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## **Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, April 21, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Rodney Weston**



## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Wednesday, April 21, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)):** I call this meeting to order. We are here today to consider committee business.

Mr. Byrne, I believe you want to put forward a motion.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** Yes.

Mr. Clerk, do you have copies of that motion, by any chance?

**The Chair:** They've been distributed. Copies have been distributed to all members.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Well, I have to find my copy here. Hang on.

**The Chair:** Here.

**An hon. member:** It's right here in front of you.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Mr. Chair, I think adequate notice was given for the following motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108 (2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the shellfish industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, including but not limited to current and past management plans for the snow crab fishery in all areas and related licensing decisions, sharing arrangements among the snow crab fishery fleets, and the assistance program for lobster fishermen, and call to appear the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans with the appropriate departmental officials, Mr. Tim Rhyno, a crab licence holder, and representatives of corporate, traditional and aboriginal fleets and the processing sector, particularly from South-East Nova Scotia, the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Newfoundland and Labrador; that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

**The Chair:** It is so moved by Mr. Byrne. I won't read through the motion again.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Calkins.

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

I have one question in regard to the wording in the motion. Whether I agree or disagree with the motion per se is a matter of other debate, but I would like to ask why we would identify one single individual. It's a little bit odd to do those kinds of things in motions.

“Minister of Fisheries and Oceans with the appropriate departmental officials” would appear to be wording that would be standard in a motion. And “representatives of corporate, traditional and aboriginal fleets and the processing sector” and so on would appear to be wording that could be lived with. If I could get some clarification as to why a particular individual, Mr. Tim Rhyno, would

be included in the wording of a motion, I think it would help me decide how I would like to handle this motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Calkins.

Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** When Gerry spoke to me the first time, I mentioned certain problems that I had with it, particularly the fact that we were addressing one particular case, that of Mr. Rhyno. At that time, Gerry mentioned that he could include management of the crab fishery in all areas, including area 12. That area concerns me in particular because it is affected by the 63% reduction. That has just happened. Furthermore, Quebec fishermen are going out to sea tonight. There is quite an impact related to that.

I have a great deal of difficulty supporting this kind of motion, for several reasons. First, I am under the impression that we are trying to explain or take into consideration the granting of a permit, in this case to Mr. Rhyno. The questions we are asking ourselves about this are probably justified and legitimate. I have few doubts about that. My problem is really on another level.

The last time we met, we were discussing future business and we were wondering what we would do about the aquaculture study and that on eco-certification. We thought that we would practically have to choose between the two because the aquaculture study is increasing in scope. At some point, we will have to choose. Given what is happening with aquaculture, I would choose that rather than eco-certification. In fact, I think that would affect everyone.

I was ready. At the beginning of the week, I told you how, in my opinion, we could undertake the aquaculture study. But at this point, I have the impression that we are facing a study of some magnitude. That is how I see it. I am also asking myself a lot of questions about management of the snow crab issue. I also have questions about the shrimp and even on the situation of the cod in the southern gulf region as opposed to the north. I have many questions about Fisheries and Oceans management practices in general.

Given what is happening and considering the priorities we established for ourselves as well as the issue I had agreed to collaborate on, I think that at some point in time we will have to review the way licensing works. Will it be within the context of our study on the new Fisheries Act, which is coming soon? That could be a timely opportunity to do so. It might be an idea to study Mr. Rhyno's case at that time. However, I have a lot of hesitations when I consider that happening within the framework of such a vast study. I'm telling you this in all honesty. This isn't a red herring—quite the contrary. The concerns regarding licensing that Gerry raised during a question to the minister are surely legitimate.

I had the impression that we could consider this from another angle. In that case, I would be ready to cooperate. As far as undertaking a major study, I think we will have to do it, but I am wondering if it must be done at this point in time in this way or in another way. I have many reservations.

•(1535)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Blais.

Mr. Kamp.

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

I want to thank Mr. Blais for his comments. I think he's summarized the issue quite well.

I think we based our lack of support for this motion on process. We did some work, we put together a work plan that involved some things at the steering committee, and then the committee decided what was of importance to us.

This was raised at the last meeting, I think by Mr. Donnelly, and he was quite right. At the time we did mention the possibility that west coast issues, particularly aquaculture, and perhaps its relationship to wild salmon populations, could come before us after we heard more information, and that we could decide after we heard from some other witnesses, and that might be an area that we felt compelled to look at.

So we have eco-certification that's still sort of hanging out there in limbo. We've now started down the aquaculture path. We heard some things that were quite interesting, to me at least, and I would like to find out more about what's going on there, who's right, and what the truth is on some of these issues. Now we're throwing in this crab study without any limits on it. All decisions that were made were certainly within the legal, lawful powers of the minister and so on. We're going to go back and look at allocation and TAC issues, if we go there.

There's all of that, and also the Fisheries Act is coming to us sooner, I think, rather than later. As Mr. Blais said, I think this could be an interesting case study when we get to the act and look at the sections of the bill that describe a new allocation, a new licensing regime, from the old one, and maybe look at issues like this and see how they would have been dealt with differently in the new act.

So I'm not opposed to that, as we hear witnesses and travel, probably, looking at the Fisheries Act. But to interrupt our two studies.... You know, we're schizophrenic already, and we probably

need to limit it to two, I would say. I think aquaculture is probably something we need to do a little more work on before we can leave it aside.

