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Chair

Mr. Scott Simms

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.)): Welcome back, everyone.

Today we have our first witnesses from the department, under the special operating agency of the Canadian Coast Guard. I believe it's still called that, isn't it? Gentlemen, thank you for coming.

This is the third meeting, and it's Tuesday, February 23.

I want to welcome our guests. Jeffery Hutchinson is here from the Canadian Coast Guard. He is the deputy commissioner of strategy and shipbuilding. We also have Mario Pelletier, deputy commissioner of operations.

The way this works is that the first question will go to the Liberals, after the comments in the beginning. Then it will go to the Conservatives, and then to Mr. Donnelly of the New Democrats. The fourth question on the first round will be from the Liberals, once again.

Before we get to that, I think, Mr. Hutchinson, you're going first. Is that correct? You want to do 10 minutes each.

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson (Deputy Commissioner, Strategy & Shipbuilding, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): No. In fact, Mr. Chair, I propose to do the whole presentation for the Coast Guard, and I should be in the 10-minute to 12-minute range.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Please proceed.

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you very much for having us to the committee this afternoon. It's an honour to be here, and we hope we can provide information that is of use to you.

We've provided a deck, which I saw was being distributed. I hope you have it in front of you. I propose to go through the deck fairly quickly. I'm not going to pause on the text of the slides; that's really there for your background information. I will try to give you a quick overview of the Canadian Coast Guard as we go through the graphics and the information in front of you.

Turn to slide 2, if you would, please. The Coast Guard's mandate is to ensure the safety of mariners and to protect the marine environment. The Coast Guard is proud of what it does each and every day. Our professionals are critical to the safe movement of over 5,600 large cargo vessels and over seven million fishing and recreational vessels every year. Canadian waters produce some of the world's most challenging weather and sailing conditions. Our ships

service all three of Canada's oceans, totalling more than 275,000 kilometres of coastline, which, as you likely know, is the longest in the world. That's in addition to the critical services we provide in the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. We're responsible for a marine area that's roughly the size of the European Union.

The Coast Guard employs approximately 4,700 personnel. Some 2,400 of them are ships' crews and officers, with another 1,100 or so in operational positions such as marine communication and traffic services, maritime security officers, and environmental response officers. The remaining 1,200 or so employees are spread across the country and support these operational personnel in their duties.

We are currently organized in three regions: the western region, headquartered in Victoria, British Columbia; central and Arctic, headquartered in Montreal, Quebec; and Atlantic, which is headquartered in St. John's, Newfoundland. We maintain a series of smaller bases, search and rescue stations, and other facilities to support our operations.

Turning to slide 3, we support the safety of mariners, our environment, and the economy through our brave men and women who take to the water each and every day. As weather takes a turn for the worst and the mariners head to the safety of shore, the Coast Guard is heading out to sea to help others in distress.

The Coast Guard is well known for its expertise in safety services, but many Canadians are not as familiar with our role in supporting the economy by ensuring that container ships and other large vessels move safely in Canadian waters.

Next is slide 4.

• (1535)

[Translation]

Our motto is "Safety First, Service Always".

Safety begins with the work done to operate and maintain more than 17,000 marine aids, to disseminate information on safety and navigation, to provide data on the weather and water levels for mariners, as well as to implement e-Navigation to enable mariners to electronically obtain the information they need to navigate in safety.

The presence of ice on waterways is a danger for mariners. Thanks to the 15 icebreakers, with an average age of about 30 years, and the 2 air cushion vessels of our fleet, ships can navigate safely on the coast and in the Great Lakes 12 months a year.

Our work in the Arctic carried out from June to November contributes to the resupply of certain Arctic communities, supports fishing thanks to emergency response services, provides ice escorts, and supports scientific research. In addition, we are often the only visible presence of the Canadian government in many communities.

Another significant contribution to safety comes from our marine communications and traffic services centres.

[English]

Another important contribution to safety comes from Coast Guard marine communications and traffic service, MCTS, centres. These centres provide marine distress and safety monitoring and marine safety information broadcast services, such as weather warnings and hazards to navigation. They also screen vessels entering Canadian waters and manage vessel traffic movements within Canadian waters. The Coast Guard has modernized the communications technology used in these centres right across the country.

It is our understanding that this committee intends on studying the consolidation of Comox and we welcome working together to show you what our dedicated officers do to keep our waterways safe through this important work.

To date, we have successfully modernized nine centres and the new systems are working well. The modernized centres will have allowed us to move from 22 to 12 centres with no reduction in service to mariners, because the number of communication towers that actually receive the calls from the water remains the same.

While the thousands of vessels transiting over Canada's waters every day are critical to the economic livelihoods of Canadians, each represents a risk to the environment or a potential search and rescue case.

First, I'll say a word on our environmental response program. On an average day, the Coast Guard addresses three reported pollution events. We know that all marine vessels carry some quantity of fuel, hazardous and noxious substances and/or oil. The Coast Guard is responsible for ensuring an appropriate response to all marine pollution spills in Canadian waters. When the polluter has been identified and is willing and able to respond, the Coast Guard advises the polluter of its responsibilities. In instances when the polluter is unknown, unable or unwilling to act, the Coast Guard assumes command and takes control of the response.

On the subject of search and rescue, the Coast Guard is the federal lead for marine search and rescue services which include monitoring, coordination, and on-water response actions. The Coast Guard ensures that safe, professionally crewed and operationally capable vessels, vehicles and helicopters are available and ready to respond to marine search and rescue incidents.

Given Canada's expansive coastline and marine area, the Coast Guard augments its search and rescue capacity through a network of assets and resources, working together to provide assistance to respond to marine search and rescue incidents. These include volunteer members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other mariners, usually called vessels of opportunity, who are legally required to respond when another vessel is in distress. An example of this, you will recall, occurred on October 25, 2015. There was a whale-watching boat that sank off the west coast of British Columbia, the

Leviathan II, and it was the Ahousaht First Nation that was first on the scene. Their quick and courageous response certainly reduced the loss of life that day.

[Translation]

The Coast Guard also plays a vital role in national security and marine safety in Canada. Although we do not have a direct mandate related to their application, we contribute to these objectives in three important ways.

When it comes to system monitoring and maritime situational awareness, the Coast Guard is one of the five partners of the marine communications and traffic services centres in Halifax, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Esquimalt. All three of those centres identify, monitor and assess potential maritime threats in Canadian waters and in boundary waters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The Coast Guard is always keeping an eye on Canadian waters.

As for the Coast Guard's assets and staff, we own and operate Canada's civilian fleet. We maintain a maritime presence throughout Canadian waters. Our vessels, helicopters, equipment, staff and expertise are called upon to support Canada's marine security and law enforcement community.

● (1540)

[English]

The Canadian Coast Guard has two armed vessels that are used for interdiction activities, specifically with respect to fisheries enforcement on the high seas. We also have patrol vessels that we run in partnership with the RCMP. They patrol primarily in the Great Lakes and on the St. Lawrence.

We also maintain a small policy group in Ottawa that helps to develop our operational policy and provides an interface with our policy partners, primarily Transport Canada.

The Canadian Coast Guard owns and operates 117 vessels, 43 of which are large vessels, along with 22 helicopters. Many of our vessels are well past their expected end of life date and our engineering and maintenance staff have done wonders to keep the vessels operating so well for so long. However, many ships are breaking down more often due to age, and the Coast Guard needs to provide reliable services. This is why the Coast Guard is working to renew its fleet of vessels and helicopters.

Since 2009 the Coast Guard has acquired 20 new vessels, including nine midshore patrol vessels that support fisheries enforcement and maritime security; two air-cushioned vehicles, commonly known as hovercraft; 15 light-lift helicopters—we took delivery of the last one very recently—that support ice monitoring and safe navigation activities to facilitate trade; and numerous small craft and barges that are too many to name but that are, rest assured, important to our work.

The future of our renewal efforts remains bright. We have contracted for seven medium light-lift helicopters and 12 new search and rescue lifeboats. Construction on the first of four offshore science vessels is under way in Vancouver. These will be made-in-Canada ships that will support the Fisheries and Oceans research needed for evidence-based science decisions. We continue to advance the work to acquire a polar icebreaker to enhance services in the Arctic and replace our current flagship, the *Louis S. St-Laurent*, affectionately known simply as the *Louis*.

The Coast Guard's next priority is the replacement of its icebreakers. These workhorses of the fleet are still performing, but they're aging. Replacements will be required to ensure that we can meet current and future demands for icebreaking in the Great Lakes, the Seaway, eastern Canada, and the Arctic.

I'll turn now to slide 8.

