we don't chase them. Our facility is definitely open. And because we're on the west coast of the island, where there's not a lot of protection from the elements, we do see barges and all manner of vessels coming into the harbour. We see the trawler fleet, which offloads at Port Hardy and then comes to our wharf to mend its nets. So all kinds of incidental traffic hits our wharf.

• (1535)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: You don't have much problem with the odd one that you lose, and you don't have a problem collecting your fees.

What we've been told by some of the other groups that we met is that they have difficulty with people who come in and use their power, and whatever, and then just tell them, more or less, take a hike.

So you don't have that kind of a problem. That's a good thing.

Mr. Phil Wainwright: We have power, but we lock it. Small craft harbours directorate put the power in the wharf a couple of years ago. It's in a locked box; people have to come through us to get to the power.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: So you don't get it unless you pay up?

Mr. Phil Wainwright: Unless they have an arrangement with the wharfinger, that's correct.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Good.

Am I allowed to continue, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: That's your lead-up now, so go ahead.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Ms. Williams, it was a very nice visit that we had in your area this morning. Your father took me around on a tour and it was very interesting.

You tell me that the harbour authority started in 1989 and that you were with them then. It's a pretty important piece of infrastructure, when you have no way to drive to a hospital or anywhere else. Would you like to expand a bit on that and how small craft harbours work? How do you collect your fees?

We've heard a lot, too, about abandoned vessels. Do you have this type of a problem? I could see when I was there that you have lots of traffic, so it would be very harmful if you had people just abandoning their vessels there. So I'd just like you to expand on that.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Firstly, I think we were a harbour authority before 1989. It was 1988, or from 1985 to 1988. I know we talked about that earlier today, but I don't know the exact date; it was in the mid-eighties. We were a harbour authority when I started in 1989; it was already well formed then. We were one of the first ones—or maybe the second one, as I guess Port Hardy was the first.

Regarding the fees, we do all the invoicing, billing, and accounting right in the harbour office. I don't believe you had an opportunity to come in there today.

As you know, Sointula isn't incorporated. We have no town office or council, which makes us different from all of the other harbours in the area. So we have no problems collecting our fees. Being in a small community, with most of the people living there, they will see you in the store and say, "Oh, I forgot to pay my bill". So there's that kind of accountability all the time, and we've absolutely had very few problems with that.

And the same goes for the derelict vessels. The odd one has been plopped into town, but it has never been a commercial fishing vessel. People who have abandoned their vessel usually deal with it themselves, one way or another. It's never been left as our problem. There was one recently that I thought was going to be our first one that we would have to know what to do with, but it just disappeared.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: We had a number of suggestions as to how to handle it.

The Chair: Mr. Blais, you have seven minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Good day, ladies and gentlemen.

My question concerns the Mifflin Plan. Ms. Williams referred to it earlier. I would like to hear you address your concerns or even your fears with regard to the future. I believe that I've understood from your explanation that there had been some problems with the Mifflin Plan, and I think that there may also be other concerns with regard to the future. Could you be more specific in this regard?

[English]

Ms. Lorraine Williams: The future is interesting when you speak of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I would love to know the future. I think the fishermen who are trying to make a plan for this year's season would like to have even that much of a future in two or three months. We're going to the thirteenth fishing season now since the Mifflin plan, and every year there is the same uncertainty around whether we are going to get to fish and how long we are going to fish. This year this quota vote has happened, and a lot of the guys and gals are feeling right now that they may not get much opportunity to fish this year. It's looking like that.

What's going to happen to our fishing fleet in the future? I would like to ask that question to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They have never been honest and transparent, and that's what I would love to see. If there is a plan for our harbours and what's going to happen, please have some honesty, transparency, and openness to the people. It has not happened in the past.

I'm not worried that the boats are going to be abandoned or left in our harbours. I know people will take care of them. Right now probably a good dozen of our pleasure boats are former fish boats that the older retired fishermen have kept up and maintained, and they are used for pleasure purposes.

● (1540)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: My next question is for everyone, and you may all respond.