Based on those things, we're not prepared to support this motion.

•(1540)

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

If we're schizophrenic, how many votes do we get?

**The Chair:** That's not a point of order.

Any further comments?

Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sure that all colleagues from all parts of eastern Canada and indeed all Canadians from all coasts would be concerned and impacted by the fact that in the province of New Brunswick the fishing industry has just lost probably \$80 million. Literally thousands of fishermen and fish plant workers have lost their jobs. In the province of Quebec, upwards of \$40 million to \$50 million from the regional economy of the Gaspé has now been eliminated. There is no federal government assistance package in place, and there does not appear to be any coming. Decisions were made that suggest the government was somewhat negligent in its order of its management plans. Those did not take into consideration conservation needs in the past at times when scientific advice was presented to them to suggest that conservation measures would be needed to prevent the 63% loss of quota that has now been experienced in one year.

I'm sure all of us take the concerns of those who face that impact, particularly in the Gaspé and in New Brunswick, and will want to act on them in some way, shape, or form. I certainly would not want to be the one to go back to either the Gaspé or New Brunswick and explain to them that this committee had an opportunity to study this issue and to provide an outlet for fishermen, for processors, for plant workers, for provincial governments, and for other stakeholders to be involved in this inquiry, but we chose not to. This is an economic issue of huge concern, with no immediate relief in sight.

From a conservation point of view, I for one would certainly want to hear from DFO scientists to understand exactly what advice they did indeed provide the minister in the last several years regarding conservation requirements, to be able to maintain quota or at least stabilize quota and to allow for, if required, a responsible and organized quota reduction over a period of years, as opposed to imposing a 63% cut in one year.

I'd also like to hear from those who are impacted and who feel that certain licensing decisions were taken that impacted negatively upon them. As you know, I do indeed still have a motion before this committee specifically to study area 23 and area 24 crab. The events of area 12 in particular, as well as, in fairness, the marketing issues in Newfoundland and Labrador seem to have superseded a study on just area 23 and area 24. When I tabled that earlier motion, the events in Newfoundland and Labrador were still developing or rolling out. There was no decision at that point in time on area 12 in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. Circumstances certainly have overtaken.

We now have a major crisis in the crab industry in particular, for which very little or no relief is being offered, and there is absolutely no outlet for anyone to be able to adequately discuss their concerns. I thought this committee would have been an excellent venue for them to identify the problems and propose their solutions. To allow this to occur, I will indeed suggest an amendment, since it does not appear that there are enough votes, that there is enough support around the table to be able to get that proper airing for those impacted individuals.

• (1545)

Again I just want to stress how serious this matter is, how significant it is, a failure of this committee and its members to stand up and allow the crab fishermen who are impacted by this, the processors who are impacted by this, the plant workers who are impacted by this, the communities that are impacted by this, and the regions that are impacted by this.... Not to allow that to occur, in my opinion, is irresponsible.

This is a new circumstance that was not available to us at the start of the parliamentary session at the beginning of March. It is now before us. To deny that it exists and simply say we have other business to attend to because we decided on it earlier shows that we don't really recognize the seasonal nature of this fishery. When new information is presented to us that was not available to us before, we don't have the option of waiting six or seven months to be able to study it. The realities of the situation are occurring right now, as we speak.

So I will indeed propose a friendly amendment to my own motion to try to garner enough support to be able to help these people in these regions in a time of absolute crisis. To get enough support, I will—

**The Chair:** Mr. Byrne, may I interrupt? The process does not allow you to make an amendment to your own motion.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** What I'm going to suggest, though, Mr. Chair, is that I will propose an amendment that someone else on the committee could indeed sponsor.

**The Chair:** I would ask that you ask someone else to propose that amendment. Rather than you proposing an amendment for someone else, you should have them propose that amendment.

• (1550)

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** No, it's perfectly in order for me to discuss what I would recommend as an amendment. I'm not moving the amendment. It's perfectly within order, and I think you can consult with your clerk, Mr. Chair, to determine that.

**The Chair:** No, that's fine.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** What I would recommend is if the motion were amended to read as follows:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry

—deleting “shellfish”—

in Atlantic Canada and Quebec,

—deleting all words thereafter until the word “Labrador” and the semi-colon, and continuing—

that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

I'll just repeat that in complete form:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

To avoid any confusion or uncertainty in regard to the other materials in my original motion, to prevent any committee member from being concerned about that, I would suggest that we delete that wording and allow the committee to study exactly as I propose.

We've already heard from some Conservative members that they didn't have a problem with that as long as we didn't include the name of a specific individual. So with that said, at this point in time, we can now have a study on the snow crab industry. We can support and come to the assistance of those in the Gaspé and the Acadian Peninsula. We can come to the assistance of those in Newfoundland and Labrador, in P.E.I., and in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and on the eastern side of Nova Scotia, those who are impacted in area 23. We can have a study on crab, we can do our work as a committee, or we can choose not to.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Blais.

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** I heard you clearly, but I heard some things that did not make me happy. I would tell you quite honestly that I presume that everyone is in good faith and I would never assume that anyone around this table would completely forget why they are here and not properly defend their constituents. If I ever do so in any way, I hope you will call me to order.