The Arctic is a unique environment, and the Coast Guard is very involved in the discussion of Canada's northern strategy. The Coast Guard provides its range of services in the Arctic. It is a member of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, which seeks to discuss operational issues with other northern nations.

Our icebreakers and their commanding officers and crews have decades of experience, and are the global authorities on icebreaking and navigating Canada's Arctic. With this expertise, the Coast Guard is leading, along with Transport Canada and the Canadian Hydrographic Service, the implementation of the northern marine transportation corridors initiative, which is looking to focus investment in services along a series of shipping routes with higher traffic to offer safe navigation to those in the north.

These shipping lanes link to every northern community, and provide a route from the Pacific to the Atlantic. In this capacity, we are working to improve safety and establish more reliable and direct supply lines to northern communities, which will contribute to lowering the cost of goods and services in the Arctic.

Although shipping through the Arctic is very expensive at this time due to a number of factors, including stronger vessel hulls required and increased insurance rates, the melting of Arctic ice will likely see costs diminish in the future. *The Globe and Mail* summarized the 2013 MV *Nordic Orion* trip through the Northwest Passage from Vancouver to Finland as follows:

Sending cargo through the Northwest Passage would shave about 4,000 kilometres on a trip from Europe to Asia compared with the Panama Canal, which also can only accommodate ships of a certain size. The *Nordic Orion* saved about \$200,000 and about four days using the passage.

As you can see from the next slide, the Coast Guard provides many important services to Canadians, and is at the forefront of critical safety and security operations. At the same time, the Coast Guard is an economic enabler and the protector of Canadian waterways for future generations.

Coast Guard personnel are proud to serve the country in this unique way. We're always recruiting Canadians who are looking to serve their country with a dash of adventure. To this end, we operate the Canadian Coast Guard College in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The Canadian public has a high expectation of the Coast Guard, and we seek to meet this standard in everything we do.

Thank you very much for inviting us here today. I'd like to extend an invitation to the committee: if we can help in any way, including having you visit our fleet or any of our operations, we'd be more than happy to host you in that respect.

We'd love to answer any questions or provide any information that can be of use to you today.

• (1545)

The Chair: We just might take you up on that, sir.

For a quick clarification, did you say the area that you patrol is the same size as that of the European Union? Did I get that correct?

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: The area we're responsible for is roughly the same area as the European Union. It would also be comparable to the whole of the Arctic Ocean, somewhere between five million and seven million square kilometres.

The Chair: Right. Okay.

My apologies to the committee. I just had one point of clarification there.

The first question goes to the Liberals.

Mr. Hardie, I believe you're asking the first question. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We'd be interested to know, given the minister's mandate letter, what kind of changes you see coming up for your organizations.

What are your plans and priorities, particularly as they surround the reopening of the Kits Coast Guard base, which is of interest in our area, and also one on the east coast, which is of interest to more people down this line? What can you tell us about your organization? What changes have you gone through in the past? What changes do you see coming up now that you have this mandate through the minister?

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: Thank you for the question.

You've quite rightly touched on the fact that the Coast Guard has undergone several changes, and we certainly envision a few more. You may or may not know that in the last few years, we actually consolidated from five regions to three, which was a massive reorganization for us, one I would say we're still living with some of the follow-up from. I already referred in my opening remarks to the consolidation of MCTS, which is actually an initiative that was under way before it had specific cost-cutting implications. We had identified technological improvements as a way of improving safety on the water, so that was something that was already in motion.

We certainly have changes to our fleet, and I've talked about some of those. The replacement of the helicopters, which was just completed two weeks ago, is really a massive accomplishment and a good example of large-scale procurement gone well, on time, and on budget.

The other changes that you referred to, MRSC in St. John's and Kits in Vancouver, were very specific commitments, obviously, and the reopening of Kits has been announced. There's work that's begun on rehabilitating the Kits property, as you may know, and the implementation plans for that are well under way. MRSC were certainly providing advice to the minister on how to implement that mandate commitment.

My colleague Mr. Pelletier will refer to some of the details around that.

● (1550)

Mr. Mario Pelletier (Deputy Commissioner, Operations, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you.

As my colleague mentioned, we have gone through a number of changes. I just want to pick up on one: the merger from five regions to three regions. It did allow us to be much more efficient in our operations and allows us to exchange resources between regions much more easily and satisfy clients' needs.

Specifically to the Kitsilano station, as Jeffery mentioned, we have started work on the building. We have started looking at options for vessels that we have available that we can bring back there so that we can ramp up operations as early as possible.

As for the MRSC, that's a very complex operation. That's an operational centre that needs staff who are fully trained, so we need to recruit staff and we need to provide the proper training. Also, in St. John's where the MRSC was located, we are in the middle of a project to change the base and move into a new building, so we need to look at the plans on how we're going to redesign the building to allow for the introduction of that centre as well. That planning work is all ongoing.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Further to that, over the past number of years a lot of departments and agencies have seen cutbacks, cutbacks in budgets and cutbacks in staff. Rationalization and consolidation have followed that. To what extent do you see your ability to fulfill your mandate now, and perhaps to improve upon that in the future? How constrained are you in your ability to reopen these two bases? I've already heard about recruiting staff who unfortunately were lost before. Now that ground has to be recovered.

As far as the Kits Coast Guard base is concerned, what in fact have you got in the cupboard in terms of staff and equipment to bring forward to make sure that base is operational? Finally, with respect to that base, what holes is it going to fill in terms of coverage that were basically left when the base was closed?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: When the base was closed in Kitsilano, there were a lot of mitigating measures put in place to make sure that we still fulfilled our full mandate. We had just purchased a brand new hovercraft that operates out of Seattle, which is about 17 kilometres away. That actually covers that area as well. We had expanded our Coast Guard Auxiliary contribution agreement by providing extra resources to the auxiliary that are already located in downtown Vancouver. Plus, we had stood up what we call an inshore rescue boat station that is basically staffed with students in the summertime for the peak season. These are the measures that we had put in place.

Since then, a lot of things have happened in Vancouver as well, too. Traffic is increasing. On-the-water activity is increasing as well. One could recall the *Marathassa* incident where some concerns were expressed about coverage in Vancouver, Coast Guard presence, and so on. By reopening Kitsilano, we're looking really far into the future and we're looking at addressing the increasing gap that might come up as a result of increased traffic and so on.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Now we'll go to the Conservatives. Mr. Strahl, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Just to confirm, Mr. Pelletier, will the resources that are needed to ramp Kitsilano back up be taken from Sea Island, or will new additional resources be stationed in the Vancouver area? Are we robbing Peter to pay Paul, if you want to put it that way? Are we simply taking things that were consolidated to Sea Island and moving them back to Kits?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: That's a good question, and thanks for the opportunity to clarify.

No, we're not taking anything away from Sea Island. Sea Island was a fully operational base before. What I mentioned is that we had purchased a brand new hovercraft that is stationed at Sea Island and that hovercraft will remain there. There are two hovercrafts at Sea Island, so we're not taking any resources away from Sea Island.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Will the assets that were at HMCS *Discovery* be maintained as well?

● (1555)

Mr. Mario Pelletier: We had a fast rescue craft for the inshore rescue boat at HMCS *Discovery*. That's an inflatable, 7.5-metre craft that will be redeployed at Kitsilano. In addition to this we are looking at a vessel of about 40 feet that could operate in Vancouver harbour. We're looking at the resource that was there.

Mr. Hutchinson mentioned that we have a fleet of 117 vessels. We have many small craft around as well. We are continually re-examining our assets and making sure they are deployed where they are most needed. Part of the work we're doing right now is to reassess where the assets are to make sure they are where they will be most needed.

Mr. Mark Strahl: I want to move to another issue that the B.C. government has raised. Certainly it was something we were looking at, at the end of our mandate: world-class marine spill response and the lack of dedicated tug service on the west coast capable of handling something like the Russian cargo vessel *Simushir*.

I didn't hear that it was part of the equipment upgrade list. Is the Coast Guard looking at that? Tell us what is there to protect the west coast from tanker traffic in that case. Obviously in that case there was a U.S. tug, vessels of opportunity, etc., but is there dedicated tug capability, and if not, are you aware of any plans to acquire it?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: The mandate of the Coast Guard is to make sure there is no pollution in the water coming from ships, so we take that very seriously.

Part of the initiatives that are ongoing is the world-class tanker safety system and part of this is what we call the area response planning. We are committed to engaging with local communities, first nations, private companies, and everything else to look at the true risk of navigation. In some parts of the country we've identified four pilot areas and we're going to focus on those at first.

It's looking at hazards in navigation, looking at available resources in the area, looking at the weather and the environment, and so on, so we can make sure we have the best system in place first to prevent any accident, but should that happen, we are going to be prepared to respond as well. By "we", I mean the broader community, and where there is a coast guard, it is the federal lead to make sure proper responses are in place, also the owners and the private operators.

