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Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald



Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (0850)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)): Order, please. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are studying committee business. I believe we're in public.

Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a motion, if I could.

The Chair: Do we want to stay in public, or do you want to go—

Mr. Mel Arnold: I'd stay in public.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Mel Arnold: We have it translated. Perhaps we could take a minute to have it circulated.

The Chair: Is there anything else that anybody...?

Gord.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, it's come to my attention—I think the clerk identified this—that I need to make some changes to the motion we passed in camera at the last meeting.

Is this the time to bring those forward?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl): There is a motion on the floor.

Mr. Gord Johns: Oh, there is. That's right.

The Chair: Has everybody received a copy of the motion?

Go ahead, Mel.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to move this motion, as follows: Whereas the obstruction on the Fraser River caused by the Big Bar landslide poses an acute threat to salmon stocks and Canadians who depend on them for food, employment and recreation, I move that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans invite the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to appear at the committee to provide up-to-date information on the government's response to the landslide and answer questions from members; and that, in the invitation to the minister, the chair impart the urgency of the ongoing situation and request that the minister appear before March 14, 2020, for a two-hour televised meeting with the committee.

The Chair: We've heard the motion. Are there any...?

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): We'd like a three-minute recess, please.

The Chair: I'll give you two.

Mr. Ken Hardie: All right.

The Chair: We'll suspend for two minutes.

• (0850)

(Pause)

• (0850)

The Chair: Before we start the discussion, there was a little bit of a preamble to the motion. The actual motion reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans invite the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to appear at the committee to provide up-to-date information on the government's response to the landslide and answer questions from the members; and

That, in the invitation to the Minister, the Chair impart the urgency of the ongoing situation and request that the Minister appear before March 14, 2020 for a two-hour televised meeting with the committee.

Is there discussion?

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I have a couple of points. I think this motion nests within our motion to study the salmon fishery a little more broadly and in detail, but I agree with the sense of urgency. This in fact could be a first phase of that bigger study. What we determine out of this study or this portion of the study could inform some of the other things that we want to hear about in the broader study of the state of the salmon stocks.

It's difficult to know the minister's exact schedule. We could consider getting department officials in here sooner rather than later to give us the update that's required so that we know exactly what's going on. In that regard, I'd like to propose a slight amendment to request that the minister appear before "April 1" for a two-hour televised meeting with the committee. That would give us the option of having officials in first to give us a bit more background on what's going on.

• (0855)

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We looked at the March 14 date. That's the final day of a sitting week. The correspondence we've seen on Big Bar indicates that the spring freshet could start at that time. There's an urgency as to whether or not the contingency plan has been put in place should the remediation or clearing project not be successful. There's an urgency to this. We believe the minister should come in.

If necessary, we could consider an amendment that if the minister is not available during the regular meeting, then maybe we can schedule an extra meeting or a longer meeting to accommodate the minister's schedule.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Mel Arnold: If I may continue, we certainly don't want to diminish the motion already on the table to study the salmon stocks, but it is worded "undertake a study on the state of Pacific Salmon".

This is, I think, a very specific issue with a very short timeline to act upon it.

The Chair: Just to be clear to the committee, Mr. Arnold, what you're saying is that this would be an independent study, apart from the salmon study for which a notice of motion was introduced last week.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This would be a hearing. I don't think we would be required to do a report on this.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Mel Arnold: We have asked that it be televised so that it's immediately available.

The Chair: I understand.

Mr. Beech.

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Before we vote on the amendment, I want to say that we're asking for a two-week extension for flexibility for the minister and also flexibility around timing. This issue is very dynamic, as Mr. Hardie already said.

We could have representatives from the department come in. This isn't to say that the minister won't be here by this deadline. It's just to make sure we facilitate the ability to get to the core of this issue, an issue that is important to all British Columbians and all Canadians.

We're asking for the two weeks of flexibility. We think this is an absolute priority. We just want to make sure that we can provide the best information to the committee. That's why Ken is moving the amendment.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome back as chair of the committee. It's my first opportunity to be here since this committee reconvened. I'm looking forward to your navigating us through the troubled waters—hopefully not as troubled as the ones at Big Bar.

I've heard what my colleagues across the way have said, but I think March 14 is already very forgiving. If it were me drafting the motion, I would have insisted that it be within the next two weeks.

This is not a situation that is dynamic. This is a situation that is very static, and there's an urgency to find out what's going to happen. If the slide is not removed by the time the freshet comes in, there is no way that any work that needs to be done will be completed with any manner of safety. If that freshet comes and the work is not done, and if this committee is not confident that plan A, plan B or plan C—if we actually even knew what plan B and plan C were—is going to solve the situation, then the salmon migrations for a second year in a row will be in complete jeopardy upstream of the Big Bar slide, which represent over 70%, maybe even over 80%, of the various populations in the Fraser.

We already know that the issues facing, particularly, chinook salmon in the Fraser are delicate. I don't see why we would be arguing to extend the time frame for the minister of the Crown to explain to the committee and to Canadians.... I don't know why we would want to delay that. It seems to me that we would want to get this, and the minister would want to communicate with Parliament, respect Parliament, respect this committee and communicate to Canadians directly through elected officials at this committee in a timely manner.

I don't believe that throwing something like this into a big, broad, all-encompassing motion that we already have in front of the committee is the way to deal with issues. This is, I think, the most pressing issue. There are a number of pressing issues before the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, but I think this is the most pressing one the minister actually has. It's the most pressing issue, I believe, that this committee has. It's the most pressing issue for killer whale populations and for southern resident killer whales. It's the most pressing issue for people who depend on chinook salmon fisheries on the west coast. To say, "Oh, let's just kick the ball down the road for another couple of weeks just to make sure the minister has time in her schedule to appear before the committee," seems to be, in my opinion, not taking this issue seriously at all.