In visiting your facilities, I noted that they are extremely busy at this time of year. I imagine that, with tourism, they will be even busier over the next few weeks or months.

How do you deal with this problem? Are you able to say that your infrastructure is adequate given the number of users? In Quebec, we have similar facilities. At first glance, it gives the impression of everyone being packed in like sardines, if I may say so.

[English]

Mr. Gerry Furney: I would say that we'll do our best. That's all we've ever been able to do. We started about 1959 or 1960 from nothing in our harbour. Before that we didn't have a breakwater. We didn't have the ability to get boats in and out, other than one small float that speedboats served from Alert Bay, which was the main centre at that time.

In recent years we've just gradually grown as the demand increased. I'd like to think that we'll continue to get the support that we've had from small craft harbours in keeping up with the demand and making sure that there's available space when fishers or others—recreationists—come to visit us.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Have you applied for funding to develop your infrastructure in order to deal with such traffic? If so, are these projects presented year after year? Perhaps you realize that, due to the financial limitations of the program in question, the projects are not being implemented. Is that the current situation?

[English]

Mr. Gerry Furney: Again speaking only for Port McNeill, we have been able to maintain such a good relationship with small craft harbours directorate that they have been ready and planning ahead of time, working with us to make sure we have available space.

Our current situation is that we have been fortunate enough to get an infusion of funding from the provincial government through an economic development trust that is headquartered in Courtenay on Vancouver Island and services all of Vancouver Island north of the Malahat and close to the Sunshine Coast area. That funding has enabled us to get very serious about increasing the length of our breakwater, thereby increasing the amount of protected space inside the breakwater. With that work being done in cooperation with small craft harbours directorate, hopefully we will be able to extend our breakwater and relocate some of the pilings and floats within that harbour so that we can handle even more boats in the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I have another question for you, Mr. Furney. You talked about having an ombudsman to resolve various problems related to Fisheries and Oceans. That is an excellent idea. Overall, this idea could be applied to that department, because all kinds of bizarre situations occur that could be quite easily resolved. However, there could also be a complaint mechanism implemented, or something similar.

Could you elaborate on the idea of having an ombudsman, an idea with which I fully agree?

● (1545)

[English]

Mr. Gerry Furney: Thank you for the question. It's a subject that's near and dear to my heart. Having helped administer a municipality for the last 40 years, I know a little bit whereof I speak.

It is very important to work well with other levels of government, which we do as a municipality. We work as active representatives or participants with our regional district, which is like a county council. We work well with the provincial government, the various departments we have to work with that have an ability to function well on our behalf, such as highways, as an example.

The Department of Highways has been very cooperative with us. There were no roads whatsoever when I first landed in Port McNeill. There were a couple of roads into the bush for logging, and that was the extent of it. There was no road to Port Hardy or Port Alice, and no road south to Beaver Cove or to Campbell River. The highway virtually stopped at Campbell River.

I've been involved at one level or another with ongoing developments as the need has arisen. We had chambers of commerce before we had municipalities. The chambers of commerce worked almost as municipal councils in getting a message across to the other levels of government.

About the only problem I've ever seen, because we've always maintained a really good relationship with each level of government, was that once in a while we'd run up against someone who had his jockey shorts in a knot and couldn't overcome the problems he had, and that could be reflected back into the relationship with us.

If there were a system of an appeal process there, which there is in many other levels of government, and advisedly so, it could make it much easier for little people in little communities to get their concerns across in a serious way and at a respected level.

I happen to be a very large believer in referees. You couldn't run a hockey game without a referee, and you really can't play the game of government without referees. The most logical conclusion I come to, then, is that we should have a referee.

A referee is essentially an individual with common sense who knows a little bit about each thing, can see through the BS that he's going to get, and gets down to practical brass tacks of making sure that everyone lives up to their obligations.

The two little examples I mentioned are honest-to-God examples. I didn't want to bother your committee this morning by showing you the ditch covered in weeds, bushes, garbage, and all the other things that get blown into a ditch on a city street, but that's the kind of thing I'm referring to.