Mr. Mark Strahl: I will go back to Kitsilano. You have an impressive list here. On an average day the Canadian Coast Guard saves x lives, etc. When Kitsilano was closed, did any incidents occur that weren't responded to by the Coast Guard in a timely fashion that can be attributed to the Kitsilano Coast Guard station having been closed?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Maybe I can offer a little briefing on the marine search and rescue program and how they deliver it. It's done in three phases: the monitoring, the coordination, and the on-water response.

The monitoring, as Mr. Hutchinson referred to earlier, is done through marine communication and traffic services. Basically, they are the eyes and ears on the water. Through a network of towers they listen to what's happening on the water, and if there's distress signal, then it gets picked up and transferred to the joint rescue co-ordination centre. They're the ones who look at all the assets that are available to coordinate a proper response to any incidents. The third one is the on-water capacity or on-water response. That's done through a network of partners.

So yes, we do have a Coast Guard presence on the water and that is critical, but we also have vessels of opportunity. A pleasure craft or a commercial vessel could be going by. These are what we call vessels of opportunity. There's the Coast Guard Auxiliary across Canada, which has 1,100 vessels and 4,000 members. We also have other partners such as the municipalities, in this case, the Vancouver fire department, Vancouver Police Department, and emergency services, etc.

When there's a case on the water, the joint rescue coordination centre has access to all of those resources, and they will task the most suitable resource to respond as quickly as possible.

• (1600)

Mr. Mark Strahl: This is my final question. When these sorts of decisions are made to consolidate, as Mr. Hardie mentioned earlier, the Coast Guard is obviously asked for its opinion on how that would affect its operations.

I'm not sure, Mr. Chair, if it would be appropriate to ask if information on that consolidation could be provided to this committee, because I think certainly at the time it was indicated that it could be closed and that you could still fulfill the mandate, which the Coast Guard very ably did. I think it would be good to see what the Coast Guard had to say about that prior to that decision having been made.

The Chair: You can ask for a follow-up as long as it's in both official languages, and they can provide you with a response.

We'll consider it asked for.

Mr. Hutchinson, do you want to respond to that?

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I simply wanted to say that there will be a fine line there. We are constrained in terms of what we can provide that was advice to a previous cabinet, as you can appreciate, but we will certainly be happy to provide in both official languages everything we're able to provide.

The Chair: Just as a quick clarification for those who are new, seven minutes is a guideline for you asking the questions. Our responses can exceed the seven, as is the normal case. So if I say you have 10 seconds left, make it quick, but please, no supplementaries after the fact.

Mr. Donnelly, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank you for appearing before the committee and I certainly thank you for your service to the country.

I do want to follow up on Mr. Hardie and Mr. Strahl's questions on the Canadian Coast Guard Kitsilano station in Vancouver.

Specifically, will the station be staffed and equipped to pre-2012 levels, which was a 24-7 operation with a cutter at the base?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: We have a standard operating profile for every search and rescue station across Canada. We have 40 search and rescue stations across Canada. Some are seasonal and some are year round, but they all operate 24-7. There's a station where the staff lives. They provide service and are available to respond within 30 minutes to any call 24-7.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: So you're saying there will be staffing for 24 hours then?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: There will be staff at the station 24 hours and they will respond within 30 minutes. That's our standard across the country.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: That's good news, and will there be a cutter?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: As I mentioned earlier, with regard to the cutter, we're looking at what we have available across the country and we'll reassign the most suitable cutter for that place. There will be what we call the 733, the inflatable vessel, which was there before. We're also looking for a larger cutter which is available somewhere else.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: In terms of timing, you said "as soon as possible". Can you give us a little more clarity on what you mean by "as soon as possible"?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: As Mr. Hutchinson said earlier, the work is ongoing at the station. It has been vacated for two years. There's some work that was due to be done at the time the service was suspended, so we are catching up on that work, plus we need to redo some internal work at the station.

We've already located floating docks that have been transferred there. It's a work in progress. I don't have any definite timeline right now, but we're working, as our minister has announced, to reopen the station.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Will it be open before the summer?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: By all means, our intention is to have presence in Vancouver harbour for the summer.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Is the Canadian Coast Guard working with the province and the City of Vancouver to look at how you could increase capacity for search and rescue using their resources?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Well, it's similar to what we've done in the past and what we're doing everywhere. I did talk about area response planning for an environmental response earlier. We have a similar approach to risk assessment for search and rescue. We call it the risk assessment methodology for search and rescue. Basically, we're looking at all resources available, their capacity, the risk, and we define what we need from this analysis.

• (1605)

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I'll switch gears to the MCTS stations. You were talking about closing centres and relying on technology. I'm wondering if you have heard about the quality of the communication that some of the operators have been dealing with in terms of their communications with shipping.

I'm understanding that some of this has been echoey and completely garbled in terms of understanding what it is the ships are communicating. Has this been your experience, or can you comment on what the operators are talking about?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: I can certainly comment. First of all, I'd like to make a clarification. When we say we're closing centres, we are consolidating operations into centres. Basically, the same network of communication towers, radar, and everything else still exists, except instead of going into two separate centres, it's going into one centre in some cases.

When we acquired the new software system for communication control, there were some issues with echos as you've mentioned, and that's why we were delayed in some of the consolidation and modernization of the centres, because we did not accept the software. We were not satisfied with the product. The company came back with another version, and we did very extensive testing of the software to make sure it met our needs.

Once the software was deployed, there was some echo, but it was mostly in only a few centres around the configuration of the console. We developed what we call a patch for adjacent console sound attenuation. Basically, it makes sure there is no echo from one console to another.

As soon as that problem was identified, we worked on the solution and had it implemented. I'm happy to report that it's been implemented in all the centres and it's working well.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Okay. My understanding is there is still some concern about that.

You did mention you still have the same resources available, but my understanding is satellites are still part of that equation and that

you are looking at future growth, so it will take some time before those are in place.

I'm going to move on, because I know we have limited time. We have a study coming, and we'll be able to talk more in depth about the modernization or closure of these centres.

In the remaining time I want to ask about the oil spill you mentioned from the *Marathassa*, in Vancouver. There was a review done on the *Marathassa* oil spill in English Bay last year. I'm wondering if those recommendations have been implemented. If so, what were the most significant changes that were made?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Those recommendations were based around three themes: notification, communication, and command structure. We took that very seriously, and we went public saying we accepted all the recommendations. We actually started working on this even before they were made, where we knew of some gaps.

I'm happy to report that we have completed about 40% of those recommendations as we speak, and the implementation of the other 60% is ongoing as per the timeline that we've agreed upon. Basically, we corrected notification protocols right away. Communication among stakeholders and partners is a work in progress, and it's not something we intend to stop at any given time, because that consultation and communication has to be ongoing.

We're developing what we call the greater Vancouver response plans, where we are engaged with all the communities and partners and stakeholders to make sure everybody speaks the same language, everybody understands their roles and responsibilities and when it's time to step in. It's a work in progress. I'm happy to report that the partners' feedback that we're getting is very positive as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pelletier.

I'm sorry, Mr. Donnelly. I have to leave it at that.

Now we'll go to the Liberals for seven minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Finnigan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Thank you.

If you don't mind, I am going to speak in French.

Welcome, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Pelletier.

My first question will bear mostly on your activities in the Arctic.

The 2015-2016 supplementary estimates (C) tabled on February 19, include almost \$1.8 million in new voted appropriations to enhance the safety of marine transportation in the Arctic.

Could you describe the Canadian Coast Guard's projects designed to enhance the safety of marine transportation in the Arctic?

• (1610)

Mr. Mario Pelletier: These funds allocated to the Coast Guard are from different envelopes.

The purpose of one of these envelopes is to expand our search and rescue coverage in the Arctic. The contributions to the Coast Guard Auxiliary will be increased to ensure an expanded presence of the Coast Guard in the Arctic.

We are also going to use part of these funds to carry out a risk analysis. We are going to try to determine which locations are most at risk, in order to ensure that adequate resources can be sent to the right locations, particularly to the Coast Guard Auxiliary. I spoke about the new search and rescue risk assessment methodology we are going to use to carry out that assessment.

Other amounts will be used to revise our Arctic navigation aid systems, which we have provided for several years. This destination is becoming increasingly popular, be it for mining or the exploitation of natural resources. So there is more and more traffic in the Arctic, in areas where people did not use to go. Over the years, we have developed aid systems for this traffic. Since this is an evolving situation, we have to revise these systems and project ourselves into the future in order to ensure that our services are adequate.