● (0900)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): To add to what my colleague has said, this is an emerging issue. In fact, you could argue this is the most existential issue facing the Fraser River salmon run right now. There is a very small window of opportunity left to actually take care of this. If we accept that as the premise for asking the minister to come to speak to us and provide us with an update, we should not be expected to accept that "the work has been ongoing, we're confident it's going to get done." That window has pretty well closed. We need an update now.

The minister's been given two weeks to make room in her schedule. We've already indicated we will sit whenever this committee wants to sit—evening, morning, afternoon—to hear the minister provide us with an update. That's a reasonable request to make. Quite frankly, nesting this issue within a broader Cohen commission type of study just does a disservice and completely avoids the issue of a rapidly closing window of opportunity to hear from the minister and get this problem fixed.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: I have to agree. This is the most pressing issue facing British Columbia right now with regard to the wild salmon emergency that's taking place. The Big Bar slide is the biggest event we've seen affecting our salmon in over 100 years. I had, what I hope, a very productive meeting with the minister last week. It was my understanding that she's getting briefed constantly on this file.

Given that, our hope is that she can appear as soon as possible. We haven't met for a long time, since a lot of this work has taken place. I understand there's been great effort to remedy the situation, but before we get started on our study, hopefully, we do the salmon emergency first. This would be critical to that study and how we undertake that study, getting the knowledge we need around the Big Bar slide and what's happening there.

I want to be flexible and say April 1 as well and give the government some time, but this is an urgent priority. We need to get the minister before us as soon as possible, at the earliest possible time, to hear from the minister and the department. If we can remedy or make suggestions, given the timeline.... April 1 is a long way out when we look at the run and the timing of the run. That's my concern: April 1 is quite a long way into the timing of doing anything or making any other recommendations to support the government.

The Chair: Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Rather than get high-centred on dates, why don't we just say something to the effect that there is an invitation to the minister and officials to appear before the committee as soon as possible? That could be March 14. It could be March 12. I don't disagree with the sense of urgency here. It's just a matter of getting the right people at the table to give us the background that we need to fully understand what's been happening, what the strategies are, what plan B and C are. The minister and officials would probably give us the best background we could use in this situation.

● (0905)

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: The minister has indicated to me, and I believe she's stated it publicly, that she would brief me at any time, any time I wanted a briefing. This is an opportunity for the entire committee to hear that. Again, I want to stress the important timing of this. Others have already mentioned the delays in getting the committees to work. This was something I had hoped to get on the table back in January, but the committees weren't formed. They weren't established. We didn't actually get going until last Thursday.

It's been delay, delay, delay. We cannot leave it open-ended to "as soon as the minister can appear". We need to put a deadline in there and make ourselves available at any time the minister is able to make herself available to the entire committee, so that Canadians can hear the briefing on this important issue.

The Chair: Hearing no further discussion, we will vote on the proposed amendment first.

The amendment states that the officials come in as soon as possible, and that the minister appear when she's available, I believe.

You amended your amendment, I presume.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I did but I think for the sake of simplicity we will just....

Can I change the amendment just slightly at this point?

The Chair: With the consent of the committee you can change your original amendment.

Does he have consent of the committee?

Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: I'm not sure that we were clear on what the amendment was going to be anyway, so can we clarify what the actual amendment was?

The Chair: Okay. That will make it easier.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Let's stick with the original amendment, which was that the minister appear before April 1.

The Chair: We now all know what the amendment is. We will now vote on the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: The motion is carried unanimously, I believe.

We will send a letter to the minister asking her to appear before committee. I will put in that letter March 14 or earlier, at a date of her convenience. We can convene a meeting at any time, as was said. We can call a special meeting if need be.

Mr. Mel Arnold: If you want to put it back to March 14, I'm happy with that.

The Clerk: What was agreed to by the committee was to extend to April 1.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have a motion.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Good morning, Mr. Chair, and colleagues.

I would like to make a motion if that's possible at this time.

I move:

That the committee undertake a study of at least three meetings to investigate and consider options to address the supply and shortage of herring bait in Atlantic Canada and to explore new options for bait such as Asian carp as a replacement for the depleting herring stocks.

I believe notice was given.

● (0910)

The Chair: We have heard the motion.

Yes, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): We have a minor amendment to this motion.

The Chair: Go ahead, when you're ready.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: The amendment is that the committee undertake a study of at least three meetings to investigate the state of the Atlantic Canada herring stocks and hear from department officials plans to rebuild these herring stocks, and the committee investigate and consider options to address.... The rest of the motion remains the same.

The Chair: Do you have that written down anywhere, so I can read it out in its entirety?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Do you want me to read it again?

The original motion is, "That the committee undertake a study of at least three meetings to investigate and consider options to address the supply and shortage of herring bait in Atlantic Canada".

The amendment would read, "That the committee undertake a study of at least three meetings to investigate the state of the Atlantic Canada herring stocks and hear from department officials plans to rebuild these herring stocks, and that the committee investigate and consider options to address the supply and shortage of herring bait in Atlantic Canada and to explore new options for bait such as Asian carp as a replacement for the depleting herring stocks, and report back to the House."

The Chair: Okay. We've heard the amendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I'm going to seek clarification as to whether that amendment is in order, because it seems in my opinion to broaden exponentially the scope of the original motion tabled by Mr. Battiste and, as a result, would not qualify for the notice period that would likely need to be given or required most of the time when a motion of this significance is being proposed.

I would look for a ruling from you as to whether the amendment is actually in order.

The Chair: It does widen the scope of the original motion, so in order to amend it to that degree or to change it like that, it has to have the consent of the committee.

Do we have the consent of the committee to...?

Mr. Cormier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): I want to talk about the motion as it stands. You said that we would broaden the study. However, the motion tabled concerned the supply issue related to the depleting herring stocks, which is resulting in a shortage of bait. We know that fishers use that bait a great deal. We can't study the herring supply issue and the impact of the shortage of bait if we don't further study the depleting herring stocks. We must study both these areas to obtain a somewhat more detailed report. We must know the condition of the stock and its impact on the bait supply.