The person who is ready to spend a lot of money on dredging and building a really good facility to handle the commercial and the recreational fishery—with services, water, electricity, moorage, and other services, such as fuel, for example—is up against a stone wall right now. And this is a classic example of where a referee is needed.

The Chair: In my role as chair, I referee also.

With that, I'll thank Mr. Blais and move on to Mr. Stoffer, for five minutes.

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

Thank you all very much for coming and presenting to us today.

I have one question for all of you. Are you all members of the Harbour Authority Association of British Columbia?

Mr. Wainwright?

Mr. Phil Wainwright: Yes.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Gwen?

Ms. Gwen Hansen: No.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: You're not.

Is it a divested harbour that you have, Gwen?

Ms. Gwen Hansen: No, it's still funded by the government.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: It's still under small craft harbours directorate. Has there been any discussion with...? I know that your community is quite small. Is it because of the size of your community that there's been no divestiture, or have they asked you and have you said you just don't have the capacity to do so?

Ms. Gwen Hansen: The committee did come to the north island to check out a few of the government wharves and put them in private hands. Ours is maintained as a rural site, because we have no other access out. We're not big enough to support it on our own.

• (1550)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: That's understandable.

Mr. Masterman, you had indicated a concern about the new harbour construction going on in Port Hardy. I was quite impressed

by the style of that construction and what it could mean. I was unaware that it was interfering with your private business.

Did you have any conversations with small craft harbours directorate or the port authority prior to the installation of those wharves, which may or may not affect your business?

Mr. Jack Masterman: I didn't, personally, but our CEO has told me that at every meeting he requested that there be enough space left between our wharf and the new wharf to allow us to bring boats in without being infringed upon by boats mooring along that wharf.

It's a real source of concern for us. I just walked it off this morning, and there's approximately 50 feet between the two docks. One of our boats is 26 feet wide. He has the drag doors hanging out the back end. He'll never get in there if there's another boat tied up on the other side.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: In your view, is it too late to move the new wharves more to the right? Is it too late for that, or is it possible?

Mr. Jack Masterman: I think it's too late. The whole design means that it has to stay right where it is. The ramp down to the main float is in place. I was looking at that this morning. There's no way to move that over at all because of the ramp base.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I don't think for a second that anybody did this deliberately. I can only assume that it was maybe an oversight on someone's part in the planning part of it. This is obviously an error in location. I don't think it's necessarily an error in design of the wharf, but obviously it's an error in the design of the proximity to your operation.

Have you estimated the cost to assist in what you were asking for earlier?

Mr. Jack Masterman: No, we haven't done an estimate of costs. We know what has to be done, but we don't know what the cost would be.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Have you had a meeting with DFO, in any possible way, to discuss this?

Mr. Jack Masterman: No. We've talked to the local municipal government. That's all.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Lorraine, I have a question for you. Besides all the other things we've heard about, I'm glad to hear that your relationship with small craft harbours directorate is still very positive.

In regard to what you would need to have done for your particular harbour, what would be the top three things that you would require right now with respect to Sointula?

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Well, we have requested, on the books, additional dock space for the summer, especially for the smaller boats. It wouldn't even need dredging, because the 20- to 30-foot boats that take up a lot of room don't seem to raft. We could use more space.

The end of the older side, the southern side, will need replacing eventually. We have a plan with small craft harbours directorate to dismantle and readjust it so that it will be in good shape. There has been a request for a boat launch, but that would require dredging and finding a place to put it.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Wainwright, what would be your request, sir? If you had DFO say yes to your request, what would you like to see done for your particular harbour?

Mr. Phil Wainwright: Could I answer that from a field perspective? I also sit on the regional district board as the area director for area B within the regional district, which encompasses from north of Port Hardy to Brooks Peninsula, which is south of Winter Harbour. Winter Harbour is kind of in the southwest corner of my area of representation.

My wish at this point in time would be for mooring buoys to be maintained within my area. And I see the issue of mooring buoys came up six or eight years ago. There was a reluctance on behalf of the small craft harbours program and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to see them reinstalled. They wear out. They're for marine safety. One set of buoys is within a provincial park area and the other two sets of mooring buoys are south of my community—they're for emergency purposes.

