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—
Chair

Mr. Fabian Manning

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•(0910)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Before we hear from our witnesses, we have received from members the names of witnesses who want to appear during our scheduled road trip next week. In some cases there are numerous witnesses on the list, and I want to make sure we're all on the same wavelength here.

Our meetings are set for three hours. One choice is to have three one-hour sessions with three sets of witnesses, where the witnesses would present for 10 minutes and we would have a 45-minute round of questions, give or take. We would have a few minutes to play with in one hour. The other choice is to have two 90-minute sessions, where witnesses would present for 20 minutes and then we'd go to the question and answer period.

Is everybody clear on that? In some cases we have numerous witnesses and we won't have the luxury of allowing every witness to make a presentation.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but if we go with the one-hour session for a group, we'll have a 10-minute presentation from the witnesses. If we go with the 90-minute meeting for a group, we'll have a 20-minute presentation from the witnesses.

Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Do you mean it would be 10 minutes per witnesses, or 10 minutes for the group?

The Chair: It would be 10 minutes total in the one-hour meeting, and in the 90-minute meeting it would be 20 minutes total for the complete presentation of the witnesses.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: When you say we have a number of witnesses, what exactly do you mean? What's the status?

The Chair: Mr. Godin has put forward 12 witnesses, and Mr. Blais has put forward 23. I think they're the two big numbers. I submitted 10.

I don't want to get down to a meeting in one of the provinces and try to debate this. Does everybody understand what I'm saying?

Mr. Blais.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): I am perfectly aware that we will be together Sunday night. It will be easy

for each panel or each member hosting the committee in their own riding to take a few moments to discuss this with the chair and to agree on the procedure. I have no problem with the one you have suggested: three one-hour sessions in our riding, a ten-minute presentation per group followed by questions. As I said, it would be quite easy to discuss details for each and every location.

I will be available to discuss this with you Sunday evening or afternoon.

[English]

The Chair: I understand, but I've been advised by the clerk—which is why this has come to light this morning—that we can't wait until Sunday evening to advise people how long they're going to speak, and so on. The clerk needs to do that this week so she can pass on that message to them.

Also, Mr. Blais, you have put forward 23 witnesses, and we have a three-hour session. So we need to determine whether we're going to do three one-hour sessions with 10 minutes each, or two 90-minute sessions with 20 minutes each, so we can give some guidance to the table people here and make sure that everybody's aware of what we're doing.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: From the start, I have said I am available to speak with you or the clerk. When the clerk speaks with you, I would appreciate it if the microphone were on. This will avoid misunderstandings.

[English]

The Chair: That's fine, but what I have to say I don't mind saying.

Mr. Keddy.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Chairman, I realize the challenge you and the clerk have in order to give the witnesses some adequate time to present their cases and the parliamentarians adequate time to hear them. But if you've got that many witnesses, it doesn't matter if you have three or if you have three hundred, you still can't give them more than 20 minutes to present. Otherwise, there is no time left for questions. So I don't know why it needs any further discussion, and it's the chair's decision, really.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Keddy.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Monsieur Blais indicated quite clearly that he understood that it was 10 minutes for each hour for a presentation. That's what I understood it to be, and I think that's what the committee understands it to be, so that's what we'll do.

• (0915)

The Chair: Okay. Ten, and in the case of it running...

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: And if it's an hour and a half, it's 20.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): I don't think I need to belabour the point. I think Mr. MacAulay covered it off. If Mr. Blais has 23 witnesses coming, I'm sure he understands the logistics and he'll organize it such that they will conform with the presentation time, whether it be 10 minutes or 20 minutes. I have no doubt that will unfold okay, based upon what Mr. Blais just said.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I could have somebody at the table who might speak, but it could be support. I'm sure Monsieur Blais is doing the same thing.

The Chair: I don't care if there are 20 at the table. The thing is that it would....

I'm sorry, Mr. Byrne, I didn't mean to cut you off. You had something?

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Yes, I think we need to think this through.

First of all, on the issue of whether or not you can receive advice from the clerk open to the purview of the committee, Mr. Chair, you receive advice from the clerk and you decide whether you follow that advice or not. I don't think it's really relevant to the committee members what exactly that advice is. And I'd rather allow you to have a relationship with the clerk whereby you can receive advice without it being necessarily broadcast.

But on the more important issue, I value my membership on this particular committee, and I value the reputation of the committee itself. Let's call a spade a shovel here. At 23 witnesses for 10 minutes, you have 50 seconds, basically, or a minute and 10 seconds for opening presentations, and then you have two minutes and 20 seconds for questions and answers from each of the witnesses.

I'm sure we're not creating a circumstance here whereby witnesses are appearing with unrealistic expectations of what exactly it is the committee is going to be able to hear from them and receive from them, because at the end of the day, I'm of the belief that our committee's reputation gets sullied if they do come with unrealistic expectations, if there is a belief by any of them that they're going to get five or 10 minutes with the committee—all 23 of them or 12 of them in the case of Acadie—Bathurst.

An hon. member: Agreed.

Mr. Gerry Byrne: And I would expect this discipline in members from this party and from the other side. If the committee were travelling to my particular constituency, I'd want to have 100 witnesses appear, but I'd know at the end of the day I'd be doing them a huge disservice if I created an expectation within them that

each and every one of them would have a reasonable opportunity to be heard, knowing that is not necessarily the case.

I'll leave it at that.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Kamp, you have the final word.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): I would prefer that we move on, and if this requires further discussion we can do it following our session with the witnesses.

The Chair: I just want to clarify now to make sure everybody is clear. If we're going into your area on the trip, you can decide whether you want to have three one-hour sessions or two one-and-a-half-hour sessions. That's up to each member. Whatever you want to do, advise the clerk of what you would like to do.

In the case of the three one-hour sessions, we'll do 10-minute presentations and 50 minutes of questions. In the case of the two one-and-a-half hour sessions, we'll do 20-minute presentations with an hour and 10 minutes for the question rounds.

Thank you very much.

Just before we welcome our witnesses, if there are any amendments we want to make to the bill we are discussing today, the clerk would like to have them by tomorrow at the latest in order to prepare them for our Thursday meeting on clause-by-clause. So anybody who wants to make any amendments should have them in the clerk's hands tomorrow. Don't show up here Thursday morning with an amendment. It won't be accepted. Or maybe a more democratic way of putting it is that we'll have a debate over whether it'll be accepted.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses here this morning. We're sorry for that short interlude, but we had some committee business that I was afraid we might get sidetracked on.

I would like to once again welcome you here. I would ask that you introduce yourselves and the organization you're part of to the committee first. My understanding is that our first witness will be from the Bruce Coast Lighthouse Partners. So I would ask the four of you to introduce yourselves first.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus (Chair, Bruce Coast Lighthouse Partners): Good morning. My name is Ina Toxopéus, or Everdina Toxopéus. I represent the Bruce Coast Lighthouse Partners and Cabot Head Lighthouse as well. I'm the chair of both committees.

Chairman and honourable members of the committee, I appreciate the ability to come before you to point out my case for why the lighthouse bill should be passed.