Having said that, the original motion, or possibly the amended version, would result in our studying the industry sector but forgetting the fact that the consequences are many and they go beyond the issue of licensing and crab management as such. There are repercussions. There are other forums where this work could be done, but the departments will have to work together to come to the assistance of the people who are experiencing these impacts. Many people are in a difficult situation, on top of the fishermen who are so seriously affected. I am thinking of those who are fishermen's helpers and those who work in the plants. They are really between a rock and a hard place because they are losing their jobs and hours of work. We know all that.

I could not understand how anyone would suggest that we are not defending our constituents well in order to influence us to vote for some motion or other. I cannot accept that. If ever I say such a thing, I hope you will repeat back to me what I have just told you. In fact, not only do I presume, I can see that everyone around this table is doing their best to do their job. We may have different perspectives on certain ways of proceeding. That is fine, it is part of the game. However, I would never dare personally attack anyone by saying that they are poorly defending or not defending their fellow citizens.

The problem is not that we wish to dispose of this issue or anything like that. I am also concerned by this aspect, but there are choices that must be made because there are studies. I am well aware of the fact that we have a Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads, which is the Fisheries Act. I am anxious for it to be referred to us so that we can study it. Then we will be able to touch on everything. Until then, there will be crises such as the one caused by the 63% reduction in the crab quota for area 12. We knew there would be reductions in the range of 40% to 50%, but not to 63%. We are seeing the impacts of that today.

That is why I would ask those who will continue to speak to this issue to be very careful and to not challenge the good will and efforts of people to defend their constituents. I cannot accept that.

• (1555)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Blais.

Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't think anyone would question anyone's integrity or capacity to defend the interests of their constituents. This business about the power of persuasion.... Of course I think sometimes we all need to be persuaded or it's useful to accept powerful persuasion simply by reminding people that this is a huge economic crisis facing the entire region of eastern Canada—Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P. E.I., and Newfoundland and Labrador. It's part of the discussion of this committee. It's not directed at any one individual or any group of individuals; it's just a reality. It's important, when we talk about this motion and these issues, that we use the power of persuasion to remind each other that these are the issues that impact deckhands and fishermen and communities and off-loaders and others.

I'm not sure if I originally understood that there was some concern about the extent to which the motion was prepared to go. I suggested, in good faith, a move to tone it down and simply use plain language to say that we will study the snow crab industry. If we could get together and decide whether or not this is an important issue to study, in a timely fashion, or it's not, should we include the language or should we not, I'd be prepared, if one of my colleagues were to go forward with an amendment, to listen to the amendment and vote accordingly, or the committee will do as it will. I know I'm very happy and very proud to say that I'm prepared to stand up for the crab fishermen, those who are impacted, and to say that we feel—and I think I'm joined by my colleagues here—this is an important study to undertake and that it should occur immediately.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just so we're clear, I haven't heard anybody propose this amendment, so I assume we're still dealing with the original motion, nor have I heard anybody else speak in favour of this motion besides Mr. Byrne, so I think we're probably at a place where we need to draw this to a question.

Nobody is suggesting that crab fishermen in Atlantic Canada won't be affected by this reduction of quota. When the quota was set last year, industry was told there would very likely be a significant reduction in quota this year, and in effect that has happened. What I would most like to say is that while that is a significant impact, in British Columbia, for example, thousands of people, both harvesters and processors, also depend on fisheries resources. There was little to no commercial fishing of sockeye last year, and the prospects don't look good this year. First nations couldn't even get anywhere close to their normal allocation of food, social, and ceremonial fish. That's on the one hand. On the other hand, those who make their living in aquaculture are feeling threatened by this debate. I think an argument can be made that if we're looking at the livelihoods of people, there is as compelling a reason to look at aquaculture on the west coast as there is to look at crab on the east coast.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. MacAulay.

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

I agree with Mr. Kamp. There are a lot of problems on the west coast. I spent a lot of the last meeting trying to convince people to continue and hear witnesses, and that failed.

With the situation that's before us at the moment, we have a massive reduction in quota—again, a slap in the face to the fishermen and the plant workers. It's right in my area, so I certainly support.... I think it's a responsibility of this committee, when fishermen and plant workers and people involved and millions of dollars are lost to the area—and even more so for my own area.

I think it's so important that this committee find out just what went on, what should be done, what the government can do, or what advice we can give to the government to try to relieve, somewhat, the massive cut in the quota, and also find out why. Bring the people before the committee and find out why all of a sudden we had to slash the quota to such a massive extent.

With that, I would propose

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

• (1600)

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** I believe he's moving an amendment, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes, I understand that; I'm just trying to get what his amendment is. I have what your suggestion was.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** It's basically the same. Do you want me to read it? No. Read it back to me.

**The Chair:** Okay, Mr. MacAulay moved that the motion be amended by substituting the words “snow crab industry” for the words “shellfish industry” and deleting all the words after Quebec and up to Labrador.

Is that correct?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** We're good.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** “And that”, I guess, would be....

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** “And”, of course, before—

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Following “Labrador” it would be—

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** It would be “and that the committee report to the House on its findings.”

**The Chair:** So add the word “and”.

All right. You've all heard the amendment. Mr. MacAulay moves that the motion be amended by substituting....

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ):** Could you reread the entire motion? Before putting the question, I would like it to be reread please.