Mr. Pat Finnigan: Thank you.

Will the requested funds be used to implement necessary projects that needed more funding, or will they be used to absorb unforeseen additional costs?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Our funding will be used to expand our search and rescue presence and to study existing systems in order to make informed decisions regarding future investments.

Mr. Pat Finnigan: You cooperate with National Defence. As we know, neighbouring countries are taking a growing interest in the Canadian North.

In your opinion, are we going to need much more resources and support over the next decade, or the next 25 to 50 years?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: On this, I had the pleasure of being a part of the Canadian delegation that recently went to Boston to sign an agreement with other coastal Arctic countries. I am referring here to the Arctic Coast Guard Forum. Through this agreement, all of the signatory countries have committed to working together to assess operational needs or gaps in services, and also to share best practices.

If, for instance, we carry out an environmental intervention exercise in a given location and another country feels it must do the same a few hundred kilometres away, we can do a joint exercise that will be more effective, as well as share the lessons learned and benefit from them.

You also mentioned the navy and the patrol vessels in the Arctic. Every additional ship in the Arctic is important. We have already begun talks with our National Defence colleagues to optimize the presence of Canadian government vessels in the Arctic. When these ships are put into service, we are going to see to it that they are deployed in strategic locations in order to ensure the best possible coverage and the best return on those investments.

Mr. Pat Finnigan: I believe I heard you say earlier that you work closely with first nations on the coast of British Columbia and that they have their own search and rescue system.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: The Coast Guard Auxiliary system covers the entire country. In the Pacific region, it is called the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue. These are all independent companies to which we contribute. They simply have different names.

We are also currently conducting a mobilization exercise with the first nations. They have excellent resources and local knowledge we want to capitalize on. By working with them, we can provide training and we can also benefit from their local knowledge. This program is being studied at this time.

• (1615)

Mr. Pat Finnigan: Will you do the same thing in northern communities and established Inuit communities? Have you already begun talks with them to ask them to participate in safety-related activities?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: That is part of our normal operational practice, whether it involves environmental interventions or other kinds. Over the years, we have deployed what we called “community kits” in strategic locations. These are containers with environmental intervention equipment to fight pollution. They are used when there are spills. The locations are determined based on risk.

Several communities have Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels. We provide them with training and make sure that they are well-equipped so that they can support us in search and rescue operations.

Mr. Pat Finnigan: Is global warming a real phenomenon? On land or on sea, have you over the years observed a warming trend that allows vessels to navigate an increasing number of bodies of water?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Each additional vessel in the Arctic makes a contribution. There are so few vessels that go to that region. There are about 25. So, one or two additional ships represent a big increase. We take this very seriously.

As for climate change and open waters, it is not that simple or that linear. The ice is melting more quickly. This causes multi-year ice to drift further south, which creates a much greater risk to navigation than in the past. In the winter, there are ice bridges that hold back the multi-year ice. If these bridges can no longer form, that ice drifts and creates navigation risks.

Last summer, there were exceptional conditions in the lower Arctic, conditions I had never seen in my 30 years of experience. We expected fairly difficult conditions in the upper Arctic, but that was not the case. Over the two previous years, we saw the opposite. Travel through the Northwest Passage has been quite difficult because of the presence of multi-year ice.

It is very difficult to predict what will happen in the next few years. Thinking that the passage might open up and facilitate navigation could send us off in the wrong direction.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Finnigan.

[English]

Now we're off to the next round. Normally, what we do is take a break for the other witnesses to come forward. We have a couple of options here, because the two witnesses in front of us will also be our witnesses for the second round.

We can take a break if you wish, or we can continue on for the next five questions, perhaps more if you so desire.

We have 55 minutes left and at 5:15 we're going to talk about committee business. Between now and then, as I said, we do have a couple of options. I'm seeking consent to either take a break or just keep going.

I see that we want to keep going. Let's roll, as Mr. Strahl says for the record.

We're going into the second round. These questions are mostly five minutes in duration. We're starting out with the Conservative Party.

Mr. Arnold, you are first.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank you both for being here today. It was a great presentation. I was also impressed with the numbers when you said you save an average of 15 lives per day. I think that's a story that most people aren't aware of. You obviously do great work.

My first question is on the changes in the Comox safety station, the transmitter. Does the number of receiving towers stay the same? Is the coverage the same or better? What is the reliability of the service versus what had been there before?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: The number of towers remains exactly the same. The radar coverage, the automatic identification system, AIS, as we call it, everything remains the same. The number of actual desks for marine communications and traffic services officers also remains the same.

What the consolidation has allowed us to do is to have a state-of-the-art communication and control system that allows us to integrate some signals from the various towers into a single centre. We've trained our officers so that they are well versed in the geographical area. It's a very extensive training program.

I can say with confidence that the coverage has not changed, and the level of service is even better due to the technology that we use. It allows the officer to focus on monitoring what's happening on the air as opposed to doing other administrative duties, such as recording weather forecasts or notices to shipping. The technology does that automatically so that the officer can focus on listening to what's happening on the air.

• (1620)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

Recently I was at a reception recognizing science and technology. There was a firm there that is basically retrieving—maybe surveillance is too strong a word—data from a number of sources around the world and basically processing that data to be used, in some cases, for fisheries monitoring or safety and immigration

issues. I'm wondering if you are able to share any information that you know of about that type of system or if that's beyond what we can actually talk about.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: I'm not aware of what you're referring to. I can tell you what the Coast Guard does, though.

For on-water activity, we own about 80% of the systems or the information that is required to ensure on-water safety. Basically, it's our vessel traffic system that monitors the traffic through the automatic identification system that is integrated in there. Vessels that come into Canada have to report 96 hours ahead of time, 24 hours.... All that reporting comes through our traffic and communication services centres and is provided to the relevant agency that requires it. Whether it be for Transport Canada to issue the clearance for a ship to enter into Canada or whether it's CBSA, it's governed by clear procedures.

We also have the marine security operations centres which Mr. Hutchinson referred to earlier, where different partners at the three centres across Canada, every partner and every agency, are collecting information they need for their work, but there are some restrictions on what information can be collected or shared as well.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

I'm wondering, on the inland coverage of your mandate for seagoing vessels, how far inland you go. I know there's Vancouver harbour and so on, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but does your mandate also come up into the Great Lakes?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: The Great Lakes are federal waters and are within our mandate. Basically, we're looking at both coasts, the entire Arctic, the Mackenzie River, the St. Lawrence River, and the Great Lakes as our core mandates.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Finally, what sort of response planning process is under way for the north coast of B.C.? We see increasing tanker traffic that may not be on the inland inside passage, but definitely increasing commercial vessel traffic. I'm wondering if you can give us any information on the planning process for the increase in traffic there.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: I've talked about the area response plan. That's one thing. As I've mentioned, we are going to be looking at specific geographical areas and through our risk assessment methodology we'll identify the actual hazard to navigation risk and the types of products that transit through those waters to make sure that an appropriate prevention measure is in place, but also preparedness and response.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

Ms. Jordan.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for your presentation. Also, thank you for what you do. Having grown up in a coastal community in Nova Scotia, I definitely appreciate what the Coast Guard does.

I have a couple of questions.

First of all, you're broken into three regions: western, central Arctic, and Atlantic. Is your budget broken by region or is it broken by program? I'm just wondering how the allocation works. Is it a program-based budget, or is it a regional budget?

• (1625)

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Our budget is based on the activity, the actual programs that we need to deliver. The exercise always starts at a national level. Every program looks at the activity that needs to be carried out during the year and costs those activities. Then it's rolled up and we're looking at the resources available and we prioritize.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Can you give me a breakdown of your employees across the country, how they're broken up by region, how many in each area?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Yes, I can do that.

In the central and Arctic we have about 1,300 employees. I hope the math adds up. In the western region we have about 1,000 employees and we have about 2,200 in the Atlantic region.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: You mentioned that your icebreakers are on average 33.5 years old, and that there will be a plan for ongoing replacement of those vessels. Is there also a plan for getting rid of the ones you have?

I'm always concerned about derelict and abandoned vessels. I just want to make sure there is a go-forward to look after what we have and to get rid of it responsibly. Is there an actual plan in place? Once a vessel is retired, what happens to it?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: We have very strict procedures on how to dispose of vessels. Monsieur Hutchinson referred to the fact that we have just acquired nine midshore patrol vessels. We've acquired a number of smaller vessels. Once a vessel becomes surplus for operation in one region, we'll look at it from a national perspective and we'll look at it from a Government of Canada perspective. Perhaps one vessel is needed to support another department, or perhaps sometimes there could be communities. We've given vessels that were surplus to our operations to the Coast Guard Auxiliary so they can use and support our operations.