The depleting herring stock is having a major impact on fishers, who need a herring supply. We must try to find other species. That's

why we moved this amendment. We wanted a more complete picture of how the herring supply issue affects fishers.

• (0915)

[*English*]

The Chair: The amendment does widen the scope, even though we're in committee business so it would have to come back as a separate motion, or Mr. Battiste could withdraw his original motion if he wanted to and the committee members could come back with a motion at their earliest convenience.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: If it makes sense, Mr. Chair, I'll just ask this. If I withdraw that motion and then make the motion as amended, put it forward, does that satisfy the committee?

The Chair: You can do that, but in order to withdraw, you need the majority of the committee to consent that you can withdraw the original motion. Is it your wish to withdraw the original motion?

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Yes, let's give it a shot.

(Motion withdrawn)

The Chair: Mr. Battiste, go ahead.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: This is why I read it as planned and not as amended. It is terribly written, but let me give this a shot.

I move that the committee undertake a study of at least three meetings to investigate the state of the Atlantic Canada herring stocks and hear from the department officials plans to rebuild these herring stocks, and that the committee investigate and consider options to address the supply and shortage of herring bait in Atlantic Canada and to explore new options for bait such as Asian carp as a replacement for the depleting herring stocks, and report back to the House.

The Chair: I presume that either you or someone else is going to put that in legible writing so the clerk has a copy?

Mr. Jaime Battiste: It will be understandable. I promise, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We've heard the motion. Is there any discussion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): I want some clarifications.

Why are we talking about at least three meetings? Do you want to have several meetings? Why are we using the words "at least"?

[*English*]

Mr. Jaime Battiste: There are two things.

First of all, there's a bit of urgency in this matter. If we're looking at the herring stocks that are being used in the Atlantic, there are 450 million pounds of bait. We've had to do a reduction of herring by about 18% this year because of the stocks. That means we need between four million and eight million pounds of bait in the upcoming Atlantic fishery.

The biggest thing is an urgency issue. We'd like to get something done urgently so we can start looking at the upcoming snow crab season and the continuous lobster season to do this. We feel that three meetings are all that would be needed to get something done on this.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: My question was already covered. Urgency matters when you start, not how long you take. I don't know why we would put on a hard cap. I'm happy to support the motion. I just don't know why we would predetermine that it's going to take three meetings. It might take one or it might take five. I don't know why we would predetermine it with a set number. If I could get some clarification on it, that would be great.

• (0920)

Mr. Jaime Battiste: I apologize for the reading. It was a little all over the place, so I can understand my colleague's frustration, but it does say "at least three meetings" and not three meetings specifically. We believe that we should be able to cover it with a healthy dive into this over three meetings, but if it takes more than that, that's fine. We wanted to make sure that we're not studying this forever, because we need to figure out what we can do on bait in the upcoming snow crab and lobster seasons.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sure this is something that will come out if we do this study, but maybe there's a simple answer here right now. Can DFO not change regulations or provide regulations that would allow for other bait to be used so that it doesn't have to be herring specifically?

I think that would be more a question for the department, the biologists and the science staff within the department, than it would be for this committee. Just looking at it, if you're going to go fishing for trout, you use this for bait, or if you're going fishing for that, you use this for bait. It's more a departmental regulatory issue than it is a major study.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: That's the reason for the study. We're looking at options. There have been several. Asian carp is one that I've heard about, and it is being used by fishermen in the United States, but also, there are other things—like seal meat—that have been discussed as possibilities. I think the study would flesh out all the areas of need, so that our fishermen, in this upcoming season or next season, would have viable options for the four million to eight million pounds of bait that has been reduced.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: Right now we're having a similar conversation on the west coast about herring, the importance of forage fish and the interdependence that has with other species, and how certainly we don't have an ecosystem-based management approach when it comes to herring and the management of herring. Also, there's

DFO's modelling on how they're managing herring. I mean, we only have one herring fishery of five open on the west coast.

I don't know if the member would even be open to this, but maybe looking at more of a whole study on herring and the importance of it on both the Pacific and the east coasts...? I think it's really important that we take a look at herring. It's a core foundational species. I'm just opening that up.

The Chair: Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I want to move an amendment to the motion to include Quebec. Many Quebec fishers on the north shore use herring to catch crab. It would be very appropriate to include Quebec rather than just Atlantic Canada.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is it your intent to just add to the motion and say "bait in Atlantic Canada and Quebec"?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I can read the motion as amended. The only change is the addition of the words "and Quebec."

That the committee undertake a study of at least three meetings to investigate and consider options to address the supply and shortage of herring bait in Atlantic Canada and Quebec and to explore new options for bait such as Asian carp as a replacement for the depleting herring stocks.

[*English*]

The Chair: Basically, the only change is to add "and Quebec".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: The amendment is based on the original motion. We're simply adding "and Quebec" after "in Atlantic Canada."

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Chair, thank you.

I have a quick thought on that. It seems we're getting concerns brought from B.C. as well. Rather than specify Atlantic Canada and Quebec, with B.C. now involved, how about we just make it for Canada in general?

I guess they're open to a subamendment. I'm new to this whole process.

The Chair: We're all still new.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: On the one hand, I don't disagree with Richard and Gord's idea of including the west coast, but I believe the core of this motion is to study the use of herring as bait and to look for alternatives. I don't think herring are used as bait so much out on the west coast. I would submit that the health of herring stocks out there as forage fish, as Gord says, could be folded into the other study on salmon, because I think that is a critical piece.

I would speak against making it Canada-wide. The issue that we're really diving into out east is quite different.