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Or before we move to discuss it.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right. This is the amended motion that I'm reading. It reads:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

So you've all heard the amendment as moved by Mr. MacAulay.

On the amendment, Mr. Donnelly.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I hear the comments about the work plan, and I believe we're going to talk about that after this amendment and then the amended motion.

In terms of just a quick review, I think it's relevant because in terms of this amendment it's going to affect our work plan, or it potentially could.

We have consulted with the minister. We have had DFO, the head of the management or the department of aquaculture in. We've talked to legal counsel on the inquiry and I think I would also like to go further on west coast aquaculture, because we've heard some different perspectives and I'd certainly like to get to the bottom of that.

I've had a number of calls on the east coast on the snow crab in particular, and I realize this is an emerging issue on the east coast as a result of a recent announcement. So certainly with the amendment, if we were able to limit the number of committee meetings we were

to look at this for this year, I could see our looking at this as a work plan item.

But again, I would like to keep the focus on the aquaculture on the west coast and have a look at this serious and emerging issue. So I certainly could support the amended motion.

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** I will give Mr. Andrews the floor because he has not spoken yet.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Andrews.

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think it's important that we do take a very serious look at the snow crab industry. We're in a crisis. I don't like using the word “crisis”, because we always seem to use that word too often, but we're in a very untenable situation in Newfoundland right now when it comes to an industry where industry, provincial governments, plant workers, everybody is waiting to see what is going to happen to the industry this year. After speaking to fishermen this past week, it's on their minds and it's very important.

I think we really need to have a look at it and do a study and make some recommendations, because the federal government does play a role. It's much like the lobster industry, which we went through last fall. So I wanted to speak in support of the motion by Mr. Byrne.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Andrews.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Quite frankly, I also am prepared to support this motion as amended, but certainly not on the basis of the arguments made by Gerry as to how to proceed concerning integrity. It will certainly not be on that basis. I am well aware that it is important to study this kind of an issue. I also used the word “crisis” on this file, because it is indeed one. It has that scope.

I will give you some figures. Sometimes, we talk about thousands of lost jobs, and at some point in time we end up wondering what that means. We have the impression that when we are talking about 100,000 jobs, it is more important than when we are talking about 50,000 jobs, etc. In the regions, we understand very well that the job numbers are smaller because the population is smaller. I represent a riding of 84,000 people. Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands have a population of 97,000 people. In the Montreal region, there are 2 million people. I just want to give you some perspective: the thousand jobs that are seriously or less seriously affected, as the case may be, in the Gaspé and Magdalen Islands region would equal 24,000 jobs in Montreal.

Therefore, we can well understand that if 24,000 jobs were suddenly to disappear or be at risk of disappearing in Montreal—or 35,000 jobs in Toronto—there would be some committee somewhere that would study that and there would be a great uproar. In fact, we saw that already with the automobile sector. It seems to me that we should be doing the same thing.

That is why the way in which the motion was originally worded was a problem for me, as I was saying. The way it now reads will allow me to be more open to supporting it. In fact, after having discussed it, Gérard and I will also I believe support it. However, it is also with the intention—and it is important to mention this—of adding something that, if memory serves me well, was requested by the crab fishermen from these regions because of this situation. The crab fishermen asked the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to study the issue of management of the crab resource. The official request is either already being put on the commissioner's desk or will be soon. I have not seen the exact wording, but I am well aware that this is what the crab fishermen intend to do.

However, the problem is much broader in scope than that. Yes, this affects the crab fishermen, and it affects all of the communities. It is a problem that any department, a few days before the opening of the season, coldly announces a 63% reduction without talking about any measures. I know that discussions are currently underway, I'm well aware of that, and thank goodness. On that issue, I can say that the minister is doing a good job: she is trying, along with others, to help with costs and lessen the impacts.

However, those impacts are enormous. This story, compared to others such as the aquaculture or sockeye salmon stories or others, these are quite dramatic from certain perspectives because it affects the communities. I am not trying to suggest that one community is more important than another. We have already had the opportunity of studying various issues, and we will continue to do so.

Given the events and the amendments announced for this motion, we will be in a position to support it. I do not know how we will articulate this study, because it is broad and deals with one subject in particular. That is another kind of challenge, but we are already dealing with so many. We will support this motion, and our support is intended to emphasize the issue, because it is important for our communities.

• (1610)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate all of the input from my colleagues on this.

I want to ask you a technical question. I'm interested in moving an amendment to the amendment. Do we need to do it now? How does that happen procedurally?

We're now in a debate on the amendment. Can I amend the amended version?

**The Chair:** It is possible for you to propose a subamendment, but the words of the subamendment must be specific to the words that have either been added to or deleted from the amended motion.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Okay. I will then have to move an amendment after we've dealt with this amendment.

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

I'll call the question.

It was moved by Mr. MacAulay that the motion be amended by substituting the words “snow crab industry” for “shellfish industry”, deleting all the words after Quebec and up to and including Labrador, and adding the word “and”.

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I would now like to move an amendment to the amended version:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, after completing its study on aquaculture on the west coast, study the shellfish industry, etc.

I guess it's not the “shellfish industry”; it's the “snow crab industry”.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Yes. We'll get that down and then read it back.

All right, I think we're getting there.