You also spoke of what happens in the summer when we get more traffic. Our commercial fishers very often stay on mooring buoys when the recreational fishers are around. The commercial traffic stays closer to the fishing grounds when the weather is better.

Our harbour authority feels we're well treated by the small craft harbours program and by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, but if you could pay some attention to the mooring buoys, I think it would help our area, and for the fishers who come to my area from all over, it would certainly help from a safety perspective.

I know it's difficult to fund everything, and the last time they replaced them they said it would be difficult to find funds to replace them again. They're starting to look a little shabby, so I hope there is some initiative, some funds that can be put towards those mooring buoys.

• (1555)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Kamp, you're on for ten minutes.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll probably be splitting my time with Mr. Calkins as well.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming. We appreciated the opportunity to see your facilities and to get a good idea of what you're doing here. I was certainly impressed with what we saw.

As we've crossed the country—certainly on both coasts, and we're heading to do some work in central Canada as well—I'm trying to get a sense of what the various governance models are. Now we're sort of into the harbour authority era, and largely we've heard it seems to be working well. There are some challenges, certainly, some of which we've heard here.

I might have missed it, but I think in your case, Lorraine, the Lions Club must be the lease holder, I suppose, of the water lot. I'm just wondering how that came to be, how it works, how the club itself plays a role in the management of the harbour, and so on.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Originally there was a very proactive Lions Club group that negotiated the lease. Even the additional rock

side to the breakwater, that part happened in the beginning, and it's carried on over the years with a committee. There is a harbour committee in the Lions Club of five to seven people, and they sit down and discuss, have meetings with us, or come by, or whatever. Everything sort of ends up being a consensus. There are four fishermen and I think two other people on the committee. When the small craft harbours program people have visited, they have met with the committee and the employees.

But most of the day-to-day talking and stuff goes through me, until there is a major project or something.

Mr. Randy Kamp: So to be on your harbour authority board you have to be a Lions Club member and then sit on the subcommittee that is managing this.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Yes.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Okay, that's interesting.

Would there be other options in your community if it wasn't the Lions Club? I guess you don't have a local government, as such, so it can't be the Port Hardy or the Port McNeill model, so perhaps this is your best opportunity.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Yes, and actually the Lions Club took over the Transport Canada dock as well. The divestiture issue was talked about earlier. I didn't mention this, but it has been a successful venture so far.

There have been two extensions so far. It was five, then seven, then nine years now, with the money they hand over with the dock. So far it has worked really well. Most of the improvements are done, and there's still some money there.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Good for you.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: There is no other organization that's incorporated on the island that could probably handle this.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Secondly, and this can be to others of you, when we had the Pacific region representatives in Ottawa talking to us about some of their issues with respect to small craft harbours—and that's what we're really trying to focus on in this trip and in this study—they made the point that the Pacific region harbour authorities have developed an ability to generate revenue outside berthage, moorage fees, and so on. I wonder whether you have any examples of that.

In fact, they were making the case that perhaps 50% of all the additional revenue generated by harbour authorities was generated here in British Columbia., and obviously we don't have 50% of the harbour authorities across the country. In fact, it's a considerably smaller percentage.

I have two questions on that. Are there any other activities that you do to generate revenue for the harbour, in addition to fees?

With respect to fees, what is your process in deciding what to charge? What process do you go through to come up with the number? I'd appreciate knowing that.

Perhaps, Lorraine, you could start.

•(1600)

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Probably 10% of our revenue is from other sources. The Lions Club put in a laundromat-washhouse facility to complement the harbour to attract visitors. Last year they put in an addition, with more machines and showers and things, because it was getting too busy in the summer. We have a little take-out restaurant, which is on the lease, that we get rent from. We have a fee that we charge—it's now the Malcolm Island Lions, and it's going to a community wharf—an administration and office use fee.

I'm sorry, what was the other thing you asked?

Mr. Randy Kamp: It was about charging for the actual mooring.