Our lighthouses are very important to all of us here, on all coasts, and to the Great Lakes. They are part of our architectural heritage. They are individually unique. They are survivors of the now fast-disappearing public architecture of the 19th century, from imperial towers—concrete towers or wooden stand-alone towers—two of which in the Great Lakes have fine buttresses, to towers built at the side of a house, or extending from the middle of the house or roof line, to one on Lake Erie that looks like the Parthenon in Greece. Cabot Head, for instance, has cedar eavestroughing, hand-made metal down spouts, shiplap board siding, a rock and rubble foundation, and board and bead along the staircases. The uniqueness of our lighthouses brings present-day tourists and connects them with our architectural heritage. The lighthouses are therefore an important tourist attraction.

The lighthouses were erected to safeguard ships and sailors in days gone by. They are at the heart of the marine history of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay in our Great Lakes, as well as both of our coasts. I'm not sure if we have any on our north coast. Our lighthouses are central to the dramatic stories of shipwrecks and rescues that are told on our coasts and the Great Lakes. They're a reminder of the first great commercial corridors of Canada. Canada was explored through these corridors. The lights still serve as a beacon of safety for those who sail our waters, even today, either commercial or pleasure vessels—and the latter even more so today. The volunteers who staff two of our lighthouses up in the peninsula have been involved in helping tourists who've had the misfortune of being stranded on an island, or having had to look for lost ones at Cabot Head.

Lighthouses have a fundamental connection to local communities. Their keepers were frequently recruited from local families. Many of these families returned with their grandchildren, or children, to recount stories of their time, or grandpa's time, spent at the lighthouse. Local communities see lighthouses as belonging to them, regarding them as essential features of the community landscape.

Lighthouses have a universal appeal. Just look at some of the publications on the Internet, such as by Bruce County. Our brochures are all centred around the lighthouse. The romance of their setting and their history captures the interest of many in the public. Visiting them takes one along scenic roads, or on a boat cruise, or tour. Visitors can view the lights and their museums, swim, picnic, and take in the walking tours, or just sit and dream.

They are now important local tourist attractions. The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula depends heavily on tourism, with most of the businesses in Tobermory directly related to tourism.

This municipality is home to two national parks, Fathom Five being the very first marine park in the area—or in Canada, I think. It's a UNESCO biosphere, or part thereof. The Bruce Trail, the longest footpath in Canada, runs the length of the peninsula, and our lights are an integral part of that trail. Bruce County's lights are grouped into a tour, showcasing different aspects of our lights: the development of the lighthouses, their local history, the style of life that their keepers used to have, shipwrecks, local lumber and fishing industries. All of these aspects are represented at our lights.

● (0920)

The Bruce Coast Lighthouse Partners works closely with the Bruce County Museum in Southampton to improve and expand this product, giving the tourists a greater educational experience. We're now working on our newest product for the Bruce Coast Lighthouse Partners: educational packages that the museum in Southampton can give to children. If you take the lighthouse tour, you start with one lighthouse that gives the past history of lighted lights, which Cabot Head does. Flowerpot Island doesn't have a light station because all it has left is the keeper's cottage, and the other lights have their own specific theme, all related back to the Bruce County light museum.

Cabot Head and Flowerpot have an assistant lighthouse keepers program through which volunteers, in our case, pay to stay at the lighthouse or station and work wherever they are needed, usually at meeting and greeting the visitors.

Cabot Head alone received over 10,000 visitors last year. We have nine lights in Bruce County alone, six on the peninsula and five within the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula, home to two national parks. Cove Island, Flowerpot and Big Tub lights are within the Fathom Five Marine Park, Cove Island's imperial tower being the oldest and the most complete site.

Tour boats in Tobermory, two big ones and two Zodiacs, are kept busy in the summertime taking people to and from Flowerpot Island. The Chi-Cheemaun passes by Cove Island light, in three seasons daily, to and from Manitoulin Island and Tobermory.

The lights are an essential ingredient in the promotion of regional tourism, adding greatly to the local economy. Bruce County's logo for tourist signs on the highway is a lighthouse. Bruce County has 854 kilometres of coastlines, and our lights are identified through the Ministry of Tourism product development process as a core trip motivator for tourism and development.

We have a strong connection with Michigan, as Michigan residents have a total of 240 lighthouse sites. Although visits from the United States were down in Ontario last year, they were up by almost 40% in Bruce County.

Bruce Coast Lighthouse Partners are celebrating the years of light with the celebration of the 150th year of the imperial towers. Our celebration will take place over the summers of 2008 and 2009.

Cove Island is a complete site, as I said before, located in Fathom Five Marine Park, Canada's first underwater park.

In 2006 Bruce County hosted the International Lighthouse Conference, and this year when we did that, Bruce County produced a guidebook with the lights in the back section. This year, in celebration of the history of the lights and the towers, our guidebook is again doing a good section on the lights, a little bit more extensive, and it's in French on the Bruce County website. I can give you the website, if you wish.

Bruce County produced a PBS show and has done three shows on the Bruce County lights alone, and those were carried usually in the American border states. The new Georgian Bay circle tour, which is a new initiative in Ontario, actively promotes 32 lights out of the 50 sites around Georgian Bay alone, six of which are imperial towers, two of which are in Grey—Bruce, with a total of seven sites on or near the Bruce Peninsula as it is. So you can see our lights are an integral part of the tourism industry in our area for both the county and the municipality of Northern Bruce.

I thank you for your time.

● (0925)

The Chair: Thank you.

Our next witness, I believe, is from the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association.

Mr. Robert Square (Chair, Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association): My name is Robert Square. I'm the chair of the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association. We take care of the 150-year-old, this year, Cove Island Imperial Tower.

I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to speak before you today. It's an honour to be able to do this and speak passionately about something I care so deeply about preserving.

The close association that our country has with the water is fundamental to our identity. Canada developed along the water, whether it's the east coast, the west coast, the Arctic, or the Great Lakes. Lighthouses have played an integral role in the development of our nation. Without these majestic towers and the people who kept the lights burning, Canada's role as a trading nation would not have been possible. I don't think Canada would have developed as it has without the lights guiding people.

The establishment of many coastal communities is fundamentally linked to their lighthouses, and the historic significance of these lights to these communities is irreplaceable. Our lights are important to Canadians. They stand against winds, tides, and storms and are, I believe, a symbol of Canada's strength.

I am not alone in my love for lighthouses. Canadians and people around the world are familiar with the beauty of one of Canada's most famous lighthouses, at Peggy's Cove. It is as Canadian as the maple leaf. It is unique.

Preserving these special places provides Canadians with outstanding opportunities to learn and personally experience our marine heritage. They are integral in what Canada is and what Canada could be.

The light I represent, the Cove Island Lightstation, is an example of these precious landmarks. It is probably one of the most completely intact light stations anywhere in North America. All the facilities are there. For 150 years this magnificent light has faithfully stood guard, warning the mariners navigating those narrow channels between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. It is a symbol of an era long past, with the walls of this circular limestone tower and stone cottage built in the middle of the Canadian wilderness. It holds very many fascinating stories. When Cove Island Imperial Tower was built, that area of Canada was essentially the end of the earth. There was nothing there. It was wilderness, extreme wilderness.