So yes, we look at all of this. If there are no takers, there are strict procedures to do a vessel condition survey, an environmental assessment, and so on before they are put up for sale. If there are no takers, or they're not seaworthy, then we're responsible to dismantle them. We had a few older ships that had mould issues and so on. We had to take them apart in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: If they actually go to an auxiliary, is there funding to maintain them through an auxiliary program?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Well, there is funding. As I said, there's a grants and contributions programs for the Coast Guard Auxiliary. We provide just over \$5 million a year. Auxiliaries are responsible for managing their contribution. They do charity work as well. They raise money through other means too. They're responsible for administering that safely. We help them in identifying where there's a need to have a community vessel and so on, but they're responsible for the costs.

With the Coast Guard, the contribution agreement pays for the extra insurance they need to have on the boat, and also their direct expenditures, such as fuel or exercises.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Going back to the abandoned and derelict vessels, I know that in the past the Coast Guard has had to deal with these vessels if they sink at a wharf or if they have to be cleaned up. Is a large portion of your budget used for derelict vessels?

I have a real interest in derelict vessels. I guess my concern is that resources that should be used for search and rescue, or that should be used for scientific research, are being used to lift abandoned vessels. I guess that's my question. Is it something you have a concern about, or is it something that needs to be dealt with in a different way?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Well, we have a concern as we see the number increasing. Whether it's because people are more aware or because it's really increasing, it's something we're looking at on a continuous basis.

You have to remember that in Canada, the approach or the principle is polluter pay. When we know the owner, we go after the owner. There's also the ship-source oil pollution fund, the SOPF, that we can draw from. It is a concern, but we are working to recover the money we spend in those response operations. Some people will collaborate fully. Other people we have problems identifying. That's when we turn to the SOPF.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Identifying vessel owners, then, is a concern.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: When the owner is known, that's easy. Whether they have the capacity to pay, they still have insurance. These are all things that come into line when we make a decision. The bottom line is that our mandate is to prevent pollution. We will take whatever action needs to be taken to prevent pollution or mitigate the risk.

• (1630)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jordan.

Mr. Sopuck, for five minutes.

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

I'm very intrigued by the work you're doing in terms of fisheries patrols, so my questions will relate more to that.

First, seeing as we're on the record here, I want to correct one thing for our Liberal friends across the way. One of the Liberal MPs today implied in the House that the sockeye salmon stocks were in jeopardy. I just want to point out that the 2010 and 2014 sockeye runs were the record in history.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Six years ago, Bob, that's a long time.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: It's very important to be accurate in these things.

Could you describe the fisheries patrols you do? How are they apportioned between the east coast and the west coast?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Our role in fisheries patrol is to provide a platform for the conservation and protection program so Fisheries and Oceans Canada can do its work.

As for numbers and efficiencies and so on, I can't speak to these. What I can say is every year the conservation and protection team will come to us with their requirement for the year. We make the ship available to them so they can do their work.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Do they report to you afterwards about their fisheries patrols?

One of the things that we discussed in our previous work on the fisheries committee was the IUU fisheries, the illegal, unreported, and unregulated fisheries, going on on the high seas. It's a major conservation concern worldwide.

Do you have any information on the results of their enforcement patrols?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: No. Unfortunately, that's really...I think our colleagues will be here on Thursday. Perhaps the question would be best directed to them.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: It says you schedule 11 scientific surveys per day. What do they entail?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: We do a variety of surveys. We do that for the science community within DFO or other departments, such as NRCan, universities, and so on.

It goes from our largest offshore oceanographic vessel, which does seismic work, to the offshore fisheries vessel, which does stock sampling of fish. It also includes some channel surveys as well and some coring. It's on both coasts, in the rivers, and in the lakes. We work with Environment Canada in the lakes as well, and in the Arctic.

As far as the product and how it's used is concerned, again, that question would be best directed to my colleagues.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I was interested in your comments earlier about the variability of ice conditions in the Arctic. I spent a bit of time in Roes Welcome Sound, by Southampton Island, in a previous life. I was there for a few years, and the variability was phenomenal.

Do you see the variability of ice conditions increasing? Some years the navigation is excellent. In other years, or for two or three years, it's difficult at best.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: At one point, the Northwest Passage was not even spoken about, because it was closed most of the time, so as it opened up, it created opportunities and people thought, "Here's a great plan: let's race." A lot of adventurers decided it was a cool idea to be there. Is it increasing? Yes, because it's more open. For a few years, it was more open than it had been. Now it varies from year to year. It's very unpredictable.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Are you saying there's no clear trend, but that the variability is increasing? We're hearing all the time that the Arctic is opening up, as if it's a linear trend, but your observations are that some years it's more open, and then the next few years it closes up again.

Can we say that the variability is increasing?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Correct, and that's mainly due to multi-year ice detaching and flowing down from the polar caps. That multi-year ice will not melt in the summer like the new ice will, so it will remain there. It will get trapped in the new ice over the winter, and once that melts, the other ice will still be there.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: A number of interests keep talking about how, as the Northwest Passage opens up, they're gearing up for it, but what I hear you saying is that they had better be somewhat careful, because it may be open for one year and then closed for two more years. To rely on that as a consistent and open navigation path can be somewhat precarious.

•(1635)

Mr. Mario Pelletier: It is a huge concern for us, yes, mostly for smaller operators and people who see a business opportunity to transit. There are people who use it just for the adventure.

It is a concern for us, yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sopuck. I appreciate it. You're right on time.

Mr. McDonald, you have five minutes.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): I certainly won't need that long, Mr. Chair, but I think another member has a question.

My question relates to your comments on reopening the centre in St. John's on the east coast. A new building is planned. I think the monies were announced last year. You mentioned it's whether you go into the original facility that currently exists or into the new building.

Is it your intent to open that facility sooner in the existing building that housed it prior to its closure, or would it be your intent to wait until the new building is built for that centre to reopen?

I ask that because the mandate letter to the minister indicated that the centre was to be reopened as soon as possible.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: I believe the mandate letter says that they would be reopened. The time frame was not that specific.

What we're looking at is exactly as you said, that is, all those options and whether it's feasible. In the space that was available, all the equipment has been taken out, so we do need to acquire new equipment as well. The standard for such an operation centre as well is to have what we call a back-up site. Basically, it's some redundancy to make sure that if something happens in that part of the city, we still can continue to provide service. We need to look at that as well. There are a number of considerations that need to be lined up before we can actually move ahead.

Mr. Ken McDonald: We'll wait for Mr. Chair to come back.

Mr. Ken Hardie: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: Do you want to ask a question, Mr. Hardie?

Normally, Mr. McDonald, you would have to split your time with Mr. Hardie. Is that your intention?

Mr. Ken McDonald: Yes, definitely. I said that another member would have a question.

The Chair: Yes, I was talking to Mr. Strahl. I was delinquent in my duties.

Mr. Ken McDonald: I'm going to split my time with Mr. Hardie, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, indeed.

I will give you the full complement of two and a half minutes, sir. My apologies.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Thank you very much.

I want to go back to the MCTS. How many transmitters are operating right now in the MCTS, that is, transmitting, as in outward, not listening, but outward?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: These are the same communication towers, receiver and transmitter.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Does each tower have the capability of transmitting?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Yes.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Are they transmitting?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: They are transmitting and receiving, yes.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Okay.

Do you have performance logs for each of those towers? Do you have a record of outages?

We heard, for instance, that the Victoria station went down for a period of time. If there were other transmitting facilities such as the one that used to be in Vancouver or Comox, which is still there, there should have been some overlap of coverage, but there doesn't seem to have been any.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: No.

Actually, what happened in Victoria is very specific and has nothing to do with the consolidation. It's what we call the microwave link that links those transmission towers to the centre. That got disconnected. As soon as that happened, all the staff started troubleshooting to find out where the disconnect was. They were able to re-establish the services within a few minutes.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Have none of the Coast Guard transmitters on the west coast gone dark in the past five years?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: We had a number of issues that were linked to third party providers. We rely on third party providers to bring the signal from a tower to other more centralized centres. If I look at the majority of the outages, it is due to third parties.

Mr. Ken Hardie: And that again was transmitting capability.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Transmitting or receiving. They use a network or phone line to do that.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Do you have performance logs to show the standard of that service?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: That is correct. We do maintain logs of all the equipment and their performance, and so on, and the cause of any outage as well.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Thank you for answering these questions.

Was there consultation with mariners before, during, and after the consolidation in terms of their satisfaction with the service?

