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Chair

Mr. Rodney Weston

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

We're pleased to have Mr. Pinhorn with us here today.

Thank you very much for coming to meet with us. As you're well aware, we're studying Bill C-555. We certainly look forward to your comments on it and our opportunity to question you on the bill.

We generally allow about 10 minutes maximum for comments from our witnesses.

I'll ask if you have any questions before we begin, and, if not, you can proceed with reading your comments.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn (Executive Director, Canadian Sealers Association): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Frank Pinhorn. I'm the executive director of the Canadian Sealers Association in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The CSA was formed in 1981 as an advocacy group representing the interests of all of our sealers. Our main goal was to try to redevelop an industry that was crippled in the late sixties and early seventies by animal rights groups. It's a big challenge.

When you look at sealing in Newfoundland and Labrador, there are over 10,000 licensed sealers. For most who earn a living from the ocean and are commercial sealers, about a third of their income originates from sealing. It's a third of their income. That's our setting today.

First of all, I would like to thank you for the invitation to be here today. I would rather have had some of our sealers with me, but the spring of 2014 has just concluded and some boats haven't been able to get out there yet because of heavy ice. From the bottom of White Bay right up to around St. Anthony, there's no access to the ocean yet because of ice. They tell me that the ice there this year was up to 10 and 12 feet thick. That's where that is.

Like I said, I would have liked to have brought some sealers with me to relay to you the importance of the industry to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Regarding Bill C-555, an act respecting the Marine Mammal Regulations, it is proposed that the distance to observe the seal hunt be increased from half of a nautical mile to one nautical mile. The Canadian Sealers Association have been requesting for years that federal Fisheries take a more stringent approach in licensing and

monitoring the activities of those who observe the seal hunt. All too often they are there for the sole purpose of interfering and disrupting sealers who are trying to make a living in pursuit of a legitimate industry to support their families and their communities.

The Canadian Sealers Association fully supports the bill of MP Greg Kerr, which will increase the distance between seal observers and harvesting crews. It will offer a greater measure of protection and safety for both. However, this bill only applies to non-licensed observers. It needs to be expanded to also include licensed observers, who presently can venture to within 10 metres of a sealing boat—30-odd feet.

The present regulations put sealers and licensed observers in quarters that are too close, considering the environment, high-powered rifles, and powerful vessels. It is not conducive to any measure of safety or security for either the sealer or the observer.

Also, Bill C-555 is only an empty gesture, unless we take a close look at the bigger picture and focus on the status of the sealing industry today in Newfoundland and Labrador and elsewhere. We can say with certainty that it is only a shadow of its former self and that we are bordering on an economic and ecological disaster that could play havoc with our rural population.

• (1535)

Let's look at what has happened over the last 20 years. From 1995 to 2006, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were taking 100% of the quota. For 11 years, we took 100% of the quota. Prices ranged from \$40 to \$100. They peaked at \$115 in 2006. There was virtually full participation for all commercial sealers who wanted to go sealing. We had up to 2,000 boats out there in a given year. There were five processing establishments in full production, with several hundred employees. A key element to these 11 years was that the sustainable commercial fishing industry kept the seal herd—I'm talking of harp seals when I talk seals—at the 5-million to 5.5-million range. For 11 years they stayed fairly stationary.

Now, what happened after 2006? The world went into an economic recession, and it took two or three years for that to subside. But over the last eight years, we have taken 10% to 15% of available quotas—400,000 seals for the last five years, I believe—and taken, on average, 40,000 to 60,000 seals. One year, which was last year, we got 91,000. That means we have left almost three million seals in the water, unharvested.

Prices have ranged over eight years from \$20 to \$35. Just look at what happened before that: we were at \$40 to \$115. Participation levels are at an all-time low. We have one processing plant in partial production.

The harp seal herd now has increased from about 5.5 million to over 8 million. With a winter like we just had...which was probably the worst one we've had, they tell me, in 40, 50, 60 years. Sealers tell me that it's the first time ever in their life they went out to where the seals were and every mature female was carrying a pup; every one. The ice conditions were perfect for the seals. They got out there in the middle of the heavy ice and no one could get at where they were to.

If we total harps and hoods and greys, we have about 10 million seals. The impact on the ecosystem is devastating, and it's in dire need of correction.

For those who commercially harvest seals, about one-third of their income is derived from sealing. The guy in St. Anthony with a 34-11 boat, if he can get sealing in the spring and get anywhere from 900 to 1,200 seals, will gross about \$40,000—four men in a boat. That means he can start the season on a positive note as opposed to being, as we say in Newfoundland, “in the hold”. It's so critical that they can pay to get their boat ready to go crabbing and shrimping and different things. They can pay their insurance. They can fuel up. It's a good start to their season.

The other thing that has happened here is that sealers are telling me that the seals they are getting are full of shrimp and full of crab; even young beater seals. We just saw a 10,000-tonne reduction in the shrimp quota, with snow crab quotas over the last five years, especially in parts of 2J and 3K, Labrador and down towards Cape Bonavista. The crab resources there in the last five years have decreased by at least 30% to 40%.

It's so critical to balance that ecosystem and to get the seals landed, get them into the marketplace, so that we can have a sustainable industry, a profitable industry.

• (1540)

We've been sealing in Newfoundland and Labrador for hundreds of years. On June 19, they're going to open the memorial in Elliston. It's about \$3 million, and it's in honour of those who died on the SS *Newfoundland* and the *Southern Cross*. Sealing is just as important today as it was way back in 1914, and way back in the 1850s. It's a critical part of our livelihoods and our culture, and it needs to be sustained.

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

We're going to start off with a 10-minute round of questions, and we'll start with Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Pinhorn, for coming and presenting to us today.