Visiting the light station and opening the heavy wooden door as you enter the tower, you are immediately greeted by worn grey circular stairs rising upwards within the tower. The darkness inside the tower is broken only by a small, single window on each landing. Personally, I can envision the ghosts of the lightkeepers walking up those stairs every night carrying their cans of sperm whale oil or kerosene to light the lamp, and throughout the often long night, they kept constant vigil tending to the lamp and keeping the area safe for mariners. They were always there for mariners, standing out as a symbol of security. Some of the surviving Cove Island logbooks have numerous references to mariners, whose ships had been destroyed in storms or run on the rocks, seeking refuge at the light station.

● (0930)

In the tower itself, under the eaves, there are bronze down spouts, lion's head gargoyles, on each of the windows. They're a symbol of a less complicated age. It was a touch of class, a real work of art in the middle of the Canadian wilderness.

The original stone cottage that housed the lightkeeper and his family remains. The second lightkeeper, David McBeath, and his wife, Mary Jane, managed to produce a family of 10 children in that little light. So there are a lot of stories in that house.

West of the tower sits the fog alarm building, and it is one of the only completely intact diaphone fog systems. When you enter the building it looks like you can just turn those Lister diesel engines and away it will go. It's immaculate.

We are encouraged by the pending passage—I hope—of Bill S-215, as we believe this will do much to preserve these historic monuments and to ensure that Canadians have the opportunity to experience and learn first-hand.

As volunteers, we are smitten—I guess that is the word—with these lighthouses. We're almost obsessed, to a point, in our efforts to preserve and protect them for Canadians of all generations. When you see young children having their first experience visiting the light, their sense of wonder and awe—their eyes just light up—it's priceless. This past summer we had a family group that came out to visit the light. They rented a boat in Tobermory and made the effort to come out to visit the light. This visiting family was from St. Petersburg, Russia. They had heard about the light and they wanted to see it and experience it first-hand.

I believe that the preservation of lighthouses, Bill S-215, is a shared responsibility, shared between the government and our groups, the non-profits. There's a wonderful opportunity here to do some really good work in preserving our lighthouses.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that Bill S-215 allows future generations to be able to visit and experience first-hand our unique and priceless marine heritage. We must be able to preserve the legacy and the lore of these lights for future generations.

Thank you.

•(0935)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Square.

Our next witness is from Heritage BC.

Mr. Rick Goodacre (Executive Director, Heritage BC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't know I was next, but I'm ready to go.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee, for the opportunity to speak to you this morning about this very important piece of legislation.

I'm Rick Goodacre and I'm the executive director with Heritage B. C. We're a provincial non-profit association. We have about 160 member groups in our membership around the province. That means community heritage societies, historical societies, museums, local heritage committees, and things of that sort.

I'm not here as an expert on lighthouses and lighthouse history. This is what I do for a living. My expertise—and I've done this job for about 18 years now—is in the general business of heritage conservation. I'm not going to say a lot about lighthouses or their worth. I've been through the testimony from last week. I know the committee has heard a lot already from very authoritative personnel about why lighthouses are important. From reading through those minutes, I don't get the impression at all that there's really any resistance on the part of this committee to that notion. I think it's a kind of given; we're already there. We know these things are important. It's more a question of what to do about it.

I'll keep my opening remarks brief because I'd rather spend the time on discussion, which I think will be more useful. But I certainly can speak to the general business of what heritage conservation is and how it works. When I say “how it works”, I'm speaking very much as a pragmatist, because heritage conservation is a very pragmatic business, believe me. There's idealism, there are values at the root of it, and without the values, without the idealism, it doesn't make a lot of sense, but the business of doing heritage conservation on a day-to-day basis is very pragmatic.

Heritage conservation is really a continuing process, an ongoing process. It's a planning, implementation, review, and “plan and move on again” kind of cycle. It usually starts with identification. We have a notion that some things or some part of our life or our community have some historic heritage value and that we really need to identify those if we're going to understand them.

Identification usually gets into another stage, which is a kind of official recognition. The creation of a register, in British Columbia, is what you would usually see in a community heritage plan. You get onto the register, and it becomes officially adopted by council, for example.

You then have a conservation plan. You've identified these places, but then there are the “So what?” questions: “So these things are historic; so they're heritage; so what?” We think we care, but what are we going to do about it? You really need to move on to that next stage of it, a conservation plan, and that plan must be something that's workable.

Then you're dealing with the ongoing maintenance and repair of these places, because heritage always comes back to something physical. History is about ideas, things that happened. Heritage is invariably about something physical that you can get your hands on.

It has an historic connection, but it's also about right now, today. This is a building. What are we going to do with it? What are we going to do with it tomorrow? How are we going to keep this building going? How are we going to keep it alive?

There has to be a legal framework to make all of this planning process happen, because we're always dealing with property, and property comes back to the law at some point.

There also has to be a financial framework. These things always have a cost factor. Or more to the point, rather than dwelling on the cost, there's always a choice factor, a resourcing factor. We only have so many resources; where are we going to allocate them? Where does heritage fit into this allocation process? What right does it have at the table to claim some of these resources? Or more importantly, in a lot of cases, does it even have a right to be at the table? Often, what we're doing is scrambling just to get to be at the table.

More importantly, I want to stress that there has to be a will to conserve. There has to be a desire, and that desire is always based on the understanding of values. I think you've heard a lot about that already at this committee concerning lighthouses, but you will always have to go back to it. If there's no will, if there's no real desire to make these things happen, regardless of the best framework planning process, legal framework, and what have you, nothing much will happen.

On the pragmatic side, the best guarantee that a place will survive is that it have a purpose. If you have a building that's identified as a heritage building, but it has no purpose—the owners don't want it, the owners leave it empty—it stands there empty and derelict for years, it goes into decline, and eventually you get demolition.

I work in the city of Victoria, live in that area, and work out of my house. I've been on the City of Victoria's heritage committee for a number of years. I'm not on it now—I've been cycled off—but I've been through that process of heritage building maintenance and conservation planning for many years there.

•(0940)

Right now we have a couple of historic buildings for which demolition permit requests have come forward. Why? Well, because the owners have let them sit literally for decades, and that's really been their plan—to do nothing. Now they're at the demolition stage, saying that things have come to this point—the roof is falling in—and they can't do anything else. So now the city and the owners are at loggerheads, and it's getting in the newspaper, and the whole process is kind of getting out of control.

The problem has been that those buildings have not had active use. Therefore, they're not making money for the owners. Therefore, there's no investment in them. That's the kind of cycle you get into, and that always spells doom for heritage.

This is an outline that applies to all heritage buildings and all heritage resources. But I think lighthouses and their history are unique. They are unique in the sense of their ownership. They are unique in the sense of their history and their function. What else is like a lighthouse? An office building is an office building, but it could be something else. A lighthouse is a lighthouse. I don't know what else it's going to be, except that its future use will have to evolve around its maritime reality and its very particular function.