• (1640)

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Actually, as Mr. Hutchinson alluded to, the modernization of the communication and control system was something that we had started before the consolidation. That's new technology that we're going to put in place that enabled us to do the consultation from the end-user perspective. The service has not changed. When they call the Coast Guard radio or the Coast Guard traffic services, there's a voice that responds to them.

As soon as it was announced, we talked to our stakeholders and industry partners and so on to explain exactly what it was and that the towers and the signal would be picked up, and the same level of service would be provided. That consultation went on. We have marine advisory boards in Canada. All regions have their own marine advisory board. We have a national one. We use those advisory boards to discuss with our stakeholders and partners about the ongoing work. That's part of the discussion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Now, Mr. Donnelly for three minutes, please.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to follow up on the line of questioning on the MCTS. Also, my understanding is that Victoria went dark this past weekend for 30 minutes. My understanding is that Iqaluit has gone dark in the past and that Vancouver has gone dark for a period.

When these outages happen what happens?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: We have a number of mitigating measures that we've put in place, and that's no different from what it was. We use our own resources on water to monitor the air, as we call it.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Eyes and ears are critical, and local stations can actually be helpful.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: That is correct, yes. That's part of our network. Sometimes we talk about local knowledge, and so on. Our navigation system is a network where we use our internal resources, whether they be the marine communications and traffic services, the joint rescue coordination centres, or our on-water assets, as well as other stakeholders' assets.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Sorry to rush through these. I have two more points I want to make in my three minutes here.

Mr. Pelletier, you mentioned stakeholder engagement to improve the communication and coordination of the *Marathassa* review. You said it was 40% done.

I have two quick questions. First, when do you anticipate the rest of the review recommendations will be implemented?

Second, in terms of the communication and coordination of the spill response—and I'm referring to the bunker fuel spill—you mentioned the table around which stakeholders are meeting. Are the City of Vancouver, the fire department, the police and other emergency responders, the province and their emergency response all sitting around this table providing input?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: That is correct. Right after the incident, when the response measures were deemed to be satisfactory, there was agreement among the stakeholders in the command centre to form what they call a project management office, and they've been meeting regularly. Anybody who was involved in the response or had a stake in the response is still part of that discussion.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thank you.

My final question is on derelict vessels. My understanding is the United States has a much stronger program than we do in Canada. What additional jurisdictional powers do you think the Canadian Coast Guard would need in order to have a more robust or resilient derelict vessel program?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: Right now, we're looking at the situation. As I said, more and more of those vessels are coming to light right now, perhaps because of awareness. It is concerning, and we're working very closely with Transport Canada, which has some authority under the Canada Shipping Act, as do we, to mitigate pollution. They have the authority to certify ships and clear a presence on the water. We're working jointly on this very topic right now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Donnelly.

We have reached the end of the prescribed amount of time for questions; however, we are well ahead of schedule, well ahead of time, as you can see. Since we are masters of our own domain, I would like to make a proposal. We've all had a turn asking questions, even myself at the beginning, and Mr. Morrissey has not. To accommodate Mr. Morrissey, how about we go with three questions. I think in game shows they call it quick snapper questions.

An hon. member: A snapper round.

The Chair: A snapper round, there you go. How about we do three three-minute rounds.

We'll go with Mr. Strahl, then Mr. Morrissey, each for three minutes, and then finally Mr. Donnelly, for three minutes.

May I get everyone's consensus on that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Let's go to Mr. Strahl for three minutes.

•(1645)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Thank you, Chair.

I want to follow up on derelict vessels. Perhaps this will be quicker than three minutes.

There was a private member's bill in the last Parliament from Ms. Crowder, and I believe it's been recently reintroduced. It calls for the Canadian Coast Guard to be designated as a receiver of wreck,

which would require the Coast Guard to take reasonable steps to determine and locate the owner of a wreck.

What would be the additional cost to the Canadian Coast Guard if it essentially became responsible for derelict vessels? You said it's becoming a much more prevalent issue. I would certainly have concerns with the Government of Canada suddenly becoming responsible for these. Have you done any cost analysis on what that sort of a plan would cost Canadian taxpayers? If you have some other ideas....

I think the current system is failing. I think that's clear. People abandon these things and there's no jurisdiction for the communities that they're sitting beside. They're an eyesore. Government can step in when they present a threat to navigation or when there are environmental concerns, but if it's essentially rotting at the dock, there's not much that can be done.

Can you talk about the cost of becoming the receiver of wreck? Do you have any other recommendations, perhaps even issues, that this committee might study to deal with this issue?

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: Thank you for the question.

The cost is a very difficult one to address, frankly, because it's fairly open-ended, and it depends entirely on what obligations are created on the operational agency. If you took the broadest possible view of the issue on whether the Coast Guard would be tasked with dealing with all derelicts, all wrecks—sunken, historically sunken, about to sink—it really depends on the scoping. I'm not being glib about that; it really does come down to that.

We know there is a list of vessels of concern that are more urgent than others. Where the question is perhaps most pointed for us is the authority to act. Right now, there is a trigger in the legislation for us when there is a reasonable risk of environmental harm of some sort and pollution, but the question really is, what does that mean? What is the trigger point for that? I'll use the word "imminent". That's from the international law, it's not from the domestic law. What's the trigger point for the Coast Guard to take action? Two things happen when we take action. Well, there are three things. One, we interfere with personal property rights. Two, we interfere with the maritime regime as people understand it. Three, and this harkens back to an earlier question today, we start to incur costs. It's a bit of an odd way to put it, but I'll put it this way nonetheless. We're actually not funded for environmental response; we're funded for environmental readiness.

The system is premised on the polluter paying. If you think of us as a fire hall, we're paid to have the trucks at the ready, but when the bell rings, there's no money because you have to go to the polluter to recover. The reality is that wrecks and derelicts and some other situations fall outside of that best case paradigm, if I can put it that way.

We think there's an authorities question that needs to be clarified if people want the Coast Guard to take action on wrecks and derelicts sooner than we do now. The trigger point will have to be addressed, but we'd be quick to say the financial mechanism to go with it.... And this is not a disguised plea for an A-base injection or something like that. There are lots of mechanisms we could use that don't just increase Coast Guard budgets. There are response funds that could be set up and insurance schemes and things like that. I'm not talking about funding the Coast Guard here; I'm talking about funding a response particularly in a way that makes the polluter responsible whenever possible.

Those are the two issues I'd flag for you.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, sir. That was very good.

Now we're going to Mr. Morrissey, before we go to Mr. Donnelly. You have three minutes, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is for either witness who chooses to answer.

Generally, we're creatures of habit. We do not like change, and every time change is thrust upon us, we tend to view it as having a negative impact on service delivery. I would like you to expand on this. When you attempt to do technological improvements, you used the term "that enhance safety". I believe the minister in response to questions in the House used the analogy of the technology you're using today on communication as akin to a rotary-dial telephone years ago and an iPhone today. We as citizens tend to react and say that these changes are going to provide less of a response service.

Could you expand on how the Coast Guard approaches technological upgrades? I assume in each one of these analyses and changes, that the enhancement of safety response and whatever your mandate is in the Coast Guard is going to be enhanced, not retracted.

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: Perhaps because you didn't specify a witness, we'll both want to speak to this question. It's a very interesting question from where we sit.

Changing technology in the marine industry is happening faster, and it's happening in a very broad way. The industry itself doesn't quite know how to keep up with it. I'll give you a couple of examples. There are companies experimenting with ships that will guide themselves. It's a huge step from where we are now, but they're actually on the water experimenting with them.

A little closer to home and maybe a little bit more 2016, Canada—and, I'm proud to say, the Canadian Coast Guard—is a leader internationally in terms of implementing electronic navigation. I made reference to this in my earlier comments. We're really looking at providing enhancements on the bridge of a ship to give navigators and captains the best information possible in real time. It's about changing to keep up with where they are and with what they're facing. Whether that's traffic approaching them, changing weather conditions, or a weather system going through and the changes and the draft they have to deal with, we're trying to give them the best information possible on the bridge so they can make real-time decisions.

That approach to technological change is a little bit like implementing GPS for your car. We didn't get rid of stoplights just because GPS started to show up in most cars, right? Nobody is proposing that we do that—at least not this year. We're trying to find the right way to bring new technology into the mix to increase safety and to increase the ability to make good decisions on the bridge of a ship, keeping in mind that we're going to be running a couple of systems at a time or maybe more, because vessels fall within such a range of sophistication, from small vessels that know their local area very well to the international carriers that know the high seas very well.

We're trying to use enhancements where we can find them to bring them on board, knowing that they'll have to do it with other technology continuing to function. We're doing the same thing with a pilot project to use unmanned aerial craft to look at towers and things like that. Can we do some of our maintenance work without putting people 600 feet up on a tower? It's that kind of thing. We're trying to do that and integrate it, rather than replace it in all cases. I would say that's the approach we're taking generally across our operations.