It was an interesting presentation, and I have some questions that relate to the bill and to some of the things you said during your presentation.

We've indicated our support for Bill C-555. There's a health and safety matter. The principle of that is that we want to ensure that the people who are prosecuting the harvest are not endangered as a result of the way the harvest is managed. We've indicated that.

I've been trying to get an answer from the department about why they've extended the regulations, what's happened that they felt the need now to extend the regulations, the distance from half a nautical mile to a full nautical mile. Have there been any incidents, or whatever? They've suggested there haven't but there might be, which is fine.

But I also understand when we began to make some calls and to talk to some folks, on hearing that this bill was coming, what the perspective was from the people in your industry. One of the things we heard was that there was a problem now with enforcement of the regulations as they exist. I think you mentioned it, that if this is going to mean anything, we're going to have to see regular and full enforcement of the rules. I wonder if you could comment on that for a second.

• (1545)

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Getting back to what you said about had there been any incidents, I talked to Ron Burton, the chief enforcement officer with DFO in western Newfoundland and Labrador. You will recall in 2008 that the *Farley Mowat* did go into the Gulf with the sole purpose of trying to disrupt those who were sealing, and as soon as it went less than half a nautical mile from the sealing boats, they could charge it and get it out of there. In Newfoundland and Labrador in the spring there aren't a lot of unlicensed people out there sailing around. It's not a very good environment out there, no matter what you're doing.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Pinhorn, but I have to interrupt at this point, as the bells are ringing. Colleagues, could we have in-house consent to extend for another 10 to 15 minutes, because we're in the Centre Block and we could go to the House promptly in 15 minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pinhorn. Please continue.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: So, Mr. Pinhorn, we're going to continue for a few minutes until we have to go to vote, but you were talking about the *Farley Mowat*, which I understand, but I was getting to the whole question of enforcement. Whether it's half a nautical mile or a full nautical mile or 25 nautical miles, if it's not enforced, it's words on paper.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: As I said a few minutes ago, the real issue is the licensed observers. They can go to within 10 metres of a boat, and they're there with their .222s and .223s, they've got powerful boats, they're out on the ice in all kinds of weather, and it's not a place for anyone. So what we're saying is that this bill needs to be expanded, and then it would have a critical impact on what's happening in our sealing industry, because it would keep these people who are 10 metres back, whatever the distance is that we agreed to.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Have there been incidents with licensed observers?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Absolutely. We know of instances in which sealing crews have been surrounded and couldn't get to their boats.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: That's interesting.

Okay. I'll take that up a little bit with DFO officials when they're here.

You talked about the industry and the growth of the herds, which you estimate are now up to 10 million altogether with harp, hood, and grey seals combined. Of course, recently the government's been trying to respond to the WTO decision banning the sale of seal products from Canada in the European market. You talked about the viability and the sustainability of the industry in the future. I wonder if you would like to comment on what you think the government needs to do in order to deal with that circumstance.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: For one thing, I think the approach they're taking is wrong. It's an approach that is long and drawn out. By the time it's resolved to any measure of satisfaction for either side, the sealing industry will be dead in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. If we don't soon start getting some of these seals landed—the 400,000 quota—and keep the herd to a sustainable level, which most people agree is in the five million to 5.5 million range—which means we have at least 2.5 million to three million too many out there..... They need to be brought down. Seals consume over 40 times the amount of the commercial catch. The commercial catch in Newfoundland and Labrador, if you add up every pound of fish landed by every fisherman, is about 270,000 tonnes. Seals consume 1.4 tonnes per seal per year. Multiply that by 10 million seals and you have 14 million tonnes of food coming out of the ocean to feed our seal population.

• (1550)

Mr. Robert Chisholm: You were saying that what the government is doing is wrong. What can the government do to deal with that WTO ban or the ban by the European Commission?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: To deal with it through the WTO will take forever. I met with Ed Fast and I met with Gerald Keddy, who's the parliamentary secretary. When they were talking about the free trade agreement with Europe, I asked him when he's going to deal with the sealing issue, and he said, "We're going to do this later". I simply said to him, "In our mind, later never comes".

Government has to sit down government to government. After the fact, it's too late. The Marine Mammal Protection Act in the United States was brought in 1971 and it's been in force for 44 years. Do you want to know what the purpose of it is? It's to protect endangered species. The lowest the harp seal population was ever at was 1.8 million. Right now they're at eight million and growing.

It has to be done government to government. How large do you want the herd to get? The rule of thumb, according to scientists, is that the population will double every seven years.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: You indicated that the industry has only been able to harvest 10% to 15% of the quota in the last few years. Is that simply based on the fact that there are no markets?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: The price was too low. I said the average price. In eight years, the average price was \$20 to \$35. You're paying \$1.10 or \$1.20 a litre to fuel up a sealing boat. Some of these 34-11s take \$3,000 to \$10,000 worth of fuel.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: What work is being done with your association to find new markets?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: I was talking to the gentleman over here. These animal rights groups have pocketfuls of money. Every time we get a market, they get inside information and they get in there and they press these governments. We had an agreement in principle with China, but it has never meant that a pound could get in there, because they're getting inside.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: China was influenced by animal rights groups?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Absolutely. Animal rights groups are over there in full bloom.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: That's interesting.

Do I have time for a question?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Thank you, Mr. Pinhorn, for coming. I appreciate it.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: I have some booklets here if you want to take one.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Yes, that would be good.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: If you have any questions, my number is inside here on the back, right here, and our website.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I appreciate hearing your perspective.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pinhorn. If you don't mind providing those to the clerk, he'll distribute them to the members. We'd appreciate it.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Okay.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Chairman, as I conclude, let me just say that I've met in the past with a number of people up in St. Anthony who seal during this particular time of the year. It's a rugged business, but it's an important business in order to make a living for the families. I appreciate that.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Absolutely. It's a critical part of what they're doing.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chisholm.