● (0925)

Mr. Jaime Battiste: It is a matter of urgency in the Atlantic—the Atlantic Ocean, not the Atlantic provinces—and I think if we look at a study there it would help give us a sense of what we can do further on down the line, if it becomes an urgent issue in the Pacific as well. I'm not saying it's not urgent right now in the Pacific, but in terms of the Atlantic, we've had to make a reduction of 18%. I've just consulted with my DFO colleagues and they've said it isn't quite the same urgency in the Pacific yet, but this study will help us in that, if we can figure out what we can do in the Atlantic, it will probably be applicable as well to the Pacific.

This was meant to be the Atlantic Ocean, not the Atlantic provinces. By no means do I want to exclude Quebec. I understand that many Mi'kmaq fishermen from Listuguj, Quebec, are also facing the same problems. I understand that, and I'm okay with the amendment.

The Chair: Just as a reminder, the discussion right now is on the proposed amendment to add “and Quebec” to the original motion.

Gord.

Mr. Gord Johns: Yes, I think we can agree that this is focused on bait replacement, and that's what you want to focus the study on. We can debate the health of the stocks on the west coast another time. It's certainly something that we'll discuss.

We're fine with that.

The Chair: We'll vote on the amendment as proposed, adding the words “and Quebec” into the study.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now we'll vote on the original motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

Hon. Ed Fast: I have a motion as well.

The Chair: Go ahead when you're ready, sir.

Hon. Ed Fast: All right. I move:

That the Committee undertake a study examining the scope and effects of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on Canada's fisheries resources and the degradation of those resources caused by illegal, unreported and unregulated;

That the Committee receive witness testimony from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of National Defence, officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of National Defence, and Canadians impacted by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

That the Committee allot no fewer than eight (8) two-hour meetings to receive said testimony;

That the Committee also accept written briefs from individuals or organizations who wish to submit input; and

That the Committee submit its findings with recommendations in a report to the House with a request for a Government Response.

That's my motion.

A voice: Can we suspend for a couple of moments, Chair?

The Chair: Okay. We'll suspend for a minute.

● (0925)

(Pause)

● (0930)

The Chair: Everybody has heard the motion and even had some time to discuss it. Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Calkins, go ahead when you're ready.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to move a motion for a study.

Whereas the public fishery in British Columbia contributes \$1.1 billion to Canada's economy, and the public fishery and 300,000 angling licence holders provide 9,000 jobs in British Columbia benefiting families, small communities and businesses connected to the public fishery's activities and tourism-related spending, and since 2016, the public fishery in British Columbia has been damaged by closures and restrictions to these fisheries, I move:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study of the socio-economic impacts of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans' decision to restrict recreational and commercial fishing for chinook salmon on the south coast of B.C. in 2019 to fully understand the impact of this decision on small businesses and coastal communities;

That, as part of its study, the Committee travel to the west coast to meet with those impacted including small businesses that were affected last year and are observing significant hardship in business for 2020 due to the reduction of opportunities in the public fishery; and

That, as part of its study, the Committee assess measures, including measures other than fisheries management, that could deliver increases in chinook salmon stocks while allowing for access and opportunity for harvesters.

A voice: That's a great motion.

The Chair: I'll suspend for a quick second.

● (0930)

(Pause)

● (0935)

The Chair: As the clerk has pointed out, a mover can't insist that the committee travel. It should be “recommend” that the committee travel, because it has to be approved by somebody else. We can't automatically say “yes” to it without getting it—

Mr. Blaine Calkins: The committee can make its own decision as to whether it wants to adopt the motion or not, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Whether or not we get approval from the whips or from the various parties or whether that determination is made is not necessarily a driving factor for this committee. We are masters of our own destiny here.

I think travelling to the west coast should obviously be part of this. It's actually critical. The whole point of my moving the motion in the first place is so we can go out and consult with those people who were impacted, who by and large felt—as my colleague just said to me—completely out of the loop. They were not consulted and did not have any adequate explanation as to why their livelihoods suffered the way they did in the 2019 season, a season in which, by the way, anybody who is a recreational fisherman would tell you was one of the best for catching chinook salmon in a long time, depending on where you were.

I don't know why this wouldn't be there. I've been here for 14 years. I've passed numerous motions at committees that have required or asked for travel, and I don't see why this one would be any different.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins, the difference is that we're not asking but stating that the committee travel. Yes, we're masters of our own destiny, and we take on whatever studies we like, but we have to get permission to travel. We don't decide we're travelling without getting permission to travel. We have to ask for permission to travel. We can't dictate to the House that, as a committee, we are travelling.

● (0940)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, I have full confidence in your ability to go before the committee that requests this travel and get us the travel that we would approve. If my confidence in you as chair has been misplaced, feel free to let me know. As a former committee chair myself, I have every reason to believe that you'll be successful in this endeavour, and if we pass this motion, I'll even come and cheer you on in that committee meeting.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: We'd like to add an amendment to this motion, which we support, that the department give a full briefing on all public consultations that took place on the west coast with the affected fishers.

The Chair: It's that we get a full briefing....

Mr. Gord Johns: It's that we get a full briefing from the department on all public consultations that were undertaken on the west coast regarding the impact of the fisheries closures.

I'm moving that as an amendment.

The Chair: Mr. Hardie, do you want to comment on this?

Mr. Ken Hardie: I do. This is a fairly substantive motion. I don't think there's any time put on it. At least I didn't see anything in here. It would be useful to have some time to look over the implications of this and how it might knit together with other things. I would suggest that we bring this back on Thursday and chew it through and vote on it then.

The Chair: All that can be discussed now is the amendment that was proposed by Mr. Johns, not the actual motion.

Mr. Ken Hardie: The amendment is substantive and I think it requires a bit of thought and preparation. I move that we bring that amendment back on Thursday, after we have a chance to think about that and the broader issues raised in the original motion.

The Chair: Are you moving that we adjourn debate on the amendment?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The debate on the amendment is adjourned.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Mr. Chair, I'd like to follow through on the notice of motion that was provided earlier.