Also, the situation is unique. These places are all on the water. They're usually in some remarkable outpost of our country and are often in very scenic places. I think that's why, in this case, special legislation is valuable and necessary. I don't believe the general blanket of federal policy for heritage buildings is sufficient to deal with our historic lighthouses.

I'd also say that these unique settings are a particular opportunity. Last year, about eighteen months ago, we had a case of a federally owned building in the control of the Canadian military. It was an historic building, an officers' mess, at Work Point in Esquimalt, near Victoria. The military didn't need this building. It sat empty for years and was falling apart. Eventually they decided to take it down.

There has been a hue and cry about this historic building being destroyed. The problem is that this building exists in the context of a very large complex of buildings. It's a secure area. It's within a complex of an institution that defends Canada. It's business; it's not heritage conservation, or at least the base commander doesn't see that as part of his job description. His job is defence of our country.

How do you deal with that building inside that large complex? Can you evolve that into another use, to turn it over to other hands? It's a very difficult situation.

You think of a lighthouse, and it's a completely different situation. You have a completely integrated system that's distinct, unique, and stands apart. It can be turned over from one set of hands to another, and a new process can be, I think, isolated or extracted from that overall context of our coastal waters.

So there are actually unique opportunities for each one of these sites. If we are going to evolve them into other uses, I think there are lots of things we can do with these sites.

I would just like to say, in conclusion, that if Bill S-215 is put into effect, Heritage B.C. will strive to see that it is implemented and that its intentions are realized. We'll do whatever we can to make this work.

Thank you.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goodacre.

I would like to welcome the vice-chair of the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association, Mr. Brian Beatson, I believe. Welcome, Mr. Beatson.

We're going to go to our questions now. I think Mr. MacAulay is leading us off.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much, and welcome.

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, I'll start if you want me to, and if you don't want me to, I'll be very pleased not to. Whatever.

You are very much welcome. It's an important issue.

Ms. Toxopéus, how many lighthouses are you dealing with or in charge of or concerned about?

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: I am chair of Cabot Head. That's my home lighthouse. The Bruce coast lighthouses include Point Clark, Kincardine, Chantry Island, Cove, Flowerpot Island, Big Tub, Cabot Head, and Lion's Head.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, there's a number, anyhow.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Yes, it's quite a number. There are about ten.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Do you think all these will be historic sites?

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Well, no. I think you need to basically pick and choose, as far as heritage goes, which ones are valuable. We have identified several that we're using, as a tourist-oriented group in Bruce County. Each one of those lighthouses.... For example, Point Clark is part of a provincial park. Kincardine is part of a marina.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Okay, there would be a number. And thank you. I don't want to take all the time from my colleagues.

Mr. Square, I was very interested in your passionate presentation. For Cove Island, I just wanted to ask if you will have a major do or ceremony for the 150 years.

Mr. Robert Square: We are currently planning a Year of the Light program to commence with Cove Island this year, in 2008. That's the 150th anniversary of Cove. It will be in conjunction with the two other imperial towers within Bruce County, which were first lit the following spring.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Of course, that's fully tied in with your tourism in the area.

• (0950)

Mr. Robert Square: Yes, very much so.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I have just one question.

Mr. Goodacre, you mentioned a number of things that I could ask you about, but you spoke about what was considered a historic building inside of a complex that couldn't remain. I just wonder if you have an opinion on this. I had a situation where we had what was an historic site, but it was in private hands. It's unfortunate; it has now burned.

I'm just asking for guidance. It's most unfortunate that those things take place. In your situation it was impossible because it was inside of a military area, I take it, and when these things are in private hands there's nothing you can do if they fall down. Isn't that a serious problem?

Mr. Rick Goodacre: In British Columbia, I would say if it's in private hands I'm a lot happier, because it's a lot easier to deal with. We have legislation in place that gives local government the power to offer any number of incentives to that private owner, if they wish to offer the incentive. The wish to offer is based on a political decision. Council will sit around a table like this and deem whether or not their community really cares about this. If it's an individual building, that city council has the power to offer tax incentives, to offer development opportunities, to offer relaxation on regulations, to offer cash outright. So it's a lot easier to deal with an owner of a building.

The case of the two buildings that are under demolition permit requests right now in Victoria actually is the exception. Most owners of commercial buildings in a city in British Columbia, at least in the larger cities, are aware of these opportunities and can work with them, or they will sell it to someone else who wants to.

Buildings in public hands are a different story, because what do you do to the base commander in Esquimalt, on the Work Point Barracks? I have nothing to offer that person. I have only to go to the minister to get the minister to try to persuade that base commander that it would be a good idea to find a solution for the building. It's something outside of his military mandate, and that is very difficult. Publicly owned buildings actually are the most difficult to deal with, because there are just not the same kinds of leverage tools.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you.

The Chair: Bill, step right ahead.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to our witnesses.

Mr. Square, how long has your association been in existence? You said your light station is about 150 years old, but how old is your association?

Mr. Robert Square: We've been taking care of the light and keeping an eye on it for approximately three years.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Do you own it, have you leased it, or what's the arrangement?

Mr. Robert Square: We don't own it. We have an agreement with Fisheries and Oceans. It's a Fisheries and Oceans-owned property.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Do they put money into keeping it up to an acceptable standard?

Mr. Robert Square: Yes and no. They are quite supportive of our efforts, but Cove Island does have maintenance issues based on the fact that the last keeper left in 1991, so there has been no real presence out on the island since then. The stone house, the keeper's house, because it's been closed up and unoccupied for a length of time, has rot in the floorboards, the floor timbers.

Mr. Bill Matthews: What about access to it? Is it regularly accessible?

Mr. Robert Square: Access is a bit of a challenge, given the declining water levels of the Great Lakes. Instead of just stepping off a boat, you have to sort of—

Mr. Bill Matthews: Yes, but is there a boat that goes there regularly?

Mr. Robert Square: No, there isn't.

Mr. Bill Matthews: If I wanted to get there, how would I get there?

Mr. Robert Square: You would arrange to go by private tour boat if you wanted to get off on the island, or travel across on the car ferry, the *Chi-Cheemaun*, from Tobermory to South Baymouth.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Does your association fundraise as well to try to keep this thing in a reasonable state?

Mr. Robert Square: We are at present working on various fundraising initiatives—a book on the history of the light, and a replication of an old federal manual for lightkeepers.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you very much.

I want to ask Mr. Goodacre a question or two.

You talked about property and you talked about the need for legal frameworks when you're talking about ownership, and you talked about the necessity of a funding, or fiscal, framework. This legislation doesn't have any funding provisions, so how do you see...? Since you place such priority on a funding framework, how do you see that evolving as a result of this bill?

Mr. Rick Goodacre: I noticed that there was a lot of discussion about this last week, and this is bound to come up. And as Senator Carney said, this is not a money bill. It cannot be a money bill, originally being in the Senate. And I think everyone's kind of dancing around the question and they really want to ask what this is going to cost.

I don't know what it's going to cost. I would say that if you're talking about maintenance of lighthouses—and I think that's one of the reasons this bill is here—a building that no longer has a use tends to become neglected. If some of these structures are now being cycled out of use, they will be left and neglected.