It's been moved by Mr. Calkins that after the words “Fisheries and Oceans” we insert the words “after completing its study on aquaculture”. So the amended motion would read:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, after completing its study on aquaculture, study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, what I heard Mr. Calkins say was “aquaculture on the west coast”.

**The Chair:** I'll read it one more time.

The amended motion would read:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, after completing its study on aquaculture on the west coast, study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

On the amendment, Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Philosophically, I fully understand exactly what the amendment, or mover, is attempting to achieve. It seems to create a sense of order to our work plan. The reality, however, is that it actually provides for disorder. Let me explain how and why.

It's usually the prerogative of the chair to call witnesses on another topic if, for example, at a point in time on a given Monday or Wednesday afternoon we actually have some time to fill because we don't have any witnesses appearing on the aquaculture issue. We have the option then of being able to call witnesses and to use that time slot, rather than simply not meeting or meeting on some other innocuous topic. The chair would have the ability to fill that time by hearing from witnesses on another study topic.

If we pass this amendment, the chair will no longer have that latitude, because we will have to complete the aquaculture study before we can engage in any discussion on the crab issue. That's exactly what the motion means. So on that basis, not because I don't want to do the proper work on the west coast aquaculture industry, I do not want to impede the capacity of the chair to conduct meetings in an efficient and effective way and, when available or necessary, to be able to use time slots to hear witnesses on other topics.

So I won't be supporting this amendment.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** Are there any further comments?

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** Thank you.

Well, I welcomed the amendment immediately partly because I was concerned about leaving behind any community. I think this is a committee that really tries to listen, and whether it's seals in Monsieur Blais' riding or lobsters on the east coast or salmon on the west coast, there is a sincere commitment here. So I had some misgivings about opposing the motion that actually passed. I like this. The reason I opposed Gerry's motion was we were onto something relevant that really matters to Canadians. Whether you're on the west coast or not, people care about aquaculture and the salmon.

I think there's a cost-effectiveness involved. When we interrupt our flow, we hurt our cost-effectiveness, and I'm always considering how valuable am I to the taxpayer, how valuable we are as a committee to the taxpayer.

And related to those things is focus. So I'm thinking, "What would Canadians want?" I think Canadians would want us to finish what we're involved in, because it's relevant and it's important, and then by all means we should get onto the community that Gerry is talking about.

So I like the amendment, and unless I can be persuaded to the contrary.... Even though it's Mr. Calkins who raised it, I still like the amendment and I'm going to be supporting it.

**The Chair:** Are there any further comments?

Mr. Donnelly.

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

I see where the amendment is going. I think it makes sense. However, I think it does add a bit of complexity now to the situation. I'm hopeful that we get to the discussion of the work plan, planning of future business.

Again, I reiterate that we have accomplished a number of things on our work plan to date, and the remaining items, at least that I've seen on the work plan, are this discussion of the estimates, the Fisheries Act, eco-certification, and of course there is interest on the west coast aquaculture. So I see this as a large number. I mean, given that this motion has been passed and we're now going to look, I believe, at the east coast, I guess I would like to ask a clarifying question: how long do we see these studies taking? Is it possible that we could look at doing these studies and looking at all the other work plan items in one year?

**The Chair:** It's a good question, Mr. Donnelly. Obviously the next part of our business today would be to discuss, based on our meeting the other day, the scope and the timelines that might be involved in that.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know if the mover can clarify what he was thinking in terms of the number of meetings that would be allocated to each, or to at least this, in order to get some clarity, because that's the information I think I would need to be able to support this.

• (1625)

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** One of our colleagues raised the point about efficiency of taxpayers' dollars and the valuable use of the time of members of Parliament. Perhaps he didn't quite understand the context of the specific statement I was making.

If the amendment as currently proposed passes, Mr. Chair, you will not be able to call any witnesses on any other topics, even if we have free time as a committee. One hundred percent of our time has to be spent exclusively on the west coast aquaculture industry, if I'm reading the motion correctly. That is not a bad thing, especially if 100% of our time can be used for west coast aquaculture issues.

Past experience has taught each and every one of us that there are moments and occasions when scheduling conflicts with key witnesses do occur, and that we do indeed have open time, time made available through nobody's fault; it's just that witnesses were not available.

We have ended up cancelling meetings in the past—our regular scheduled Monday or Wednesday afternoon meetings—because we don't have witnesses to hear from. If we pass this motion, it precludes the chair from using that free time to call witnesses on another issue. That's not a very productive use of taxpayers' dollars or MPs' precious time.

When you vote for this—if you're true to those principles—bear in mind that locking us into the study of one issue, and one issue only, may seem very positive in spirit towards the needs of those of our stakeholders in the west coast aquaculture industry, but it's not being very true to the needs of taxpayers, who expect that if we do indeed have free time, we use that time as beneficially, efficiently, and effectively as possible.

I don't think those taxpayers that we're protecting would want to hear we're taking a Wednesday afternoon off because we don't have anybody to hear from because of a scheduling conflict, when we could be doing other business.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That's a bit of a stretch to say this motion somehow precludes the chair from filling a meeting that wouldn't otherwise be filled. We have motions about work plans that list in order the things we do, but then we go completely out of order. I guess in every one of those cases, the chair has kind of violated the motion that the committee has passed. In fact, we've done that already in the last week or two. So I think that's a huge stretch.