I move that, given the decline in Pacific salmon stocks and the ongoing situation with the Big Bar landslide, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study on the state of Pacific salmon and make recommendations on next steps to ensure for the long-term health of these stocks, as well as the commercial, indigenous and recreational fisheries that depend on them, and call witnesses including senior departmental officials, First Nations, and relevant stakeholder groups to testify before the committee, and report back to the House.

The Chair: Is there any debate?

Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: We'd like to make an amendment that we add, after "Pacific salmon", the words, "as its first study". That's before, "and make".

Then, after "them," add "that this study consist of at least six meetings, with two of those meetings focused on the Big Bar slide".

Then later, after "testify before the committee," add "and that an interim report be completed on the Big Bar slide before the full study is complete".

The Chair: Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: In the spirit of our earlier discussion, I agree with my Conservative friends that the Big Bar deserves first attention and not so much a study but a hearing, which obviously dovetails into the larger study that I'm proposing here. This study wouldn't be, necessarily, the first order. It might be immediately following our hearings on the Big Bar, and if we decide, for instance, to issue an interim report to Parliament.

● (0945)

The Chair: Go ahead, Gord.

Mr. Gord Johns: What we're trying to make sure we secure is that, first, the intent of the earlier motion was to have the minister come and do a full briefing to the committee on Big Bar. What we're talking about is included in the salmon study, to have two separate meetings, minimum, that are focused on Big Bar and that we do an interim report ahead of the full study of salmon. It's important that we get something out the door early on, and that's what we're looking for.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Given the context of the debate that's already happened here today on previous motions that have been moved, there doesn't appear to be any urgency until after April 1 to study this particular issue, given the fact that we've extended by several weeks, on a previous motion, the requirement of the minister to come and talk to us about the Big Bar slide.

I would like to propose an amendment to this, at the end.

Instead of saying, "testify before the committee" period, I would say "testify before the committee, and that this study begins after April 1, 2020."

Mr. Terry Beech: We're speaking to the subamendment? Is that where we are currently?

The Chair: We're speaking to the amendment, I guess, not the actual study.

Mr. Terry Beech: Are we speaking to Mr. Calkins' amendment or speaking to the original amendment?

The Chair: It's Mr. Calkins'.

While I'm speaking, Gord, do you have a copy of what you've proposed as the amendment we could have here at the table?

Mr. Beech, go ahead.

Mr. Terry Beech: Do you mean on the subamendment?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Terry Beech: Thank you.

In terms of the urgency, this issue is urgent for all British Columbians.

When the minister made her first trip to British Columbia, she specifically went to Big Bar. She might actually be the first minister who didn't go to Vancouver as her first visit. She went to Big Bar to check out the situation. She's been seized with this issue throughout. I think delaying it until after April 1 is a mistake. We need to start looking into these details now as a committee.

The ability that we will have if we adopt Mr. Johns' amendment, and not adopt the subamendment, is that we will be well versed in exactly what has happened, what the challenges are and what potential contingency plans can be. I would suggest that we vote against the subamendment and support Mr. Johns' original amendment.

The Chair: We'll deal with Mr. Johns' amendment first. There are three items in it.

We will vote on each one individually.

The first amendment by Mr. Johns is that after the words "Pacific salmon" be added "as its first study".

(Amendment agreed to)

• (0950)

The Chair: Second comes at the end of the motion. It adds "that this study consist of at least six meetings, with two of those meetings focused on the Big Bar slide".

Then later, after "testify before the committee," add "and that an interim report be completed on the Big Bar slide before the full study is complete".

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Third is "that an interim report on the Big Bar slide be completed before the full study is complete".

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now we'll vote on the motion as amended.

Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Are you talking about my amendment now, or are you talking about the entirety of the motion?

The Chair: No. You ruled yourself that your amendment was out of order.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: It's as if now, in this committee's mind, that amendment was never moved. Is that correct?

If it is deemed as never having been put forward, I'm fine with that.

The Chair: It actually went to debate, so it was put forward.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I know, but then we went back in time.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Not everybody can do that.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: We have time outs. We have changes in time. We go back in time. This committee's very flexible that way.

The Chair: We can set the clock at whatever we like.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I'm fine with that, but I just want clarification from you that the amendment that I moved is deemed now to have not been put forward because we went back and dealt with Mr. Johns' amendments. Is that correct?

The Chair: It's now null and void.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you.

The Chair: Now we'll vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think this one should be fairly straightforward. I have another motion that I'd like to put forward.

The Chair: We hope.

Mr. Mel Arnold: This one really deals with the previous work of the committee.

Whereas the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans did not receive responses from the Government of Canada to four reports tabled late in the 42nd Parliament of Canada, I move:

That the Chair of the Committee re-table in the House four reports for which the committee did not receive government responses before the 42nd Parliament was dissolved:

(a) Report 21 (West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits, tabled May 7, 2019)

(b) Report 23 (Striped Bass in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Miramichi River: Striking a Delicate Balance, tabled May 28, 2019)

(c) Report 25 (Aquatic Invasive Species: A National Priority, tabled June 17, 2019)

(d) Report 26 (In Hot Water—Lobster and Snow Crab in Eastern Canada, tabled June 17, 2019); and

That the Chair re-table these reports and request government responses for each.

● (0955)

The Chair: The only way that we can report them back to the House, instead of just tabling them, is to have them readopted. We'd have to readopt them first and then bring them back to the House. The committee would have to readopt them. This is not just a matter of re-tabling them in the House. They have to be readopted by the committee first.

Mr. Mel Arnold: As an amendment to this, can I simply put forward a motion that the committee readopt those four reports as originally tabled?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: First of all, thank you for bringing this forward. These four reports represent very good work that was done by this committee. There are a lot of us who are back, and we all have a little ownership of this. I'm totally in support of this motion.

I suggest that there are two things we have to do. We have to readopt, and then we have to re-table. That's really the nature of the slight adjustment to your motion, Mel. Then we're good to go.