The Chair: Mr. Pelletier, we've run out of time on that question. I'll just ask you to quickly sum up.

Mr. Mario Pelletier: My colleague hit all the right points.

I would say that historically the marine industry has been very traditional in nature and the availability of technology is very new to a lot of people. We are making headway and are working very closely with our partners to improve. It's a very interesting journey.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Donnelly, you have three minutes.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would love to continue on the MCTS technology question, but I think we'll have to leave that to the study, given that I have three minutes.

I want to go back to Mr. Strahl's questioning on the derelict vessel issue. I think he did bring up a good point. There's obviously a cost to taxpayers that has to be considered, but there's also, I think, an equally valid point that there's a cost to Canadian waters, both environmentally and for navigation, if we leave these there. They're not always small crafts. There are some large vessels that we need to deal with. He referenced Ms. Crowder's private member's bill that has been recently reintroduced by Ms. Malcolmson, so we have the private member's bill that is asking these questions, and I understand there's interest from the Liberal side to look into this issue, which is welcome news.

I tried to ask in the last question about the U.S. Coast Guard and its powers and if we could learn anything from the United States in terms of how it deals with derelict vessels. Mr. Hutchinson, you mentioned “authority to act”. I think that’s key. What can we do to look at jurisdictional issues?

Also, obviously, we were talking about the resourcing issues, so how can we better resource our Canadian Coast Guard to deal with this issue?

In two minutes, please.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: I referred earlier to the need for clearer authorities. I would say that’s the strongest lesson that I personally would take from the American model.

The caution I would note on the American model is that in some jurisdictions, by having taken aggressive action on wrecks and derelicts, they’ve created, inadvertently, dumping grounds for wrecks and derelicts, because having a disposal process in place has meant that people have come to rely on it. I think we need to be very careful about that.

I would add simply that we’re pushing into a policy area that’s led by Transport Canada. We are willing participants in that policy discussion, and we do take the point that we’re not just talking about 20-foot sailing boats that people don’t want anymore; we’re talking about, in some cases, significant risks to the environment.

For us, going back to my very first statement after I said thank you for having me here, our mandate is the protection of mariners and the protection of the marine environment. We see that very much at the core of this issue. Transport will see safe navigation as the core of the issue, and that’s fair enough, but our focus is on protecting the marine environment.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Donnelly. I’m sorry about that.

That being said, though, may I prevail on the committee for one quick point of clarification on what was said at the beginning? Is that okay?

At the beginning of your opening statement, you mentioned jurisdiction. I’m asking for clarification on this issue, because I want to make sure that everyone is straight on this.

As far as jurisdiction is concerned, there are three elements here. You’re talking about monitoring, response, and on-water rescue. Once the response is charged, or in other words, once the JRCC kicks into place, you augment that part of the service. In other words, it’s the Department of National Defence that would take the lead on any and all within the federal jurisdiction. Is that correct?

Mr. Mario Pelletier: For marine search and rescue, we work out of the joint rescue coordination centre, which includes both the Canadian Armed Forces and the Coast Guard. We look at the on-water one and the Canadian Armed Forces look at the air response. We’re working jointly. Quite often we will dispatch an aircraft or a helicopter to the site of a marine incident. It’s the same thing for an air accident that happens over the water or in the water. We will deploy the Coast Guard assets there. It is a very efficient way to approach it.

Mr. Jeffery Hutchinson: If I may, on the jurisdiction point, I’d like to add that there is no single minister responsible for search and rescue at the federal level.

The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard is responsible for marine search and rescue. Pardon me for smiling when I say that title out loud. We’re proud to have our name in his title.

The JRCC reflects the fact that we need both mandates present for decision-making. To have that decision-making happen across a room like this means that it’s happening very quickly by experts who know what to deploy.

I did want to make the point, though, that our minister has the mandate for marine search and rescue, and that’s part of the jurisdictional answer.

● (1700)

The Chair: Thank you very much for that. I appreciate it.

The second part of our program today is committee business, but before we get to that, I would like to thank our guests today, who I thought did a great job.

Thank you very much, gentlemen. You were both informative.

Also, thank you for your service, as was pointed out earlier, and I thank you for today’s service, because it benefited us well.

Monsieur Pelletier and Mr. Hutchinson, thank you so very much. We’re going to continue on with committee business. You may carry on as you wish.

We’re not in camera for this, so we might as well just keep on going.

Let’s break for two minutes and then we’ll be back with committee business.

● (1700)

_____ (Pause) _____

● (1700)

The Chair: Members, we’ll proceed with committee business.

I’d like to talk about some of the logistics of getting witnesses together. The study has been passed, and now we need to talk about how we will get witnesses. We want to get moving on this right away, so in no particular order, I’d like to address that first, if that’s all right.

You all have your calendars in front of you. For February 23, which is today, we had our briefing session and committee business. On February 25 we will have the second of two departmental briefings.

If you flip the page over to March, you’ll notice that we have a break—sorry; we have a constituency week.

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: Yes. We all have to get used to that.

Then we have March 8. It was brought to my attention that even though Thursday is the deadline for witnesses on our study of the MCTS—this is from the motion that we passed—the committee staff would like to get started on some witnesses. I guess what we're asking is that if there are obvious witnesses who you want to bring in, bring the names forward now despite the deadline of Thursday. This is for the benefit of our folks here, so that they can get working on witnesses.

Agreed?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Fair enough.

The Chair: So we can do that ASAP.

I don't know if you'd like to suggest someone now, or if you'd just like to move on to something else and do it at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Mr. Chair, is it possible to get some email addresses and send something off-line? I don't have the names with me, but I have some I can suggest once I get home.

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

I only say this because I'm trying to stress that they want to get working. If you have an obvious choice of a witness, send it ASAP, please, so that they can start working on it.

• (1705)

Mr. Ken Hardie: I just need to be able to reach the clerk.

The Chair: The clerk will provide his email address. You can send that in ASAP, even though we have a deadline of Thursday. But if there is anyone else you're looking to bring in as a witness, you have until 5 o'clock on Thursday.

Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Chair, I think that's a great suggestion. We're happy to get our list in as soon as possible, i.e., hopefully today we'll email it. If it's open until Thursday at 5 o'clock, if there are others we have forgotten or others that have requested, we'll add those on, but we'll take your lead and get those in ASAP.

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, this is for witnesses just on that particular topic.

The Chair: Correct. It's just for the motion we passed regarding the station on the west coast, the MCTS station, and that study.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: If we chose, after that deadline, to bring in other witnesses we identify, do we have that...?

No? It's cut off at that point?

The Chair: That's why I like to do deadlines, Mr. Morrissey, for that reason, so that we don't have to bring people in at the last minute. It's logistically difficult to do if you're bringing them in from far away. We are dealing with a study on the west coast.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: So it's on that issue.

The Chair: Yes, on that issue. We'll deal with other issues when we get down the road.

Just for clarification, here's what I'm proposing as far as the study is concerned. It was brought to my attention from some people with more experience than I have in dealing with this that we have a departmental briefing, which we just had from the Coast Guard, and DFO will be in on Thursday.

Following that, we usually have a meeting dedicated only to committee business so that we can decide on a study we'd like to do. In other words, it's post departmental briefings and so on and so forth. It gives us some ideas, some food for thought, on what we would like to study in the future.

I'm proposing that on March 8 we have a day of committee business to discuss possible studies and future work. Then on March 10 we would begin our study of the MCTS stations on the west coast. That was the motion we passed. It had been brought forward by Wayne Stetski.

Mr. Donnelly, I believe you have something to say.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I might. I would put forward a process that you may wish to consider, Mr. Chair.

In the past at fisheries committee we have gone into subcommittee to look at our priorities, have a discussion among the parties, and then bring forward recommendations to the larger committee.

If that's something you would like to entertain, I'm certainly happy to make a motion to that effect.

The Chair: I'm perfectly willing to entertain it. We had a discussion last week and we said that this particular committee intends to do things with all members included. So you're suggesting going to the subcommittee and making the decision, which will come back to the full committee afterwards.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Just to clarify, Mr. Chair, we'd be making the recommendation as opposed to the decision.

The Chair: Oh, yes, of course. My apologies. That's what I meant. You just corrected me, and I thank you for it.

Ms. Jordan.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: I was under the impression at the very first meeting that we voted against doing that. At the first meeting, we said we would not form a subcommittee and that we would just all make that decision. I think that was what was decided at the first meeting. I don't have the notes in front of me for that meeting, but that was my memory of it.

The Chair: I think you're proposing a motion to change that. Is that correct?