Ms. Davidson, you have seven minutes before we have to recess.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Could you let me know when I'm at about three minutes, because I want to share my time with Mr. Sopuck.

The Chair: Certainly.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Mr. Pinhorn, thanks very much for being here with us this afternoon. I'm sorry that our time is going to be kept to a minimum.

I was very interested in the history that you were giving. I'm from Ontario, so of course I don't know too much about the seal hunt, for sure, but we know the things that we see, and we know the things we read and the things that we hear, and you seem to support the amendments that were coming forth to the marine mammal regulations under Bill C-555. Is that correct?

• (1555)

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Okay, but you also made comments about the fact that it deals only with non-licensed observers and not with licensed observers. So I'm wondering if you could comment a bit more on that, and while you're talking about that, I'm also interested in whether there is air surveillance and air observation that occurs during the seal hunts. If there is, does that cause danger, or potential danger, to the sealers as well?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: The reason we supported the bill in principle is that when advocating for the sealing industry, it's not very often that we get people who are what we would call like-minded. MP Kerr had the interest to introduce the bill and to increase the distance, and it's a good point in areas where people who are non-licensed may be accessing areas where there's sealing.

Our hope is that now that bill would lead to getting that 10 metres increased to a mile, and that would keep animal rights groups away. They do go in, and they can surround someone who is sealing and not let him get back to his boat. When you're out on the water with ice and all kinds of things it's not far enough.

With respect to air surveillance, they bring out helicopters and they'll hover over a crew for four, five, or six hours at a time, who can't very well seal because they are filming everything they do, and DFO takes the videos and if there is something there that is not according to the regulations, they could be charged. They give these films to DFO and they use them for enforcement purposes. If they have cameras, they can film at very long distances and all that, so there's no need for them today to be within 10 metres of a fishing boat. That's the critical part of this. It's to get at not only the non-licensed observers but the licensed observers too.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

I'll pass to Mr. Sopuck.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Thank you.

You outlined the problem, Mr. Pinhorn, very well, but your advice to government was very broad. What would you specifically recommend to the federal government on what we can do to sustain and improve the sealing industry? If you could be as specific as you can, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: I worked with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Newfoundland for 28 years. We were doing research. One of the things the government can do is put in some funding. From 1985 to 2001, we had cost-shared agreements. We used to do research on the meat to deodorize the meat and to concentrate the omega levels. The seal oil capsules originated from that program.

What we have to do now is put more focus on the meat, the byproducts, and the oil industry. The oil is rich in omega-3. It's good for a food supplement. We can do a lot more work on the oil, the meat, and the byproducts. The fur will be a byproduct, as it is in the farm industry.

For the last 10 years, it seems as if we've lost sight of the fact that R and D is so critical here to changing everybody's thinking. Last year, the federal government came here and put some hundreds of thousands of dollars into the Northeast Coast Sealers Co-op in terms of doing more work with the meat. What will develop the industry is the sealers bringing in the whole animal to be used: the fat, the hide, the meat, and the byproducts. You bring in the whole unit. I think it would make it more palatable to the world to accept it as an industry, as opposed to going out and harvesting animals traditionally, for just the fur.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Of course, in the wild fur industry across Canada, all of the meat is discarded, yet the wild fur industry exports—I'm thinking about mink, fisher, coyotes, and so on—went from \$200 million a year to I think, in the year before last, about \$750 million a year. So I'm not sure that the optics of discarding the meat is as serious as some people may think.

Given that there is a scarcity of high-quality protein in the world, do you think that at some point we'll be able to—quote, unquote—wait this out and the markets will come back? Or is that just a hopeless suggestion?

• (1600)

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: Well, I know from the interest the Chinese have expressed to just me, through the sealers association, that they want the meat and the oil. I know that. I always say that politics is interfering with the flow of goods into the United States. The biggest market for seals up to 1970 was the U.S. In terms of our industry in the fifties and sixties, most of the seal products went into the U.S. They love seal meat, but you can't get it in there because of the politics.

Two of the Chinese are going to fly in from China to meet me on the weekend. They're going to meet me up in the north. When I leave here, I'm going northwest. They're flying in here to talk about the seal industry and product development. We think it can be done.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: That's great.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, colleagues.

We will recess now for the votes and reconvene immediately afterwards.

Thank you.

•(1600) _____ (Pause) _____

•(1640)

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order.

Thank you, Mr. Pinhorn, for waiting.

Mr. MacAulay, you have the floor now for questions.

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

Mr. Pinhorn, welcome, and I'm sorry. It's the way things go around here. Time is short.

You were meeting the Chinese. Could you give us just a little run on what you plan to do. Would you be dealing with the pelts only or are you trying to indicate the importance of the seal meat and the export of seal meat from this country to China? Would that be part of what you're going to try to do with the Chinese delegation? You're meeting two Chinese people concerning the seal industry. I'd just like you to elaborate a bit on that.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: The Chinese groups I know who are interested in seals are looking at it as a holistic approach. It's not just the pelts, it's not just the oil, it's—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: They're short of protein, right?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: They're short of protein, that's exactly right, sir.

What they're doing is looking at investing in processing plants here in Newfoundland and Labrador and doing the pelts, and the oil, and the meat, and the byproducts. They're looking at the whole thing and not just one part of it.

There is interest here in putting infrastructure in place to get the product they want.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: That is good.

You mentioned that at the height of the seal industry, there were five processing plants in Newfoundland and Labrador. How many months or weeks of the year did they run?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: How many weeks?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: A couple of them would have been working virtually 12 months of the year.