If the bill is saying that if it's designated a heritage facility then there has to be some minimum expenditure in order to maintain these places so they don't degrade, then there will be a cost associated with that. And I would say that, with what you heard last week from Fisheries and Oceans, there's no ability in your existing budget to take care of heritage character buildings, because that's not within their mandate. So that will have to be identified as a function, and there would be some costs assigned to that. I mean, this won't happen unless there's some expenditure of dollars.

And when there are provisions in the bill for maintenance, again, you have to have a maintenance schedule. There has to logically be some costs assigned to that. But I don't see this as a major sudden upswing in restoration. As Natalie Bull of Heritage Canada said last week, this is not a bill to suddenly turn these places into historic theme parks, where you have huge budgets to restore everything and make them ideal sites for presentation. They aren't necessarily all going to settle and become museums. Some of them might, especially on the east coast or in Ontario, but much less so on the west coast, where lighthouses are still mostly functioning, whether they're staffed or not. But I see that their logic will be that there will be some costs associated here.

I think another factor to consider here is that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, through the Parks Canada Agency, has had a cost-sharing program for a number of years for national and historic sites. If it's a national and historic site and it can be in private hands, it can be a store. Rogers' Chocolates in Victoria is a national historic site. All kinds of different places can be national historic sites. But if you're a public entity, you can apply to the national cost-sharing program for some money.

Well, the way to keep a lid on that spending is simply by putting a lid on the budget. And they're saying, well, okay, it's \$2 million; that's it, that's all there is. It's not a question of how much you need and that's what the budget is. The question is how much we are willing to allocate. So there's always that side of the decision, saying, okay, there's a pot of money for this maintenance program and these sites can apply to this pot of money. But they can easily put a lid on that amount of money. And that lid is often set by saying how much we're willing to spend.

So that's the same with local governments when they make money available. The City of Vancouver is providing density to buildings, to incentivate them. They now are doing a complete reassessment of that program because they don't want to create too much density, and they're also looking at the gap between how much it takes to make a building become rehabilitated in a marketplace situation and how much they're willing to spend.

So it's give and take. It will be negotiated.

• (0955)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goodacre.

Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, Mr. Square, I would like to thank you for your brief. I read it carefully. I know that if you have gone to the trouble of writing a brief—and this takes nothing away from those who did not—it means you have gone the extra mile to prepare for us. So I thank you.

You will understand however that I am uncomfortable with your request or complaint. Yes, heritage lighthouses deserve to be recognized, protected and maintained. Maybe they are recognized by the department but they are not maintained. I think we all agree on this. This means that over time, as they deteriorate, they disappear and it is our loss.

In my view, the bill will not help. I would like to hear you on this. In your submission, Mr. Square, you have a short paragraph dealing with Bill S-215. I would like to give you an opportunity to discuss further the bill under consideration. I would like to hear from you a compelling case that this bill will indeed improve the situation in the short, medium or long term within a financial framework. A recognition framework is one thing, but it is the funding framework, as you know, that makes the difference between a well-maintained lighthouse that stays and one that does not. How do you see this from the point of view of the bill?

• (1000)

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Square: I think Bill S-215 will allow the non-profit organizations that will eventually be running a lot of the heritage lights the opportunity to take care of them. It'll allow the organizations to work with the government agencies responsible for heritage preservation.

Because we're outside of the government, our organizations would have greater leeway in what we could do as far as fundraising is concerned. Somebody would be far more amiable and willing to give money to a non-profit heritage organization that was taking care of a lighthouse rather than to Fisheries and Oceans. In that way we can work together, whether it's on matching grants or some sort of creative fundraising or cost-sharing arrangements, and think outside the box, so to speak.

Non-profits also have a large volunteer pool they can draw on. One of the communications I've been working on is regarding the restoration of the fog alarm building. I've been in contact with Ingersoll Rand and the company that made the engines for the compressors, Lister diesel. Those two companies are quite interested in lending assistance in our restoration ideas. When the process goes through, Bill S-215 would give those organizations legitimacy in the restoration efforts, along with the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you.

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts the proverb says. I do not really like that proverb because I am sure that Greeks are not less generous than others. Whatever the case may be, it means it may be dangerous to accept a gift because it may cause more problems than solutions.

It is well known that some heritage lighthouses are not currently well maintained and that certain locations are contaminated. It is a fact. Wouldn't a non-profit organization made up of volunteers and well-intentioned people run the risk of getting stuck with the problems and insufficient funding? With all due respect, you will end up with heritage lighthouses, okay, but also with all the funding problems that come with them. We may end up not doing you a favour.

What do you think?

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Square: As far as site contamination and the condition of the properties go, we've had unofficial discussions with Fisheries and Oceans officials and have received a fair number of site contamination and habitation reports. They're quite aware of the site conditions, and we're quite aware of our site conditions. I guess that comes into the association's ability to produce a business plan for the site. You can't do everything all at once, that's for sure.

At Cove Island we're quite aware of the site deficiencies, but they are manageable. By doing a proper phased business plan over many years, you can manage it. I think it's very manageable. On getting into areas where we'd be over our heads, I think we have enough expertise to draw on, both public and private, that would act as very valuable business resources and heritage preservation resources for us.

It will be a process. It's a long-term plan of five or ten years, but you do it smartly and efficiently within your own financial abilities.

•(1005)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Square.

Thank you, Mr. Blais.

Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'd like to say thanks to our witnesses. It's the passion and the stories that make some of these things real for Canadians, particularly as so few Canadians actually do visit these places, some for just remoteness' sake and others perhaps in ignorance of the importance of our history.

Also, I'd like to say a quick thanks to the committee. Normally I sit on the environment committee. It's a pleasure to be at a committee that has such collegiality, with folks asking questions and moving ahead. We don't have that similar circumstance at environment right now. It's a pleasure to be here on fisheries.

I represent the riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, which is the northwest quarter of British Columbia. It's an extensive coastal riding, with some of the most remote places in our country. They're difficult to get to and dangerous to travel in. As proven by the sinking of the *Queen of the North* and a number of other vessels over the years, there are treacherous waters on the west coast of British Columbia. Lighthouses have played an integral role. You talked about the development and the history of our country. Without lighthouses, the trade and the building in that part of the world would have been impossible.

I have a question about this bill. Committee members will forgive me, as obviously I'm new, temporarily filling in for Mr. Stoffer, who has a great passion for lighthouses. I might ask questions that have already been answered by other witnesses, so the committee might be hearing it again, but sometimes a pair of new eyes can help when you're looking at a situation.

It seems to me, in reading through this bill, that the fundamental question—Mr. Goodacre, you spoke to this—is money. I'm also my party's critic for Parks Canada and some of the heritage sites that they're responsible for, and we've had consistent and ongoing reports on a lack of funding and a lack of upkeep on the capital stock in Canada for our heritage sites in general. Essentially, this bill seems to want to include lighthouses into that assembly of important places, find them some criteria and designation.