On the other hand, if he's concerned about that, and I'm not, then if this amendment passes, as I think it should, and if he wants another amendment to this twice-amended motion along the lines of, "with the understanding that the chair can call witnesses on any other topic if there are open meetings", then we're happy to do that. We're not trying to keep some discussion of this away.

This is about priority for us to start on this study on aquaculture, which is a very serious issue on the west coast, as those of us who are from there know. We've already gotten going and heard some testimony. We've already interrupted our study on eco-certification. We've had many letters from I don't know how many people who want to talk to us on this issue. I don't know how many letters we've received on the crab issue. I haven't seen any yet. There might be some, but I'm quite sure we haven't received the volume we have on the aquaculture issue. I think it behoves us as those who do things in some kind of intentional form and order to carry on with aquaculture.

This motion is simply saying at this point that we are really clarifying our work plan and that if we pass this motion our discussion will be done and for the foreseeable future our order will be giving priority to aquaculture, which we're going to follow with a study on crab. That, to me, makes eminent sense.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

Mrs. O'Neill-Gordon.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to say that, as we all know, this certainly does affect some of my area. I have spoken with fishermen and I have expressed my sympathy for their loss, their reduction, which mainly leads to a loss of workers and of jobs. This is a big concern of mine.

I also have met with the minister. As she has explained to all of us, the fishermen were asked to take a lower quota last year due to the reduction of biomass, and they didn't do that. Therefore, this year there is definitely going to be a bigger impact. I can see that.

I also know that our government is working to provide other means of job sharing and employment benefits, and is working with the fishermen and the processors to help a little bit. It's not as much as we'd like to see done, but it is a lot.

What I don't understand is how this sudden study of the snow crab industry is going to help our fishermen right now any more than what our government is about to do. With our process and our plan all in mind, I prefer to go ahead and finish our plan, then certainly go back to study the snow crab industry and be ready for the next year or whenever we can help them. Personally, I don't see where our dropping everything to study the snow crab is going to do these

fishermen, the workers, or the processors any good, any more than what we can give them now.

For that reason, I'll be voting for the new motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That's probably one for the quotation book.

Could you read the motion, as it would be amended, for the benefit of all committee members?

**The Chair:** This is the amended version of the amended motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, after completing the study on aquaculture on the west coast, study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Would you interpret that to mean that you wouldn't actually have an order of reference to study the snow crab issue until the aquaculture study is completed? That's the way I would read it.

The motion is very specific about timing and about when the crab study can occur. It cannot occur until after the west coast aquaculture study is completed. So in terms of the ability of this committee to use financial resources to call witnesses or to take other measures, you won't have that order of reference if this amended motion passes. That would be my interpretation.

I'd love to hear from those of a higher power. Maybe our clerk could say that I'm not reading this correctly. What would be your interpretation? May I ask the chair or the clerk to provide us with an interpretation?

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Sorry for the long meeting.

From my understanding, upon discussion with the clerk, it does limit our ability to deal with the snow crab industry beyond the study on the aquaculture industry on the west coast. It does not specifically mention other items in the work plan the committee might take into consideration, such as eco-certification. That is something we have on the work plan. So in essence, we could still call witnesses on those items. But as far as this amendment itself, it does limit our study of the snow crab industry, Mr. Byrne.

I hope that provides some clarification.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate you acknowledging that I was correct.

**The Chair:** God bless you.

We'll go to Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I guess this is a process comment, but this motion is wrong on so many levels. Here we are having the same conversation we had the other day. We've reverted right back. We were talking about aquaculture the other day. We were talking about how many witnesses we were going to have and how many meetings we were going to have. That was going to be part of a subcommittee discussion. I understood that was going to happen, which would make a recommendation that we wouldn't follow anyway probably, and here is this motion.

Mr. Blais made a great point when he said we're going to examine the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec with no scope on it, no idea how many meetings we're going to have on this thing, or how many witnesses.

Basically what I see is that with no scope, nothing defined on this, all the words are going to be reinserted by Mr. Byrne, choosing all his witnesses again. That's what's going to be on the witness list, and then we're going to be on this for some period of time.

I think we should deal with some of the other questions at hand, such as how much time should we be spending on aquaculture, and deal with this in a logical order.

Until you can put some scope around it, how could you ever support something foolish like that?

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** I know there are many ways to solve a problem and find different solutions. Last time, we were trying to solve our scheduling problem and having the most enlightened discussion possible, saying that we would do this or that. However, we did not arrive at a consensus.

The only consensus we arrived at was to refer the problems to the subcommittee, to the vice-chair and the chair so that this could be discussed again and they would send us a work plan.

Currently, it seems to me that the work plan that is being created is going against the amendments. That does not solve the problem. If I understand the motion as amended clearly, it would seem that there is a study at risk of being set aside, that of eco-certification. That is what I understand.

We seem to be moving closer to an agreement, which is that we seem to be moving towards two priorities and we must not forget that there is a third on the way. It will happen one day. It is floating in a bubble somewhere above our heads and when it lands, we will have no choice but to deal with it. I'm thinking of the new bill that will be tabled. If it is not tabled before next year, we will then have more time and be able to work better. Currently, I understand that that will help us. It is a different way of doing things. We are moving forward through motions and amendments and in that way we are developing a work plan. However, what I understand in terms of the work plan is that eco-certification is being set aside. It is impossible to do everything at the same time. We also are not immune to all kinds of other situations that might arise. The crab situation has just been produced because of the 63%. God knows and the devil can only guess what is hanging over our heads, apart from the new Fisheries Act. A catastrophe could arise somewhere or some kind of decision could result in our urgently having to work on that issue.