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: We had a motion that we approved.

The Chair: You can vote at any time you wish. A motion is a motion.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Just to clarify there, I think the issue was that it would be in camera. The discussion would happen and it would happen in camera. My suggestion, if all parties agree to this, is that the in camera part would be a subcommittee and then it would bring it back to an open meeting of the entire committee.

The Chair: It would be public.

Ms. Jordan.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: What's the structure of the subcommittee?

The Chair: The subcommittee comprises the chair, two vice-chairs, and two members of the Liberal Party, whose names are to be supplied.

I'm looking for more input. Is there anything else from that?

• (1710)

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I'll make that motion if I can get a seconder.

The Chair: It is moved by Mr. Donnelly and seconded by Mr. Sopuck that we constitute a subcommittee consisting of a chair, two vice-chairs, and two members of the governing party.

All in favour of that motion?

It turns out that during routine motions, we adopted that. Now we just have to institute it. We don't have to have a vote. It's already been accepted.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: It was defeated.

The Chair: No, it was not. There was no motion to do that.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. David Chandonnet): It wasn't defeated. It was adopted.

The Chair: I know we discussed it and I know there was a general kind of agreement as to whether or not to go through with that, but there was no vote or motion passed to defeat the idea of a subcommittee. We did have a vote to create a subcommittee during routine motions. It exists, and a vote really isn't necessary. It's just a matter of scheduling it.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I'll withdraw the motion if it's already there. If my seconder is okay with that, we'll remove that and continue on. Ideally, the subcommittee could meet prior to the meeting you're talking about. That will be March 8. Will that be in camera or will that be open?

The Chair: Normally they are in camera.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: That would be the difference. Ideally we have the subcommittee in camera, and then the discussion in public. We're talking transparency here. The public wants to know how we are setting priorities, and what the issues are.

The Chair: Just as a point of clarification, let me explain it again.

During routine motions, there are several measures we take, as does every other committee. We adopted a motion to have a subcommittee to help put out our committee business and eventually bring it back to the main committee of all of us. We did discuss the idea of not having a subcommittee because it has never really been the practice of the fisheries and oceans committee to have one in the past—not never but for the most part, let's say, in the last session.

We did not take a vote on that, however. So we can't vote it in to bring it back. Do you understand what I'm saying? So, right now, on the docket, we have a subcommittee created but just not used. Mr. Donnelly is proposing that we use this subcommittee in the future.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: That's correct.

The Chair: Ms. Jordan.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Do we need a motion to use it?

The Chair: No, we just schedule it.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: So it's just there.

The Chair: It's just there. It's just a matter of using it.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Okay.

The Chair: I suppose that would go for a lot of things in life, but you get the idea. There you go. It's just a matter of using it.

I guess what you're proposing is to schedule a meeting for the subcommittee. It doesn't have to be within the parameters of Tuesday or Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: That's correct. If I could add further clarification, Mr. Chair, the idea is that when we do get the priorities back into the realm of discussion, it's open, and Canadians have access to what we're talking about, as opposed to it being in camera.

The Chair: That is correct.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Okay.

The Chair: Are there more questions on that issue? Are there any points of clarification needed? We're good?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Not really.

The Chair: Well, "not really" means no.

Would you have a question, Mr. Morrissey?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Take us through the process again. We are new to this, on this side. It started with a motion from Mr. Donnelly. Just walk us through the process that we are now agreeing to.

• (1715)

The Chair: What we agreed to in the very first meeting is what we do. It's called routine motions, right? The food that's provided, how we operate in generalities—

Mr. Robert Morrissey: I have that here.

The Chair: Okay. If you have them there, go down to the one on subcommittee creation.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Is that the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure?

The Chair: That's correct. We voted to create that. Now, the discussion that followed was about not needing that. We can do it within the full committee, as was done prior. In the past, we have done that. We're a fairly collegial committee, as was said by Mr. Sopuck, and therefore maybe it's not needed. We didn't schedule one at that time.

In the beginning, what was asked by Mr. Donnelly was to create a subcommittee to do this, but in fact one was already created, which the clerk pointed out, so we didn't need to do that vote. It was just a matter of asking shall we schedule a meeting of the subcommittee?

Ms. Jordan.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: I'm sorry. I hate to be difficult, but I'm very good at it.

What you're saying is that when we did the routine motions, we decided that we weren't going to have a subcommittee because we were all going to make that decision. We didn't vote on it, but we said at the time that it was going to be all of us because we were a collegial committee and we didn't need the subcommittee.

Now what you're saying is that Mr. Donnelly wanted to make a motion, and no, we don't have to, because we already have it. But we didn't already have it. We decided against having it. That's my confusion. Sorry.

The Chair: The clerk has pointed out to me that the record shows we voted on it and passed it as a routine motion to create the subcommittee.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Okay.

The Chair: Correct? Right. That's why we don't need to do it, because one was already created by routine motions. You can check the blues if you wish.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: If it's possible, if it's the will of the majority, could we amend the motion we passed in the first meeting to basically designate the subcommittee to be a committee of the whole? In other words, the subcommittee is everybody. Is that possible?

The Chair: What you're saying is that you want to eliminate the subcommittee.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Right.

The Chair: Okay. Right, because a double negative makes.... No, a double positive makes a negative. I don't know. Whatever. You know what I'm saying.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ken Hardie: I do.

The Chair: If you would like to make a motion, I cannot stop you from doing that. This is committee business, so you have the right to do that, but the record shows that we did have a vote and we created a subcommittee.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I was just seeing if there was a way open, and if it was the general consensus that we wanted all of this to happen in the committee of the whole, if there was a mechanism to get there. I'm really agnostic on the whole thing.

The Chair: I guess, Mr. Hardie, for what you're suggesting, that one of the options you could do if you don't want the subcommittee that's set up would be this: you leave it to committee business, which is what we're doing right now, and not bother with the subcommittee or going to meetings of the subcommittee. Is that what you're suggesting?

Mr. Ken Hardie: No. My colleague down here was of the opinion that we had generally agreed that everything would happen as a committee of the whole. I was just looking for a way that we might make it happen that way.

The Chair: That's called a motion.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Okay. As I say, I'm *comme ci comme ça* on this one. If one of my colleagues wishes to make that motion and bring that about, they can go for it.

The Chair: As I say, any motion is possible. Right now we're dealing with the fact that Mr. Donnelly wants to have scheduled meetings of the subcommittee that was created at our first meeting.

Mr. Donnelly, go ahead.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure if the motion has been made yet, but if a motion does come forward, I'll support it if you're happy to keep it public. That's the issue, so I'm suggesting that the subcommittee is the part that will go in camera and bring it back to the committee of the whole, to which Canadians will then have access. They don't know what we're talking about right now. When we come back to the committee of the whole and we have this discussion then if we're in public and we've had our opportunity to have this debate in camera, we'll be able to let Canadians know what we're talking about. Right now, they have no idea.

● (1720)

The Chair: That's right, because we're in public right now.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I thought we had gone in camera. So if we're in public, this is great. Then Canadians have an opportunity to understand what we're debating, procedurally of course, but when we go in camera, they don't, and if we're making decisions about priorities, they're not going to know what we're talking about.

The Chair: That is correct.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: And they won't have access to that information. So in terms of transparency, that's the only issue I'm bringing up. If there is a better way to do that, if there is a motion about how we can provide transparency to Canadians, I'm all for that and I'll support that.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, if we form the subcommittee, does the subcommittee receive the witnesses and ask the questions, or do they come to the whole committee?

The Chair: No, they do not.

Mr. Mel Arnold: So the subcommittee would look at preliminary questions to provide to the—

The Chair: The subcommittee decides on the agenda, what we do. It recommends the agenda to be brought back to the committee for consideration. The subcommittee, normally in camera, has a discussion about the future agenda, studies, and so forth, and they bring that back to the committee to vote on, and they make recommendations.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Is that the agenda for this topic or for our calendar?

The Chair: It's for the studies that take place. For whatever studies we wish to do, the initial discussion takes place at the subcommittee to make recommendations to all of us.

Mr. Sopuck.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I want to apologize to the committee if I was confusing. The previous fisheries committee, in the last term, had a subcommittee that met on a regular basis to recommend agenda items. So we did have a subcommittee, and I'm very sorry if I confused the issue.

The Chair: That's fine. Thank you for the clarification.

Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, I would move that we adjourn the debate. I request that we adjourn the debate.

The Chair: Are you saying that you want to adjourn committee business?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Yes, it's getting late.

The Chair: It is a dilatory motion. As it is so deemed, we have to vote on it right away.

All those in favour of adjournment?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I'll ask for a recorded vote.

The Chair: Sure.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 3)

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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