I guess my question, to put a fine point on it, is do you have any sentiment or experience that the government, if this designation were to go through and were to be included, would make more money available? At the end of the day, if you were put onto this list, if lighthouses were now designated in such a way, would that open up a source of revenue for you folks to be able to protect these places?

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Perhaps I can address that.

Speaking for Cabot Head, with the bill we would have a firm base to work with. We're a not-for-profit organization at Cabot Head. The lighthouse has been on our lease. We've had it since 1986, and in

1994 we got incorporated. We do active fundraising, but every five years we have to renegotiate our lease with Fisheries and Oceans and with the municipality.

If we were designated as a heritage site, that would be one barrier out of our road. It would make it easy. As volunteers, as lighthouse enthusiasts, we still would do the fundraising, the dinners. We have an active gift shop and an art studio that raise money for us. With that we keep the light up. We add to it. We're working on it.

•(1010)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Moving to the point that was raised earlier by Mr. Goodacre, do you feel that in this legislation, or in the way the government treats these heritage lighthouses, there should be any secondary designation for places of importance that don't have the visitors, that don't have the access that some other places might, perhaps in eastern Canada or closer to some of the larger population centres? There may be an historically important place, but one that's identified as very difficult to get to. The fundraising capacity for a non-profit group, if there is one, or an association would be much more limited than for a group working on the other side of Quebec City, say, or near where some of you folks represent.

Do you feel there should be some caveat in here for places of a more remote nature?

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: If you have a lighthouse that is specifically very historically valuable, then I think all of Canada should strive to keep it alive. Otherwise, how is Canada going to keep its heritage in the next 10, 20, even 100 years from now? European countries have kept the old buildings alive and in relatively good order so that people can visit them. They've made that effort.

Canada is a young country. If we don't start keeping our important heritage buildings free or accessible, we've lost them. And some would need more help than others, I would think.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Keddy.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to thank our witnesses for appearing today. A couple of points were made. Mr. Blais mentioned that Mr. Square spoke with a great deal of passion, and I agree with that. What I've heard from all of our witnesses is that you also have a passion tempered with pragmatism. I appreciate that.

I had carriage of this bill in a former incarnation in the House and have supported the bill the couple of times that it has come before the House. I understand that our members are concerned about the costs here, but I think there are a couple of things we should be clear on, and I just want to put this out to you folks to see if you're in agreement.

First of all, the process won't result in every lighthouse in Canada becoming a historic light, nor should they all be historic lights. There's a dual reality here, wherein we will have some heritage designations for lights that will remain under federal control and be federal property—and hopefully will remain federal lighthouses, as navigational aids—and we will have lights that will be facing a regular divestiture anyway, opening the process for community groups to take responsibility for those lights.

I represent a big fishery riding, South Shore—St. Margaret's in Nova Scotia, with West Nova right next to it. I was on probably a dozen wharfs last Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning, and the thing I noticed on each wharf was that you could see a lighthouse somewhere in that harbour from it—or from the majority of them. But even so, some of those lights are navigational aids, and some of those lights have already been divested without any assistance from community groups.

My concern is that if we don't get this bill passed this time.... I think it's in a good format, a workable format. And I think that with the petition process, we will have enough dollars to cover it—and all of those dollars won't be coming from DFO, because this has to go through Environment Canada and, of course, through Parks Canada.

I'm not sure of the number, but I believe that in the riding I represent, there are between 13 and 16 working lights now. There used to be over 20. Some of them have been torn down and burned; they just no longer meet a need of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, or the Canadian Coast Guard. Some of them are no longer navigational aids. There are a number that have been divested since I became a member of Parliament—and the community groups then didn't have the clear guidelines to go by that we have here today. In one particular case, a lighthouse has been rebuilt by a community group; it had been gone for years and has been completely rebuilt as a tourist attraction. Although a number of our lights are on islands, a number of others you can actually drive to in Nova Scotia. Those have much more potential to be maintained by a community group.

If you could, I'd like you to go into the national historic sites. You folks talked about the importance of them a little bit, but the example you used was of your funding. I believe there is funding available to this bill; but either way, this government, or any government, simply controls the funding by the amount they put out as expenditure. I'd like to further explore that a little more.

Does anyone have a comment on that? I mean, it would be nice to have all the funding you could use, but—

•(1015)

Mr. Robert Square: Yes, in a perfect world, having a bottomless pit of money would be great.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: It would be just fine.

Mr. Robert Square: It would be absolutely fantastic. We could do everything we wanted to do right away at Cove Island. But that's not the reality of the situation, and we realize that. Those are the constraints and the environment in which non-profits work. We are very aware of that.

Monsieur Blais has stepped out, but one further thing that I would add to my comments to him is that there are currently discussions under way on divestiture of the property at Cove Island from

Fisheries and Oceans to Parks Canada. So there is a chance that the property will become part of Fathom Five National Marine Park.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Fantastic.

Mr. Robert Square: That would open up further avenues for us as far as the preservation of Cove Island Lightstation is concerned. Fisheries and Oceans have been great; they've been great people to work with, but they have constraints to what they can do.

We just work within the existing framework; and with a sound business plan, we'll be successful.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Some of the lighthouses from Bruce Coast have been taken over by the municipalities they're in—such as Kincardine, and Chantry Island—and are being rebuilt. Lion's Head has its own lighthouse. It was burnt down and kids rebuilt it.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: If I could interject for a second, to me this process—and I agree with Mr. Square that there is probably no perfect process—allows us to preserve our heritage lights on both the east and west coasts, and the Great Lakes, certainly. At the end of the day, it also allows for divestiture to a community group to save a light that may not have wonderful historical significance but is important as a tourist attraction to that community, or has other value. Once that happens, then they can fundraise. And these buildings will be turned over in reasonable condition—that's the other thing—so the community groups can fundraise to shingle the roof, or paint them, or replace windows or fix the sills in them.

But without that ability to fundraise and make some money, I see these buildings continuing to fall by the wayside—

•(1020)

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: And being lost forever.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: —until they reach the point where government are unable to maintain them any longer, or fix them up. The expense will just be too great. And community groups will not have any significant reason.... Besides the fact that they would like to have the light, they would never be able to afford to take over and maintain it.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Right.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Is that what you're seeing as well?

Mr. Rick Goodacre: If I could speak to that very briefly, in general I do not see this as a money bill. I do not see this as a big spending bill. I think this is a process bill, and it's a process that's going to set the minimum standards here. It's just going to say officially that we recognize that historic lighthouses have meaning in Canada. This bill is going to set a process to recognize that. It's also going to create a process whereby these light stations will move through an evolution, which they've been doing since their inception 250 years ago.

I would say, furthermore, that any organization that will take on an individual lighthouse and responsibility for it is not going to be opening up the tap in Ottawa for money to flow to it. They're going to be doing quite the opposite; they're going to be taking on a significant responsibility in which the federal government needs to be some kind of partner.

But I see the local organization taking on by far the lion's share of the burden here, and ultimately everything will come back to them, because they will be taking on that day-to-day responsibility, and the final responsibility, to make sure these places don't fall apart. They will be there on site. They will be there looking at these places day by day and will be taking on board, in a philosophical way, a commitment to not seeing these places deteriorate. So if there's a squeeze, they are going to be in that squeeze more than anyone.