The Chair: The slight adjustment is already done.

I hear no further discussion.

(Motion agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: When we get the reports back, that also opens up the ability for dissenting reports. If there's going to be a dissenting report on any of these, we would have the issue of needing a date for the dissenting reports to be in by.

We have to agree on a deadline now to receive dissenting submission reports. What should the date be?

Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Are you asking for a date to require any dissenting reports?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mel Arnold: We are at February 25 today. I would say our deadline should be by the end of the break week: Friday, March 5.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold has moved that the deadline for dissenting reports would be March 5 at 3 p.m. EST.

Mr. Fast.

Hon. Ed Fast: On that motion, is there any merit to asking around the table whether any party wants to submit dissenting reports? If everyone is clear that there isn't, then we can forgo this motion.

The Chair: The only difference in membership party would be the Bloc.

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: We want to take some time to consult with each other.

[*English*]

The Chair: Let's suspend for a couple of minutes.

● (0955)

(Pause)

● (1000)

The Chair: Whether there's a dissenting report coming or not, we have to adopt the actual date suggested by Mr. Arnold, that is, March 5, regardless of whether anyone is going to present a report or not.

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I want to move a subamendment.

We need more time for reports 23, 25 and 26. Instead of March 5, the date would be March 19. We may wish to submit dissenting opinions. This would give us more time to submit everything.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I don't know how a dissenting report could be tabled on behalf of a political party that wasn't part of the committee study in the previous Parliament. Can I get some clarification on that?

● (1005)

The Chair: It might be because we're readopting it as a report of this committee. When it gets presented in the House, it will be a report of this committee, not of the previous committee.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Fair enough.

The Chair: Of course, we have everybody at the table.

Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: In talking to my colleague from the Bloc, I think he was fine on the “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits”, and he was fine with the date initially proposed of March 5. However, he wanted some time on the other reports, just to examine them thoroughly. We support that.

The Chair: Basically, the amendment is to have the date changed from March 5 to March 19. The deadline for report one stays March 5. For reports two, three and four, the date would be March 19.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now we'll go to the motion originally entered by Mr. Arnold with the amendment added.

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, given that notice of motion was given, I move the following motion:

That given the potential consequences of seal predation on fish stocks along the East coast and following the government's creation of an Atlantic Seal Science Task Team; the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study on seal predation and its effects on Atlantic fish stocks, primarily off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and explore the potential for other viable domestic markets for seal products; that the committee strongly consider travel to countries such as Scotland, Norway and Iceland, which acted to conserve fish stocks as a result of seal populations; that the chair be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, travel, resources and scheduling to complete this task; that the Committee call witnesses including senior departmental officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and interested stakeholder groups to testify before the Committee; and that the Committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.

The Chair: We've heard the motion.

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I want to move an amendment to the motion to also include the coasts of eastern Canada and Quebec. We handed out the amendment to the motion, which reads as follows:

That given the potential consequences of seal predation on fish stocks along the coasts of eastern Canada and Quebec and following the government's creation of an Atlantic seal science task team; that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study on seal predation and their effects on Atlantic fish stocks, primarily off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec

These words should be added, because seals are also found in the Saint Lawrence, and this presence should be included.

● (1010)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

This is debate on the amendment, I presume.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On the amendment, I think it needs to be expanded further, whether that would be a subamendment or whether it would be to withdraw the member's amendment and submit another one.

Seal predation is a major issue on all coasts of Canada, especially the east and west coasts. We could do that by striking out references to specific areas, which is what I was going to move as an amend-

ment. At this point, I would be opposed to the current amendment, but I am wanting to make a different amendment.

The Chair: Do you want to make a subamendment to the amendment?

Mr. Mel Arnold: I don't have a copy of his amendment. Mine, quite simply, is mostly just striking out words. It would be quite simple. Just strike out “along the East coast” and strike out “Atlantic” and insert “Canada”.

The Chair: Mr. Blanchette-Joncas is in agreement with changing it to “Canada” versus “Atlantic” and “Quebec”.

Mr. Mel Arnold: It's a friendly amendment, then, right? We would strike out “along the east coast”. The amendment, the motion, would read, “That given the potential consequences of seal predation on fish stocks and following the government's creation of an Atlantic Seal Science Task Team; that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study on seal predation and its effects on Canada's fish stocks”.

It would be “Canada's fish stocks” and we would strike out “primarily off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador”. We would simply strike that out, and then the rest of the motion would stand.

An hon. member: Does it still have “Scotland, Norway and Iceland” in it?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Yes.

The Chair: He didn't take that out.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Is there any discussion on the amended motion?

Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: I'm concerned there's no specific mention of consultation with indigenous communities, Inuit and Métis, and making sure we have representation from the Atlantic seal science task team. It should be broadened, because we want to make sure that, in this study, we're looking at a whole-of-ecosystem management based approach to the impact of any sort of seal harvest that might take place.

I'm trying to think of how we can work on this together, sounds like Mr. Beech has some thoughts on this. I'm just thinking of broadening that to ensure that we're including the Inuit on the north coast, first nations and Métis on the west and east coasts.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank Mr. Johns for bringing that up. As I mentioned in my intervention a moment ago, seal predation is a concern on all coasts. It seems to be highlighted on the east and west coasts, because they have a recognized seal harvest with the Inuit. We do certainly need to hear from those group as to how important those opportunities are, especially in those remote communities.

Mr. Gord Johns: Can I move an amendment right now?

I wish to add “to coordinate the necessary witnesses including Métis, Inuit and first nations communities”. Would that be the place? Maybe the clerk can help in terms of where we can add that, so it's in the motion.

The Chair: Everybody has heard the amendment. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I might want to amend the subamendment by replacing the word “Métis” with “Indigenous” or “first nations,” to avoid confusion.