Between 1995 and 2006 two of the plants would have been working virtually maybe 10 months of the year. In some cases they would have two and three shifts on and they'd be processing the pelts, as I said, most of the year.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Pinhorn, you put a lot of things on the record here that I consider quite valuable and important, and it's what the country needs to hear, too. It's sad what has happened and what a number of people, do-gooders, can do to a very important industry. I think if you took anybody into where they butcher

animals, you'd certainly have a lot of trouble with that. It's sad and if this is not stopped, how far is it going to go?

For my last question, I'd just like you to elaborate. I know you have mentioned to me the monument that's going to be erected, and there is a sense of pride and respect there. I'd just like you to mention that on the record.

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: The hundredth anniversary of the disaster was in March. Both of them happened the same year.

Pardon me?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Just to get it on the record, which disaster?

Mr. Frank Pinhorn: The SS *Newfoundland* lost 74 or 75 people. They all froze to death on the ice.

Then the SS *Southern Cross*, with I believe 154 aboard, sank. The word is that the pound boards in the vessel were not in good condition and may have shifted. She was fully loaded and on her way across the southern shore and rolled over and sank, and she lost 154 people. Altogether I think there were 251 who were lost in one year in 1914.

John Crosbie is the honorary chairman of the group. He and some business people have a committee in place, of which I'm a part. Altogether they've raised upwards of \$3 million. They're going to erect a memorial, and the name of every person who was lost in the sealing industry is going to be on that memorial, so there are going to be....

There's the story of Mr. Crewe and his son. His son went to the ice, and he was 16. The year before that Mr. Crewe had said he'd never go out there again. When his wife heard that the 16-year-old was going sealing, she turned to John Crewe and said, you've got to go out with him to look after him while he's out there in the boat and sealing. The young fellow froze to death in his father's arms. That's the story written by Cassie Brown in her book, *Death on the Ice*.

•(1645)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

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

At this time we'll take a brief recess until we change so the officials can take their seats at the table.

The Chair: I'm ready to call this meeting back to order.

I'd like to thank our guests for being very patient. I know you've been with us several times when we've tried to get this opportunity to hear from you.

Mr. Swerdfager, I know you are no stranger to this committee, so at this point I'd ask, if you have any opening comments, to please proceed.

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager (Assistant Deputy Minister, Ecosystems and Fisheries Management - Operations, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Hello everyone.

As you know, I am Trevor Swerdfager, Assistant Deputy Minister of Ecosystems and Fisheries Management—Operations.

On behalf of our minister, the Honourable Gail Shea, I would like to thank the members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak today about this private member's bill, which is Bill C-555.

I have the pleasure of being accompanied by three of my fisheries officer colleagues, Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre et Mr. Yves Richard, both from the Quebec region, and Mr. Randy Jenkins, who works at central administration.

As you certainly know, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Conservation and Protection Program is responsible for enforcing the Fisheries Act, the Endangered Species Act, and more generally, federal regulations which apply to natural resources.

Given that our staff includes more than 600 active fisheries officers, they maintain a strong presence nationally. They often represent the department and even the government in many small communities from coast to coast.

As the tragic events that occurred in Moncton last week reminded us, people responsible for upholding the law, be it to ensure our safety or to protect our national heritage, accept tasks and face dangers that are truly remarkable, even if we often forget it.

I am therefore very pleased and proud to be here today with three of our best fisheries officers, not only to talk about this bill, but also to highlight the importance of this aspect of operations and our department's mandate.

[English]

Turning to the matter at hand, I'll also take just a very small amount of your time with a further couple of preliminary remarks. Simply put, in the fisheries management domain, particularly in the seal harvest area, the department really has two main preoccupations: the conservation of the resource and the safety of the people who are engaged in it. As my minister has noted elsewhere, our department strongly believes that Bill C-555 will advance us toward both of these goals.

As you know, the bill proposes a change to the marine mammal regulations to alter the minimum distance from 1/2 nautical mile to one nautical mile that an unlicensed observer can approach a person fishing for seals. Although, as you've heard, violations of this particular provision are infrequent, when they do occur and when people are determined to interfere with a lawful harvest activity, they put at risk the life of sealers, enforcement officers like those beside me today, and coast guard vessel crews.

The officers with me today have first-hand experience with these risks and would be happy to describe them to you should your questions for us happen to go there. We've also tabled with the committee a number of pictures that might illustrate some of the operational issues, and if the chairman wished, he could pass those around for people to have a look at.

Turning to the bill itself, we do feel that the changes it proposes, while modest in nature, would better equip us to manage access to the seal fishery and to better enforce or protect the safety not only of seal harvesters but also of our enforcement personnel.

As the committee will know, a vessel can cover half a mile in a matter of minutes, leaving enforcement personnel very little time to react to its movements. The new provision would give officers additional time to respond to incursions within the observation limits and Coast Guard vessels time to better manoeuvre into position. It would also afford us additional time to advise harvesters of the potential for danger and allow them to return to the safety of their vessels or to land, as the case may be. We feel that the safety of the harvesters and the managers of the fishery would be improved as a result.

Make no mistake about it, the department fully supports the right of people to observe the seal harvest. There is no debate, on our part, on that issue at all. Indeed, our regulations clearly allow for observers to be licensed. Applicants for licences are subject to a very stringent screening process to ensure that individuals are not intent on disrupting the harvest activity.

Compliance with this particular regulatory provision is very high. In our view, it is working quite well. We need to ensure that proper regulatory measures are in place to properly control those intent on disrupting lawful seal fishing activities. We feel this bill helps to do so.

• (1650)

As I said, we have plenty of expertise sitting around the table here in terms of past exercises, particularly those who I know may be of some interest with respect to the *Farley Mowat* and other incidents in the past and going forward.

We'd be very happy to take any questions you might have today.