Ms. Lorraine Williams: Oh, the actual moorage.

We get together with the other harbour authorities in the area to discuss our fee schedules, usually yearly, and we go by that, from where it was set originally. We basically have just raised it.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Wainwright.

Mr. Phil Wainwright: Our authority and our community are so small that our harbour authority actually runs the waste disposal for the community. We do that in conjunction with the small craft harbour so that we can both survive by doing it. In other words, in the summer we have an influx of a tremendous amount of garbage. We provide a garbage trailer, and we charge for the service.

Our goal as a harbour authority, with the few people we have, is to break even at the end of the year. We have some funds from when fishing was big on the west coast and there were lots of fishers. We still have some funds in our bank account from times when we leased substantial portions of our wharf to fish buyers. They have long gone, so now we rely upon the daily rates, in conjunction with some rates we charge the community to bring their debris to our garbage trailer. We haul it away.

As I said, we're so small—a lot of it's volunteer—but our goal is to break even. I don't know whether the inference was that we collect money and make lots of money from our harbours, so that we could maybe sustain them. That's not the case.

Mr. Randy Kamp: No, I wasn't making that point, but are there any other revenue-generating ideas or things you've done that you could share with us?

Mr. Pat McPhee: I don't know. We have a parking lot. It's paid parking at our place. There's the boat launch. There's extra revenue there. We have loading and offloading areas that generate revenue.

That's about it, I think.

We have a black water pump-out. There's a nominal fee of \$20 to get your boat pumped out. But that by no means generates enough money to pay for that pump-out system that was originally put in there, because it's not used that many times in a year.

•(1605)

Mr. Randy Kamp: Is there anything from Port McNeill?

Mr. Gerry Furney: We operate similarly to Port Hardy. There are some parking revenues and some charges for pump-out. We don't charge for fresh water.

Wireless Internet would be one of the smaller items.

We try to keep it as economical as possible, but as Lorraine mentioned, we do discuss it among ourselves and we fix the prices.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Yes, there's collusion there.

Mr. Gerry Furney: Absolutely.

We have some users who don't want to pay anything; they'd like to have it for free. There are other users for whom the money doesn't make a lot of difference. So some place in between we've had to come up with a reasonable way of handling it, differentiating between the commercial fishermen, giving them the big breaks, and then having the other people pay the bulk of the shot.

Mr. Albert Sweet: The only exception in our rates is on the commercial side. We structure those to break even, as per the mandate of the small craft harbours. On the municipal side we set them with the other authorities.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I realize some of you may have some more questions, but we have to be out of here at 4:30. To do a fair round for everybody, time doesn't allow. If there are any questions that you want to ask after we clue up, if you want to talk to any of the witnesses, feel free to do so.

I'm sorry, but if we allow one group to have a couple of minutes then we have to allow everybody to have a couple of minutes, and time is not going to allow us to do that. I'm sorry about that.

Mr. Scott Simms: No, I understand that.

Mr. Chair, I just thought that three minutes would suffice, wouldn't it? There are only 12 minutes, so if we divide—

The Chair: That round of 12 minutes was 16 minutes, so we'd have a job to do that, right? And we have to be out of here at 4:30.

Mr. Scott Simms: But with your stern hammer, sir, I'm sure you can cut us down in time.

The Chair: Here's the hammer. I'm sorry.

I want to thank our witnesses for their presentations here today. It's been a great exercise indeed. And thank you also for our tour this morning. It certainly gives a different perspective to what we're trying to accomplish in our study, and I'm sure some of the things that have been brought forward here today will be incorporated into that study.

Over the summer months our study will be prepared by our analyst for us to review in the fall, to present to the House of Commons in the fall. So if there's anything that comes up or something that you may remember that you didn't bring forward today or didn't hear here today that you think will be of importance to our study, please feel free to forward it to our analyst or our clerk, and we will make sure it's considered and incorporated into our study.

Once again, I want to thank you for a great visit to this part of Canada. It's been very worth while. Thank you for your presentations here today, and have a safe trip home, everybody.

The meeting is adjourned.

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