• (1015)

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Is it removing “Métis, Inuit and first nations” or is it adding “indigenous” to that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I'm simply proposing that they be replaced by the word “Indigenous,” which has a more comprehensive and generic meaning.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

[*English*]

The Chair: We will go back to the main motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, I'd like to move another motion as soon as we can get it out to the interpreters and distributed.

The Chair: You can start now, Mr. Arnold. Everybody seems to have a copy.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Whereas the application of non-selective fishing methods and fishing gears impacts non-targeted species and stocks, some of which are in a critical state, near extirpation, I move, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2):

That the Committee undertake a study examining fish harvesting regulations and selective fishing gears that could reduce by-catch of non-target species; and

That the Committee allot no fewer than six (6) two-hour meetings to receive said testimony; and

That the Committee also accept written briefs from individuals or organizations who wish to submit input; and

That the Committee submit its findings with recommendations in a report to the House with a request for a Government Response.

The Chair: We've all heard the motion.

Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: I'd just like to ask if he could expand on that and give us a rationale. I'm not sure that I understand, the way it's currently written, the purpose of the motion.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Selective fishing gear was traditionally used more on the west coast, with fish wheels. What we're seeing right now is that some of the fishing methods are actually impacting species that are at very low abundance, whether they be gillnets, seine nets or in-river fisheries. There are methods being piloted out there. Pound nets are one example. A similar type of trap net on a

boat or a movable platform is also being looked at, where the fish come in through a funnel-type system and they are not taken out of the water or gillnetted in any way. The non-target species can be moved through the system and, with no harm whatsoever, allowed to go up river, while the target species are taken out and harvested. There's already been one study done down on the Columbia River, and they're looking at doing one on the Skeena River this year. It could be very beneficial to some of those stocks that are in extreme states of depletion.

Mr. Gord Johns: We're very supportive of this study in terms of conservation. It will give us an opportunity to look at it. In relation to Mr. Calkins' study, I think there could be some merging, potentially, as a result of that.

• (1020)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Just for clarification, do you see us dwelling an awful lot on the non-selective fishing methods, which obviously could create a rub with the people who are currently using those techniques, or will the focus of this really be, “Here are some alternatives that we should consider,” versus “Here are things that we're critical of”?

Mr. Mel Arnold: I think what we need to look at here as a committee is what is best for the fish and the fish stocks in the long term. If we continue with the current practices where certain stocks are going to become either listed under species at risk or of extreme concern because of the impact to non-target species.... We've heard some of this testimony in regard to the Yelloweye Rockfish on the north coast of B.C. We also see it with some of the other species, in-river species fisheries.

What we need to look at as a committee is not whether we're going to step on someone's toes or upset someone's status quo. What we need to look at more is what's best for the fisheries in the long run and what's best for all of Canada.

The Chair: I hear no further discussion.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, as notice of motion was given, I will move the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study to examine the issue of seafood mislabeling and the potential economic, conservation and food safety risks that it poses to Canadian consumers as well as fishers and producers; that the chair be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, travel, resources and scheduling to complete this task; and that the committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.

I understand that my colleague Madam Gill had some amendments she was going to make.

The Chair: We've heard the motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I want to move the amendment to the motion to ensure more traceability with respect to the original motion. We'll hand out the amendment. The amended motion would read as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study to examine the issue of the implementation of a food traceability program to address fraud and mislabeling of seafood products and to examine its potential impact on the economy, conservation and food safety of Canadian consumers as well as fishers and producers; that the chair be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, travel, resources and scheduling to complete this task; and that the committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.

[English]

The Chair: We've heard the proposed amendment. Is there any discussion?

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I can also provide further information. Labelling doesn't necessarily fall within the purview of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, because this issue has more to do with agriculture. By including the concept of traceability and, possibly, fraud, this matter would then fall much more within the purview of the fisheries committee.

(Amendment agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Now, we're on the motion in its totality, as amended.

Mr. Fast.

• (1025)

Hon. Ed Fast: There has been a high degree of consensus around this table today, and a high number of different studies have been proposed and adopted, so we're going to have a very busy schedule. I take note that this probably falls under CFIA. I understand the Bloc's point, but perhaps the analysts can confirm, or suggest otherwise, that this kind of study, especially focused on labelling, is more within the purview of the CFIA than the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Chair: I don't know if Mr. Morrissey, as the mover of the motion, wants to comment on that.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: I know where my colleague is coming from, but this is from the perspective of the seafood industry. We may want to hear from some officials, but it's the impact on the seafood industry at the fisher level and that traceability.

Hon. Ed Fast: I understand that, but can we hear from the analysts whether this would typically fall under CFIA's jurisdiction more than under DFO's?

Mr. Michael Chalupovitsch (Committee Researcher): I can confirm that CFIA is in charge of food inspection and labelling. There could be implications for fishers, but CFIA is the agency in charge of it.

Hon. Ed Fast: The only point I would make is that I think we are going to support the motion, but this complicates our schedule even more. At some point in time there will have to be a prioritization of all the studies, and I imagine this one may end up falling to the bottom of the heap. Mr. Morrissey should be aware of that.

The Chair: Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Chair, I want to consult with the analyst to determine whether traceability really falls within the purview of our committee.

Mr. Michael Chalupovitsch: Thank you, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

While Fisheries and Oceans Canada contributes funding to traceability, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for the inspection and regulation of food products.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: Seafood fraud and food traceability should fall under this committee, I believe.

Could we maybe roll that into Mr. Arnold's IUU study? There is some relation to it. It's just a thought, because on the seafood fraud piece, it could be connected to that. I'm just putting it out there, but I do believe this committee definitely should be looking at it.

We had testimony at the end of the last session of this committee regarding seafood fraud and food traceability, and there was a piece, of course, that was related to this committee and that maybe we can look at. Maybe the analysts can help split that up a bit.

The Chair: Mr. Cormier.