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

Mr. Chisholm, we'll start off with you.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Thank you very much.

Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing before us today.

I wanted to ask if you could tell me what kind of resources you deploy during the harvest, how many square nautical miles you cover, and that kind of stuff. Could you give me some sense of the level of responsibility? We heard how many fishermen are involved, but what is the area, and how many vessels, airplanes, helicopters, and officers do you have?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre (Chief, Conservation and Protection, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): We have a Type 1200 icebreaker, which is usually reserved for monitoring the seal hunt. It is a large vessel. On board, it has a team made up of six to ten fisheries officers and a supervisor. A helicopter is permanently based on it, whereas one or two others are ground-based. I will also raise the matter of monitoring within the Gulf, which is closer to my field of expertise and experience.

The location that fisheries officers are deployed to depends on the seals' movement. By movement, I mean the largest proportion of the seal population. That's where the hunters are found. Usually, hunters are almost all in the same location, which is in the Gulf's interior, depending on the seals' migration.

The teams of fisheries officers are deployed by helicopter when the ice conditions are satisfactory or safe. Fisheries officers proceed with inspections on board fishing and hunting vessels to ensure that seal hunt regulations are obeyed. They also monitor both licensed and unlicensed observers who want to move in closer than the one-half nautical mile zone. That is what we are here to talk about today.

The hunt can take different proportions. As has been observed in the last few years, and someone mentioned it earlier, the market is not very lucrative and costs are high for fishers and hunters who want to reach the seals' location. Over the last few years, the scope of the hunt has not been as broad as it once was.

It must also be considered that, during the three years preceding the year that just ended, ice conditions were not favourable. In that context, monitoring was not as important as it might have been between 2005 and 2008, when ice conditions were good, seals were available and the market was flourishing.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada developed a national monitoring plan for the seal hunt. It is a business plan that establishes the staff and equipment required. If the state of the ice does not allow helicopters to land, the ships on the icebreaker are used.

• (1655)

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Thank you very much.

I was interested in our earlier witness from the Canadian Sealers Association. He talked about the licensed observers creating a problem. They are restricted to 10 metres, and he said he's aware of many problems arising as a result of that and that maybe that distance should be extended. I was interested in that because my understanding is that there is quite a bit of scrutiny with those licenses, in terms of the whole question of disrupting the seal hunt.

I wonder if any of you could comment on that situation and the fact that he identified that as a problem. Could you comment on that, please?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: I'll offer one quick comment, and then perhaps my colleagues will chime in from a more operational perspective.

I want to emphasize that at this point the 10-metre distance is one that was established through a process of negotiation in an out-of-court settlement. It's been in place for some time, and at this point at least, the department has no intention whatsoever of looking at that. It's not part of the bill. It's not part of the policy approach. It's not something we're intent on changing.

Having said that, you might want to talk about what operational issues we encounter with that from time to time.

Do you want to add a bit?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Richard (Chief, Regulations, Quebec, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): In fact, the ten-metre rule has been in force for a few years already. That is as close as licensed seal hunt observers may come to hunters. The license allows us to manage and meet these people. They are the subject of investigations, through which we can make sure that their stated goal is not to disrupt the seal hunt.

That being said, when talking about monitoring someone who is hunting, a distance of 10 metres is still close. I've already provided you with explanations about that, but I don't know if you want more details.

We've received complaints from some hunters; they say that it prevented them from hunting. We have made enquiries about it and collected some statements, but they are very hard to prove. These people are often in helicopters, and it is possible to allege that their manoeuvres were intended to land close to where the hunt was occurring. It is very hard to put forward arguments or to assemble files in a way that can be defended in court.

My colleague might want to add something about that.

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I thought you indicated you wanted to add something.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: I just want to specify that the number of observation licences is limited. People who request a licence are interviewed. Their background or police record is checked. Nevertheless, the number of people selected each day who have a licence is limited. The goal is to avoid having as many observers as hunters on site. For regulation purposes, all of these people are met, including helicopter pilots.

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Okay, thank you.

I'm going to ask my colleague to ask a question, but I appreciate what you've said about DFO recognizing the fact that observers have a right to observe the harvest and that it is something you respect and work to regulate to ensure the safety of the harvest and the observers.

My colleague would like to ask a question.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Thank you.

Mr. Sylvestre, I've read your statement. As I am the critic for my party for aboriginal affairs, I hope that you will forgive me if I sometimes take shortcuts.

If I've understood correctly, should Bill C-555 be passed and implemented, coercive power would be exerted first and foremost by your organization. For my part, I am a native of Manicouagan, whose shores cover thousands of kilometres. In communities along the lower North Shore, like Ekuanitshit, people still use seals for food.

I see that the situation still opens the door to an interaction. On the ground, we see that people can approach each other on the ice. In Atshuk, it is still relatively easy to reach these locations. Because there is ice, it's possible to get close and see seals with the naked eye.

Your organization would therefore exert power to uphold the parameters of Bill C-555.

You mentioned staff. Remind me of the number.

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: We have staff in Quebec that cover the seal hunt.

You no doubt already know that the Gulf of St. Lawrence becomes a hunter's playground during the seal hunting season. If the seals move north to the Magdalen Islands, sealers from Newfoundland, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and the Maritimes will go there.

We therefore assemble conservation and protection staff from other provinces or regions, and we adjust the number based on the number of hunters present on site. In fact, we will not mobilize a boat with 20 people on it if only two boats come to the hunting ground, as was the case in the last few years, given that there was not a market for this product.

Regardless, when it comes to staff, we are able to respond to these situations.

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain: Currently, as part of your day-to-day duties, are there any interactions with aboriginal communities?

I'm thinking among others of the Innu, who do not necessarily need boats, since they can move on the ice. In many cases, the hunt is not organized; it is practised according to an age-old model.