So in fact it's a good deal for the government to do this.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I have one more point, if I have time. That's the fact that we have a number of lights in southwest Nova Scotia, some of which, quite frankly, have been moved two and three times in their lifetimes. Prevailing winds on the Atlantic have simply eroded the shoreline, especially for a number of them on islands, which are exposed to some pretty severe weather conditions. Quite frankly, those lights are going to be lost anyway, because eventually some of the islands they're on will be lost. That's another factor here. So we're not going to get a community group to take over those lights.

We did a cost assessment on Coffin Island a few years ago. I think some \$450,000 worth of armour stone was put around the light. This was three or four hurricanes ago—quite a while ago—when the armour stone was gone. Because there was a light there, DFO had to make the decision of replacing it with a 20-foot fibreglass tower, which is not nearly as majestic as the old light. But we lose some lights due to conditions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Keddy.

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: There's always one in the broth. Mr. Cullen was singing our praises a few minutes ago, but we always have one bad apple.

I believe we're going to go to Mr. Lévesque next.

[*Translation*]

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

I think there are several lighthouses in the Georgian Bay and Lake Huron area. If there were too many heritage lighthouses, could people eventually lose interest? Too much is like too little. If you had to protect lighthouses located at a reasonable distance from each other to avoid competition both in Ontario and in British Columbia, how many would get the priority in your view?

I will give Mr. Square the chance to repeat to Mr. Blais what he wanted to say earlier.

I will also ask Mr. Goodacre to tell us how it works in British Columbia and how many lighthouses are necessary in his view.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Square: First, Monsieur Blais, while you were out of the room, regarding part of your comments and my response, the thought came to me that I forgot—part of getting older, I guess—that Fisheries and Oceans are in talks with Parks Canada to divest themselves of Cove Island and transfer it over to Parks Canada to be part of Fathom Five National Marine Park. So that will open up other areas of cooperation and opportunities for us as part of the heritage preservation of Cove Island.

If I were to preserve one light in Ontario rather than having a perfect world in which all of them would be preserved, I would be selfish and say it's Cove Island, only because it is the most completely intact light station facility I can think of. Everything is there. You step off a boat onto the property, and it's like stepping back into history. It's what you see a light station being.

• (1025)

Mr. Rick Goodacre: In terms of making those choices, the Schindler's list of heritage, first of all, the proposed legislation states that the minister must “establish criteria to be taken into account in considering whether a lighthouse should be designated as a heritage lighthouse”. The minister must also establish an advisory committee.

There will be a process. This kind of discussion is always part of a process. In fact, if you made a list today, 25 years from now you might look at that list again and say you think the list is incorrect, because there's always a question of ongoing, shifting values.

If a community has a heritage register, they should revisit that every so many years to decide whether the list is still correct. At one point, the national historic sites in Canada all seemed to be battlefields. If you go to the national Historic Sites and Monuments Board now as ask them what their priorities are, those are very different from what they were in 1919. So it's an ongoing discussion.

There's also the question, as I said before, of money. You can talk about needing funds, that we need to fund these sites. There will always be a lid on the amount of money available. There will usually be a lid on the number of sites that are allowed into any given register, because when you add another property, that becomes another job to do.

Again, in terms of a municipal heritage register, I've seen cases where, enthusiastically, the city adopted a register that's really far beyond their means to deal with. Then they ended up having to backtrack and say, “Well, we really can't cope with this large a register.” So they want to bring it down to size. It's an ongoing push and pull.

So there have to be decisions about how many resources you want to dedicate to this particular program, and then when you're making those decisions about what gets in and what gets left out, you're looking at not only whether that site is a historic place, but also how big is the global picture; how many sites are we going to allow into this program? And then you start making your decisions.

There will certainly be places where you'll say, “Well, whatever the decision, this place has to be on that list.” There will be some stellar sites that simply are beyond dispute. But then you get into your secondary list and say, “Okay, we have the first five; what are the next 10?” And you'll have to work your way down.

So there's no way to protect yourself and say, "I know what that list is." You are embarking upon a process, and that means there will be some indeterminate outcomes. But the principle involved is that you need to say, "We will recognize that we have historic lighthouses; we are willing to make those decisions as leaders"—because that's what you are, representing Canadian people. "We will make such a list and we will go out and find out what the truth is, find out how many historic places there are, and then deal with the facts as they come forward."

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To stay on this topic for a moment, the importance is the list. The importance is who sits on this committee that's advising the government as to where the priorities should go.

Is there any advice that you would offer, if you had the minister in front of you now, in terms of how to construct the group of people who would make those final recommendations, and whether there are any critical criteria that might be perhaps counterintuitive? We know national historical importance and those types of things, but are there any criteria that you think might be important, and all historical applications would have to pass through this lens? In the bill itself, I can't read any detail that really directs the government one way or another as to how to make that advisory committee, and what, if any, criteria that committee should use.

So if you were to offer advice to the government, what would it be?

• (1030)

Mr. Rick Goodacre: I'll go first.

The Government of Canada, under the historic places initiative, which has been under way for about seven or eight years now, has brought in a new concept called "statement of significance". This has become pretty much commonplace across the country. In British Columbia, we're seeing cities throughout the province starting to adopt this process of writing a statement of significance.

The point about the statement of significance is that it writes a very fundamental statement about what are the values of the place, and I think that's how it should be approached. Each one of the sites for consideration would have a statement of significance, and it would come back to the ideal: what are the values here? You can never be sure why any place is important. You can't predetermine that.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: So you'd resist any type of point system or—

Mr. Rick Goodacre: I would. It's a mistake.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: This is always subjective.

Mr. Rick Goodacre: You have to look at each on its own merits. You write that statement and you have the people who know that place well, but also there's a certain expertise in doing that. I would say that's the approach to take, to look at it that way.

In terms of the question about who would be on that committee, what you really want is balance. You want a lot of different points of view and different ways of thinking. You don't want to load it up

with just a lot of, if I may say so, historical experts, because they will have their points of view. You need to have that balance.

What the minister needs is really good advice, understanding what the real intent of this bill is. I think that's what I would do if I were advising the minister. And then you can put forward lots of names of candidates to be on that. There are lots of people in this country who have the skills to do this.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you.

Mr. Robert Square: Further to Rick's comments, FHBRO has a point system in the evaluation of their buildings. Looking at some of their evaluations, especially of our light, that would be a mistake in any criteria system for designating the lights.

It has a place, yes, but you need the subjective element of it—what Rick said, what the statement of significance does. It gives you what makes this light, this particular light, this particular property, significant. Why is it heritage? Why should it be protected and preserved?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I'm going to interrupt, only for the sake of time.

A comment was made, and I want a very quick assessment of how Canada compares to other countries, from your perspective. You deal with other associations and other groups abroad—in Europe, and the United States. How are we faring with respect to keeping up our heritage when it comes to lighthouses right now?