There are two issues that concern the committee, that is aquaculture on the west coast and crab in the east. At least that means we are covering issues from coast to coast. So much the better, that is very Canadian. That will allow us to say that we are concerned about what is going on at home. However, as for the motion as amended, I will not be able to support it. It sets out a work plan and projects our working initially on aquaculture and moving next to the crab situation. From my perspective, if I had a better idea of where we were headed on aquaculture I might be a little more comfortable as far as the current situation is concerned. As far as aquaculture out west is concerned, I'm not too certain where we are headed. If I knew more, I could more easily support the amendment that was moved. However, I know that there are witnesses who will soon be invited to appear. I do not know how many, nor for how long. Aquaculture in the west is a very broad subject.

**Some voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** First of all, everyone will have a turn to speak. If I say something that suits you, you don't say a word. If I say something that does not, you interrupt me. Is that how it works? I want to finish telling you what my thoughts are and then you will have an opportunity to express yours. You cannot interrupt me because you are not satisfied with what I am saying.

The problem is nevertheless the following. I am well aware that as far as the crab issue is concerned, I have the impression that we are heading towards a study that will take a certain amount of time. We will have to in any case determine how much time that will take. If not, as far as aquaculture is concerned, we will carry on meetings for a certain number of weeks and, at some point, we will realize that we will have to invite more witnesses. However, what I understand is that there are two major concerns: aquaculture in the west and crab in the east. In that regard, I believe that each one of the parties will have to present a work plan.

• (1640)

However, I cannot accept the amendment as it is currently presented that plans for a study on aquaculture in the west before studying the crab situation.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kamp.

• (1645)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** So that we're all clear here, it's pretty clear that Mr. Byrne is trying to hijack the agenda of this committee, and he's doing a pretty effective job of it, I have to say.

If this amendment fails, we go back to the main motion; we're never getting to aquaculture. Let's be clear about that. So Mr. Byrne should know that when he goes to the west coast the next time, he needs to tell all the people who write me hundreds and hundreds of letters about aquaculture on the west coast that he was unwilling to spend some time continuing a study we had already begun.

Mr. Blais says he doesn't know what the work plan might be for aquaculture. He's right about that, but we certainly have a better idea of what it might be as opposed to the work plan for snow crab. We have nothing limiting it in terms of time or interest or anything else that I can see here, apart from the comments that have been made. This amendment of Mr. Calkins is just stating a priority: that we continue with what we've started. We've had a number of meetings on it, and this seems to make sense to us on this side.

If that amendment were to pass, we're certainly not opposed—let me say this again—to finding a way to empower the chair, if there's an empty slot, to bring in witnesses on any topic, including crab. I think an amendment could be made to the main motion after amendment to specify that, if it seemed necessary. We'd be happy to do that.

But really, what we're saying on this side is pretty clear. We've started aquaculture, we've abandoned one study already, the work plan is out the window, and we have no idea what we're doing here. A case could be made for returning this whole thing to the steering committee and trying to figure out where we're going, because it looks to me as though we're in chaos at the moment.

But we have this motion on the floor, like it or not, and I think this amendment should be passed so that we give an order to the studies we're going to do, with the understanding—by motion, if necessary—that if there are empty times, when we don't have people to come in on aquaculture, we can bring some in on crab or any other topic. We on this side don't have any difficulty with that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Donnelly.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of points.

I'm going to assume, and I guess I would like some clarification, that snow crab is now on the work plan.

I just want to confirm. If the amendment fails, does the motion fail? The motion, as far as I know.... That's why I wanted clarification.

**The Chair:** We would vote on the amendment to the amended motion, and then we would vote on the main motion as amended.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Mr. Kamp's comments and others just now help to emphasize exactly why I want some clarification on the work plan before deciding on this amendment to the amended motion. I have expressed why I think we need to look at the emerging snow crab issue, based on a decision that was made before we set or talked about the work plan.

There was a question about the focus; for instance aquaculture, what it could be. I proposed a focus at the last committee that was something to consider. I appreciated Mr. Blais's comments at the last committee also, concerning how we might want to deal with aquaculture. I believe the comment was that we should dedicate a number of committee meetings, bring in some witnesses, hear what they have to say, then make a decision as to whether we want to go further. I think that's a very good suggestion.

It also leaves the work plan somewhat open-ended still, even doing that. So my final comment, and I understand the frustration at

the table on this, is that I'm still nervous that the aquaculture issue is not on the work plan, and if it were to be added, we still have to deal with the other items that are on the work plan. I don't know how we're going to get all that accomplished in one year. That's why I asked for the clarification about how many meetings we could dedicate to all these work plan items. Until I get that clarification, it's hard to support something that I would normally support if we had that clarification.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. MacAulay.

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

I've mentioned aquaculture on the west coast many times at this committee, and it didn't get raging support, I would have to say, and I think most people at this committee would have to agree. Last week I spent a lot of time trying to suggest to the committee that we bring witnesses in this week—this day. There were witnesses who could have come. It wasn't accepted by the committee, and now here we are, all of a sudden.