Mr. Serge Cormier: I'm just reading here the mandate letter for the Minister of Fisheries, and I know that I saw something about her needing to study the issue of traceability for seafood.

As you know, we ship a lot of products around the world now, especially from Atlantic Canada. We ship mostly live lobster, for example, to China, and our product is sold worldwide. I think it would be a good thing to study the traceability of the seafood products we export around the world.

I'm pretty sure it's in the mandate letter of the minister to work on the traceability of seafood products.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold, do you want to speak? You indicated that when Mr. Johns was speaking.

Mr. Mel Arnold: No, I think I can cover it later, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay, it is in the mandate letter.

We'll vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

• (1030)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have one more and I promise this is my final motion for today.

The Chair: We'll be busy until this time in 2021. There shouldn't be any more motions after that.

Mr. Mel Arnold: There is going to be other stuff coming.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold, go ahead when you're ready.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Whereas Fraser River steelhead stocks continue to rapidly decline in abundance and that the decline of these stocks will have significant impact on the other Department of Fisheries and Oceans' management decisions, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), I move:

That the Committee undertake a study examining government measures that have been taken to reverse declining Fraser River Steelhead population units and examine what measures are available to restore these stocks to levels of abundance; and

That the Committee allot no fewer than six (6) two-hour meetings to receive said testimony; and

That the Committee also accept written briefs from individuals or organizations who wish to submit input; and

That the Committee submit its findings with recommendations in a report to the House with a request for a Government Response.

The reason I bring this up is that I realize steelhead have been a provincially managed species. The impact here to other fisheries, as we will probably find in the selective fisheries study.... I hope to be able to share information and testimony from one study to another, and I hope to get that support with the committee.

As these steelhead decline, if they should be listed as a species at extreme risk under the Species at Risk Act, I believe the act states that no one, without ministerial exemption, shall harm, injure, alter, damage, kill or interrupt any one of those species, meaning that you shall not do anything in the Fraser River that could impact one steelhead. It could have huge potential impacts on salmon fisheries on the entire west coast if this isn't addressed.

That's why I feel it's very important that this committee study government actions, provincial and federal, because I know the two are now talking on steelhead, and I think it's an emerging issue in British Columbia that has become very important.

The Chair: Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: You mostly covered off the questions I had about the nature and scope of this study. Is it not something that can be adequately handled in your other study on non-selective fishing methods? When you brought that motion forward steelhead was the first thing I thought of. I know there will be other species that would be included there, but can it not be adequately covered in that other study?

Mr. Mel Arnold: There are so many issues around steelhead: water flows in the habitat, stream enhancement that has or hasn't been done, the hatchery issues. The province has been reluctant to use hatcheries for steelhead. There are so many other factors they simply couldn't all fit into the study on selective fishing gear. Selective fishing gear will only be one small part of the steelhead issue.

The Chair: Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I want some clarifications regarding the management of steelhead stocks.

Are they managed by the federal government or the provinces?

• (1035)

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Steelhead are typically managed by the provincial government, but because they are in the river at the same time as salmon, which are federally managed, and the opportunity to fish for salmon, both commercially—the first nations food, social and ceremonial—and recreationally, those salmon fisheries managed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans could be severely impacted if the Fraser River steelhead are not managed back to a state of abundance. That is why I feel it's of national interest that we do this study.

The Chair: Hearing no further discussion, I'll call the question.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: Thank you.

In conversations with the clerk, we need to do some housekeeping on the in camera motion I made in the last committee meeting. Is that correct? I just want to make sure we present them. If I could, I'd like to clean up the part around our motion on in camera meetings. I'd like to make an amendment. Would that be the appropriate way to go, to amend each of the terms that I set out in the last motion? Maybe the clerk can answer that.

The Chair: Once a motion is adopted, Mr. Johns, it can't be amended, but you could add clarification maybe.

Mr. Gord Johns: Okay.

There was a part we had in the motion that was adopted to discuss administrative matters. Right now it includes committee business. We want to clean that up to discuss matters regarding individuals' private information.

Maybe the clerk can help me with this because she flagged it as a real problem.

The Clerk: From what I understand, at the last meeting, you moved a motion regarding in camera meetings, and part (a) was about administrative matters, that the committee can meet in camera for that reason. What you mean to do today is to specify that committee business could be done in camera. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Gord Johns: That's correct.

The Clerk: Because the motion was adopted by the committee, you would have to suggest this as the interpretation the chair can give, which is that committee business can be done in camera.

Mr. Gord Johns: Correct. Do you need a motion?

The Clerk: You seemed to indicate you also wanted to add a point (d), because I know that some other committees have adopted a similar routine motion.

Mr. Gord Johns: It was in regard to an individual's private information, making sure that's included. If it's not included in the previous motion, it needs to be included in today's proposal.

• (1040)

The Chair: Can I suggest, Mr. Johns, you bring it back at the next meeting written in its proper form, so we can all understand the intent of the motion in its totality?

Mr. Gord Johns: Yes, I'll do that.

The Chair: I would suggest as well, before I adjourn, that perhaps at the next meeting we should start looking at some dates for some of the work we're proposing. We need to prioritize it and get some meetings scheduled, because if we just keep piling things on

without preparing a schedule for the next couple of months, we're going to be getting nowhere. We've approved a lot of work. Eventually, hopefully, we'll get it done.

If everyone is okay with that, that's what we'll plan for Thursday's meeting, unless the minister says she's available to come on Thursday or something by chance.

Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: It's a good idea, Mr. Chair, to get some of that under way. We need to look at the first priorities, so that during the break week, the clerk will be able to start lining up witnesses and the other issues that are needed to carry on with our studies.

The Chair: I would suggest that the clerk have for us the list of motions, or work that's been adopted, including the ones that included a minimum of six days of studies, or three days or three meetings, so that we can look at the calendar and get a better feel for what we're doing and where we're going.

The meeting is adjourned.

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