Mr. Robert Square: As concerns the U.S., which I've been exploring fairly extensively, we lag very far behind the U.S. They have a lighthouse protection manual, produced a number of years ago, which we do not have here in Canada.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mrs. Toxopéus, you talked about Europe at one point.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Yes. There too they are protecting their lighthouses, are more in tune with their lighthouses and local communities. Some of them, especially in Holland, are also nationally historic, especially the different kinds of architecture that they have.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: So they take an architectural significance, as well.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: Architectural and historical, but most of their lighthouses they need for the coast, because of the nature of the coast. They're still manned.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: As one last point, perhaps, I'm going to pick up on something Mr. Goodacre said. It's coming from a conservation—and I'm thinking environmental conservation—mandate.

I've seen an evolution over time. The notion of "park" has changed in the environmentalist mentality as an exclusive thing to people, that it's out there and you put a wall around it. The interaction between the local human populations and that environment is now being considered as a higher level of environmental protection.

It seems that on an historical basis, when we look at these historic sites, that too remains. The lens that has to be increased and bettered is the reaction between people who are living there now and these historic places, rather than putting a fence around it and circling it in time as a forgotten thing.

Thank you very much for your testimony today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Calkins, you have five minutes.

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

I just want to say that if I do have any time left, I'd like to share it with Mr. Miller from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses here, but also I have one question for Mr. Goodacre—given the realm of experience that you have, as I think most have, to answer this question.

Right now, Bill S-215 proposes a new process to define lighthouses as heritage buildings. Currently, in all the processes that I'm aware of, we have the ability to designate places as national historic sites through Parks Canada. There are already heritage lighthouses designated as heritage buildings within Parks Canada, and there is already a process through Treasury Board to designate heritage buildings.

The way I see it, this is a fourth process. Could you differentiate for this committee what Bill S-215 adds in light of comparing and contrasting those other three processes?

•(1035)

Mr. Rick Goodacre: The natural historic sites process is a process of commemoration. It is a process to recognize special places, people, and events in Canada, so it is not an asset management system. It is not looking at an inventory of buildings within a complete system to decide how to manage this category and that category.

For example, right now, as I said earlier, the national historic sites program is not eager to fund a lot more battlefields, because they've been there; they've done that; they have overextended themselves in that direction. The Parks Canada program of national historic sites, actual parks that are managed by Parks Canada—and in fact they're not really expanding those—is a program to make special places available to the public. They will be managed, particularly interpreted, for the visitor. So it's like a museum program. They have stories they want to tell and places they want to interpret to the Canadian public. Again, a very limited number of places are going to be candidates for a Parks Canada system.

The federal heritage building policy is a blanket program. It is an asset management program, and in fact it covers all of our buildings, and FHBRO, as was mentioned, has the responsibility to identify and rate and classify these buildings in terms of how they'll be

treated. You might very well say that that third level is sufficient; we have a program in place. The evidence is that it doesn't work that well, and the reason it doesn't work that well is that it's not backed up by legislation. In fact, if you asked me what was wrong with the lighthouse act, I would say the problem with the lighthouse act is that I'd like to see this kind of legislation for all our heritage buildings in Canada. It isn't there.

When you look at the building I mentioned earlier, the Work Point Barracks, a military building that came down, I'm not saying that it had to stay, but I'm saying that the process that was involved was not adequate and the policies in place to protect that building as an historic place really were not strong enough. They were not backed up by real legislation.

So what we're dealing with here is a special class of buildings within that program. But given that this is a very special class and that it is a unique set of buildings, I would say that it probably is valid to have this particular piece of legislation, much like the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act of the 1980s was identified as something that was needed then because of the change in the railways. We couldn't wait 30 years to figure this out; we had to act then.

So in that sense, I think this piece of legislation takes our blanket heritage policy, federal heritage policy, another step further for this special class of buildings, and it's something we need to do. I would also say that if we don't do it now, if this bill fails, it's not going to come back again and we will only have the dubious privilege of looking back in 20 or 30 years, those of us who are still around, and saying we should have done something and we didn't.

I hope that answers the question.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to say thank you very much to the witnesses for being here today. I apologize for missing your presentations at the start, but I had another issue on another committee that I've been spearheading for a long time and I had to be there. But I'm happy to be here now.

All three of you are involved with organizations with lighthouses in my riding. I put out this question to all of you, but Mr. Goodacre, I appreciate your comments about getting this bill done, that we may never get the chance again. I've been saying much the same thing myself.

To Mr. Square and any other witnesses—you're involved with the Cove Island group—how do you see that this bill helps or enhances what your group is doing there and basically opens up the door? I think the goal here is to try to get as many of these lighthouses in the hands of community groups and what have you across the country. So how do you see this bill working towards that end?

•(1040)

Mr. Robert Square: I see the bill after it's passed—and I'm talking very presumptuously, I guess—allowing the non-profits and the government to work together. I envision it allowing us into the designation process and the listing of the criteria that will flow from the bill to designate the lights, and I see it as a partnership between us. It doesn't remove all the responsibilities of the government in the preservation process and it doesn't relieve us of our responsibilities either. It's a dual-managed process over the coming years, and it will evolve over the years.

Non-profits have their place. We're able to work a little outside the box that the government is in, and that would be how I see the bill progressing.

Mrs. Everdina Toxopéus: I think it would give us a little bit more stability if legislation were in place that would designate whether it's a heritage site, whether it's within Parks Canada, whether it's within the community, or whatever. If it's designated, then we're not sailing a rocky boat, because right now we're debating if we're going to get the lease or not. If we're not going to get the lease, 10 to 15 years of our work is going to go down the drain, especially in the case of Cabot Head. But if lighthouses like ours were designated by the federal, provincial, or municipal governments, then we'd have that problem out of the way and we could concentrate on our fundraising and upkeep of the lights instead of biting our nails every five years, wondering if we are going to have a lighthouse to work with.

Mr. Rick Goodacre: You'll create an official process as opposed to an informal process, and I think that needs to be done.

I think there's an enormous importance in legitimizing this relationship, which probably is not there now. This kind of

legitimization is largely symbolic, but symbols can be extremely important. It means this is real and this is a relationship the government recognizes. It also creates a legal framework for that to happen.

On the west coast particularly, I think what will happen is that it's going to galvanize people, because right now there's a sleepy attitude about lighthouses on the west coast. Of the 56 lighthouses I have on my list—there's also one historically on one of the interior lakes—half of them are still staffed and the other half are mostly still operational, at least as beacons, and a lot of them are more out of sight than out of mind. The people of B.C. assume things are moving along, and I think there's a lot of latent interest in these places. There's certainly a lot of interest in history and heritage.

So when we see this bill passed, I think people will take action, because the bill contains some time horizons. It has milestones, and you have to respond to it. It's not a bill that puts something passive in place; it creates an active process. So that will be, I think, of great importance and value.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goodacre.

And thank you once again to our witnesses and to the committee. Your presentations here today, and certainly your answers to our questions, have helped us as we move forward.

On Thursday we will be on clause-by-clause of the bill, and once again I want to advise committee members that anybody who has an amendment to the bill must have it to the clerk by tomorrow, Wednesday.

Thank you once again.

The meeting is adjourned.

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