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: We generally have more contact with people who hunt for recreational purposes rather than for commercial purposes. People travel and we have contact with them.

These are not the types of hunters observers want to meet. What observers want to see is the bulk of the commercial hunt because it is garish; there are a lot of people and a lot of blood at the same time on the ice.

In my experience, other than the average person who wants to see what is happening, shore-based hunters do not see much of sea hunt observers. However, they must respect the same rules. As far as I know, we have never had any problems with the communities.

Where we have to intervene is more with organized groups who want to observe the hunt, which includes both those who apply for licence and those who arrive on site without one.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, Mr. Clarke.

How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

[English]

The Chair: You have 10 minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: Thank you again to the witnesses for being here.

I have never experienced the seal hunt and would therefore like to know more about the licencing system. How does one apply for a licence? Who is responsible for issuing these licences?

• (1705)

Mr. Yves Richard: The issuance of licences is established under paragraph 4 of the Marine Mammal Regulations. The licence itself shows whether it is for sealing purposes or for observation purposes. This section also sets out the costs of the licences.

In the case of the seal hunt, licences are issued for nuisance seal, seal fishery observation, marine mammal transportation, collector vessel, personal use sealing and commercial use sealing.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

If I understood correctly, there is currently no

[English]

an active grey seal fishery. Is that correct?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Richard: It has existed in the past in the Magdalen Islands, at a place called Corps-Mort. Grey seal can be hunted like other seals. Licences can therefore also be valid for grey seal hunting.

[English]

Mr. John Weston: Would the regulations we're talking about apply in exactly the same way to a grey seal fishery?

[Translation]

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Yes.

[English]

Mr. John Weston: In other words, the regulations aren't specific to the type of seal.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Richard: Close times are set out in the schedule to the Marine Mammal Regulations, which also includes a list of seals species. From there, a mechanism set out in the Fisheries Act kicks in. Under the general fishery regulations, regional directors-general may, by order, vary close times and fishing quotas. That is how the seal hunt is managed.

[English]

Mr. John Weston: If I might borrow the term, I'm a little bit on thin ice when I talk about seal hunts, but if I understand correctly, the grey seal hunt would be more on land than on the ice floes. Would the regulations, therefore, be applied in a different way in practice?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Richard: I believe you are referring to Hay Island in Nova Scotia, where sealing has occurred in the past. It is not my region and I do not really know whether sealing still takes place there. There may be licencing conditions that are specific to that hunt. The provisions of the regulations are quite long and also apply to the grey seal hunt.

[English]

Mr. John Weston: Mr. Jenkins?

Mr. Randy Jenkins (Director, National Fisheries Intelligence Service, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you.

If I can just expand on that, probably the largest grey seal hunt we've had that's been organized in recent years occurred on Hay Island off Cape Breton. It's a small rock, for all intents and purposes. It's a nature reserve, but sealers have permission to go and harvest so many animals there. But the observation permits, if that's what you're asking, work in exactly the same way: persons have to apply to the department to be licensed to go on the island.

Because it's such a small island and we have only a small number of sealers there, if more than one or two individuals want to go, we restrict the groups to four persons at a time. The others can stay off in the boat, but they would rotate on the island to do the actual watching, just to better manage the peaceful and orderly harvest of the fishery. There are only so many sealers allowed on the island and so many observers allowed on the island, but the conditions are identical whether it is harp seal or grey seal. They are the same conditions.

Mr. John Weston: I'd love to ask some questions about the safety of the people in uniform, like yourselves, and I think the better person to ask them would be someone who has worn a uniform, a uniform of which we are all very proud, and that is the uniform of the RCMP—Mr. Clarke.

The Chair: Mr. Clarke.

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks, guys, for coming in today.

I have a couple of questions. This is about officer safety, too, is it not?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Absolutely it is. I think part of this is that we wouldn't want to exaggerate the point at all. We're not trying to come forward to suggest that there are all kinds of problems and a litany of threats and so on, but absolutely, this is certainly a big feature in the officer safety context.

• (1710)

Mr. Rob Clarke: Yes. I came from a detachment where we had something tragic happen.

On the 10-metre rule, when I was going through training, we were trained that within that range if a person holding a knife or any type of weapon comes at you and you're carrying a sidearm, number one, your safety is going to be compromised and, two, the individuals you're trying to protect are also compromised.

But what I see in the pictures here is a lot of vessels, probably within more than a 10-metre range. Now, vessels can be used as weapons, to put it bluntly, and have been used as weapons. When you're on a vessel or on an ice floe, how do you guys feel when things escalate? Do you feel that your safety is in jeopardy? Have there been instances where officers have come close to putting their lives in jeopardy? Or have you experienced any losses?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: Some clarification is needed.

The pictures submitted today are from cases involving the *Farley Mowat*. These people did not have observer permits and were not even supposed to be within 10 metres of these places. There is a difference here. If you wish, we can speak to these photos more later on.

Let us talk about the people who have the permits allowing them to get within 10 metres of the hunt. Usually, we meet all of these people and experience has shown us that they are not all the same and they do not all have the same goals. There can be some confrontations between hunters and people with observer permits within 10 metres. Actually, this prevents the hunters from doing their job. They cannot work as well when they have a camera filming them 10 metres overhead or next to them, compared with when they are alone on the ice.

However, as fishery officers, we face the same danger whether we are aboard a crab or other fishing boat because there are many weapons on the boat. All fishers have knives and they often also have firearms on board. In addition, we often see fishers who are under the influence of drugs. And I am not talking only about seal fishers. The safety of peace officers must be ensured for any one of their duties. The most basic duties officers carry out during their day can probably also be the most dangerous.

As for the ten-metre distance, people have to undergo safety checks before being issued a licence. They must respect the strictest rules when they are on site. This does not eliminate the potential for an altercation with an officer or a fisher. Also, the hunters have weapons in their hands. There is a distinction between monitoring or a protest observation and observation that is more geared towards documenting than the hunt. Those with licences may be against the hunt but that does not necessarily mean that they will take radical action against the hunters.

[English]

Mr. Rob Clarke: I'm looking at the *Farley Mowat* boat here.

You talked about having licences and, from a law enforcement standpoint, individuals carrying side arms, or firearms. But I also look at the observers on their ships, one with a harpoon gun on the front of the bow. That's on slide number seven.

Have any of the fishers ever been threatened or felt threatened by one of those weapons, or have they ever been pointed at the fishers? This can escalate and things can happen within a millisecond of escalating, from just individuals out harvesting, to the point where, I hate to say it, shots are fired.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: On picture 7—I believe this is the one you are referring to—what you see is not a harpoon but rather a water cannon. The effect, however, is exactly the same. In the series of photos you see, the *Farley Mowat* is going directly for the fishing vessel from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and is just about to deploy the water cannon on the fishers.

However, there are some things even more dangerous than water cannons. You will see a series of pictures of small boats. In picture 10, at the very left, for example, to the left of the yellow arrow, you can see the *Farley Mowat*. A few seconds before that, the fishers were on the ice, while the boat was getting closer. That is clearly within the half-mile. It is really quite close. I was onboard the patrol boat that day and we played cat and mouse all afternoon to avoid taking damage from that boat. We then stopped the boat. Of course, all the rules, agreements and approvals from senior management gave us the authority to end this violation. The ship was therefore stopped. I was the first to board the *Farley Mowat* to arrest the crew. They were led aboard our ship, that is the icebreaker. The *Farley Mowat* was towed to the wharf in Sydney. Charges were laid in the following days. The fishers' lives were indeed in danger that time.

As you can see on the picture, there are two fishing vessels, a red one and a blue one, which are the same size, about 45 feet. The people on these boats said that they were truly scared that day. Some told us that the *Farley Mowat* had brushed their stabilizer. Stabilizers are those long arms that are deployed on each side of a ship to stabilize it. The *Farley Mowat* had missed the stabilizer by a few centimetres. These people were scared. They were truly happy to have us there that day to put an end to that violation and allow them to see to their business and to earn a living.

•(1715)

[English]

Mr. Rob Clarke: Thank you.

Do you feel it wouldn't be a weapon?

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: Oh yes. I sure do.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much.

Thank you for being here, and thank you for being on the ice and trying to provide safety for both sides of this issue, I suspect.

Minister Swerdfager, how many fisheries officers do you have in the department?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Right now, we're at about 625 badged officers. We have a number of C and P officers who are not at the field level, if you will. But we're at about 625 or 640 at any given moment.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Is that far less than what it used to be?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Not a lot. It's a little bit, but not a lot.

It's been relatively steady over, I'd say, about 12 years.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Sylvestre, did you indicate that the observers are there and that it's good for the seal harvest, good for the industry, and it is...? I didn't quite catch how you responded to that.

I have a different opinion on the observers. It's quite different, but I'd like your view.

Did I understand you correctly?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: No, I did not mean that it was good for industry. My apologies if what I said was interpreted that way, but that's not it. I wanted to establish a distinction between two...

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: It's good for the industry for them to be there.

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: No, I didn't say it was good. I didn't mean to say that it's good for the industry.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Okay, thank you very much.

I do not know all the legal ramifications, but you're telling me that 10 metres was established by the court. In my opinion that 10 metres is a problem. First of all, roughly how many people percentage-wise, who obtain the licence to be within 10 metres of this harvest, support the seal fishery? Would there be 50%? I'd just like to have your opinion.

Mr. Randy Jenkins: I will attempt to address your question. I don't know the actual statistics, but I would suspect that the majority of the individuals who request a permit to observe the hunt are those who have an interest in animal rights. The regular media, CBC or CTV for example, may also request a permit to get footage for their news shows. But the regular observers are largely from the organized animal rights groups, such as the HSUS and its affiliates, the IFAW, and the Sea Shepherd Society, and so on.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: In my opinion, Mr. Jenkins, they've done an excellent job of basically destroying an industry that was so valuable. But anyhow, that's not your problem.

How many licences would be issued per day to go onto the ice, or is that gauged by the number of harvesters on the ice? How do you gauge that? If I want to get an observer's licence to go out on the ice to support this seal harvest, will I get it and can I go out?

•(1720)

Mr. Randy Jenkins: As long as you don't have the stated aim to disrupt the hunt and you're willing to abide by the conditions that are explained to you in the licence conditions, you will be issued a permit. The permit contains conditions that you must provide information to the department as to with whom you are planning on going to [Inaudible—Editor], how you plan to get there, and when and where you plan to go.

If only a small number of vessels are fishing on any one day or in one area, we will restrict the numbers to keep them manageable. The same situation would apply as I explained about Hay Island, so if we only have two vessels fishing in a certain area, sometimes multiple groups may be interested in going to that area. We usually explain to all the interested participants that, for example, we're only going to allow four of them to be in that area at one time, so they can agree among themselves to send one representative from each group, or in the absence of an agreement, we'll just arbitrarily decide that you someone can go out in the morning and somebody else in the afternoon. Usually if there's more interest than there is realistic opportunity to observe without being too disruptive, the groups will all agree among themselves to select one individual.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much.

I've been told that it's been a big job, not the licensed ones but dealing with the bill now and the shift from half a mile to one mile. Is it correct that it was difficult to monitor that and to keep them within a half a mile? Was there any problem with that and were you short of resources? If there was a problem, why? Also, how will the mile help if the half mile couldn't be enforced? My problem is that there are a whole lot of do-gooders going out there to destroy an industry. Anyhow, that part is not for you to answer.

Mr. Randy Jenkins: Thank you for your question, sir.

I think some of the biggest advantages of one mile versus the half mile gets back to safety. You can appreciate, as in the pictures we've handed out—particularly when it comes to ships—that you can cover a lot of ground fairly quickly, so we will have more time to react. We will be able to position ourselves farther away from the fishing industry if there is a problem, for example in the case of the *Farley Mowat*, because...the sealers, particularly if they're on the ice, even the wake from the ship cracking the ice, and so on, could endanger their lives, so it would give us more reaction time.

When it comes to enforcement, if we see a ship that doesn't already have the stated aim of disrupting the hunt, for example in the case of the Sea Shepherd—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Deal with it, yes.

Mr. Randy Jenkins: Yes, so once they start approaching the zone, we'll be in the area. We will give them fair warning that they're approaching the zone and that they're not allowed to enter unless they have an observation permit. We will give them an opportunity to cease and desist, to find another route, or to move away.

In the case of individuals intent on disrupting the hunt, as we've seen with the *Farley Mowat*, they're simply not going to turn around because we say so. In that case, it requires an escalated approach, which ultimately leads to us—the department—positioning a coast guard ship between the *Farley Mowat* and the sealers on the ice, for the protection and safety of the sealers on the ice.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Would you say, sir, that... I'd just like you to give me an idea of what a normal day might be like out there. Looking at these licensed observers who are within 10 metres of the people who are doing the work, it would seem to me that it would be somewhat annoying. As far as I'm concerned, they're there to cause trouble.

●(1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Richard: I want to add on to what Mr. Jenkins was saying.

There is constant communication between people onboard the icebreaker who manage operations and those who issue observation licences. That is intended to ensure that an excessively high number of observations licences are not issued and to avoid having too many people observing just a few boats. This type of communication already exists.

Obviously, if someone with a licence follows a hunter, that can cause problems. For hunters, it is not simple to work in this type of context. Having someone filming them with a camera can lead to additional stress for hunters. Seal hunting conditions are not simple. There can be vast stretches of ice or small flows no bigger than three or four tables. Fishers jump from their vessels to the ice to hunt seals. Of course, it is not simple.

When we meet with hunters, we try to make them aware of this reality and make them understand that if they do their job correctly and if they use slaughter methods that are both accepted as humane and recognized by industry, observers will have nothing to report after their day of observation. We try to make them aware of this to ensure that they can still work safely. I admit, however, that it is neither simple nor easy.

That is what applies to those who have an observation licence. When it comes to those who do not have a licence, other problems crop up. We spoke today about people who clearly had no intention of obeying regulations and whose goal was to disrupt hunters activities. That is a whole other aspect of managing the seal hunt.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. Sopuck

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Thank you.

In my previous lives I was involved with wildlife conservation and the communication of hunting. I'm currently the chair of the Conservative hunting and angling caucus.

As I look back on the history of the animal rights movement, I see that their modus operandi is very clear. First they start off by questioning the sustainability of the hunt. Then they want it to be made more humane. I looked at some of the old records, and I see your department worked very hard to ensure the humaneness of the hunt and played by all the scientific rules. But it became fairly clear that the ultimate goal of these animal rights groups—who are phenomenally wealthy—was to end the seal hunt itself.

From your experience on the ice with these groups, is it fair to say that their ultimate goal is to end the hunt, period, and the humaneness and sustainability of the harvest has nothing to do with their motives?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Sylvestre: I must say that, as a citizen and not as a fisheries officer, I get informed and I go to their site. We can see where they are coming from. There are different types of activists, going from the least to the most hardly militant, as our photos demonstrate. Indeed, their goal is to stop this hunt which, according to them, is far from humane.

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Pinhorn talked about the seal population increasing from five million to ten million animals. I have no reason to doubt that.

Mr. Swerdfager, has the quota kept pace with that increase in seal numbers? Has the quota itself effectively been doubled?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: The quota has continued to rise. For quite a long time we've had nowhere near the harvest, but the quota has never really been set at... I understand that's a big level.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Okay. Thanks.

I have one last question. Have you been able to use modern GPS technologies to better monitor the distance of the observers from the hunters and vessels and so on? Is that an option?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Yes.

The Chair: The bells are ringing. Once again, I have to interrupt. I apologize, colleagues.

Just quickly before we adjourn, you have a housekeeping motion in front of you with respect to paying the expenses of our witnesses. Can I get a mover on that?

Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Get a mover first, and then I just want to ask a question.

The Chair: Can I get a mover for that motion you have in front of you?

Ms. Patricia Davidson: I so move.

The Chair: The motion says:

That the proposed budget in the amount of \$4,800, in relation to this study of Bill C-555, An Act respecting the Marine Mammal Regulations (seal fishery observation licence), be adopted.

Those in favour?

• (1730)

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I wanted to speak to the motion. That's why I wanted it to be moved.

I just have a question. We haven't even really come up with a witness list yet.

The Chair: I've asked members to submit any witnesses they might have. Have you submitted any witnesses?

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I believe we've shared a few with you.

The Chair: I haven't seen your witness list, Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: We haven't sat down in the subcommittee and talked about that.

The Chair: We haven't discussed it. This is just a motion to allow us to pay the expenses of the witnesses we have today. Anything further would require another motion to go further than this.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I don't mind that. I just hope it doesn't mean that we've somehow....

The Chair: There's no finalization of a witness list at this time. If you have witness lists, please submit them to us.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Okay.

The Chair: Those in favour? Those opposed?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Gentlemen, we have to adjourn at this time because of the bells. I certainly do appreciate your taking the time to come here and your testimony today.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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