Everybody, I would hope and feel, is trying to do their best for the fishery, but we have a major crisis on our hands in the snow crab fishery. And we have a major problem on the west coast, but it's fair to say that I didn't get a great hearing on Monday at this committee to bring in some witnesses. All of a sudden today it is a crisis.

I believe it is a crisis and I believe we should be looking at it. I just wonder why all of a sudden aquaculture is so much more important today than it was 48 hours ago. I fully agree that it's important. I think members would agree that I pushed the issue as hard as I could. Now this motion comes forward, dealing with a major crisis in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, which if passed without the amendment that's in play at the moment would not mean that we could not call witnesses from the west coast on the aquaculture industry. I fully believe that we should, at any opening we have, bring witnesses from the west coast on the aquaculture industry.

But if we totally ignore a major disaster, concerning which I have a lot of big questions to answer—as to why the quota was cut so much all of a sudden, what happened, what compensations are going to be in place, what happens to the workers.... This is an immediate issue that this committee needs to deal with, and I truly hope that we do; that we deal with the snow crab issue leaving room, at any time that we can, to deal with the aquaculture industry on the west coast. I've spoken in favour of continuing that study more than anybody else here—or as much, at least. But now, to jump on this and to say that we cannot look at a major crisis in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.... I think the committee would not be doing what it should be doing: looking at a major crisis.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Bryne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Fin, just as a clarification, the motion has been amended but not adopted, so we are not yet decided to study crab at all in eastern Canada. That is subject still to a vote. The only thing we've voted on so far is the amended version of the motion.

It's a good thing that these meetings are recorded and transcripts provided, because Fin brought this forward. This is an issue that Fin brought forward because, quite frankly, there wasn't a huge amount of support from the government on a study of B.C. issues at all. That's not hearsay or conjecture; that's all fully recorded in the transcript of this committee when we were discussing this business. In fact, there is no motion to study aquaculture in B.C. There is an order of reference that tells us to call in the director general from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. That's it. There is no order of reference to study B.C. aquaculture yet, because there was no consensus on the part of the government members to do so. We'd actually have to engage in another motion to study B.C. aquaculture issues.

It's just so we're all clear. You know, there's a bit of revisionist history going on here.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** On your side too.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** On our side too. Well, as long as you acknowledge that it's occurring on the Conservative side of the table, because you can't have "too" unless you acknowledge that it's occurring there. There's a lot of revisionist history, and quite frankly it's not coming from this side of the table.

There is no order of reference to study B.C. aquaculture. We have an amendment to a motion on the table that implies that there is, when there's not. Who's deceiving who? I'll go to the B.C. coast any day and say what we did to help out the B.C. stakeholders in this industry. Quite frankly, I would not want to be in someone else's shoes right now.

Since the rhetoric is being raised here, I'm happy to participate, because at least I can actually speak with fact. So let's get on this vote for this. I won't vote for this amended motion simply because it implies that there is an order of reference for this committee to study B.C. aquaculture when there's not. There is nothing of the sort that we've approved. It actually impedes our ability to work as a committee because we cannot call any other witnesses on the other issue that we deem important, which is the crab issue. From my colleague Mr. Donnelly's point of view, as someone from B.C., given the fact that there is not even an order of reference to study the issue of B.C. aquaculture, I certainly would understand why he would not want to support the amendment to this motion. He's quite right to be concerned about whether or not there's any sort of clarity to this whatsoever. So I think we should just get on with this.

I will certainly be supporting a motion to study B.C. aquaculture, because there isn't one yet. In fact, many on this side of the table had to fight to get to the position we're in right now. And the only position we're in right now is to actually call in a senior government official to actually explain it. That's it. That's all we've done. And we had to fight to get it to that point. So let's get on with it.

• (1655)

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Despite everything, slowly we're moving ahead. That's my impression. Perhaps I'm too optimistic. Gerry raised some points that I agree with. I can't agree with everything he said but I do agree with some of his points.

It's true that we started off in aquaculture with a briefing. I think that Randy explained it very clearly last time when he spoke about the sudden arrival of lice, the famous bug. Then there was a controversy with one witness, then another and we got carried away. Last Monday, I think Randy explained very clearly why we got there.

As I was saying, there is a consensus on two items: a study on aquaculture in the west and the snow crab in the east. That's what I see. With respect to eco-certification, even if a study has been proposed and it's in writing, we have to forget it for now. We can't do all three at the same time. I don't think that would be possible.

We have to find a way of doing both these studies. A solution will be found eventually by the famous steering committee. It will once again suggest a work plan and I hope there will be a consensus. I am not sure of that, but that's life. What I'm seeing, and I'm going to try to understand and support this, is that we appear to be moving ahead in two different areas—at two opposite ends furthermore—with respect to Canadian and Quebec priorities. I share those priorities.

Furthermore, to complicate matters—not as much so in the case of the snow crab—because it's a little less complicated to study given that we are more familiar with the parameters—we were told by Commissioner Cohen's staff that we could move ahead in that direction. However, what complicates matters is that there is a much broader study, which is in fact a commission of investigation that is looking at the same problems we are. I think that's what complicates matters. That's also why we still don't know exactly what we're going to study. There's also salmon. Salmon and aquaculture are two completely different things. This is what is complicating matters.

I personally don't have any problems with this. I think that experts from the west are people from the west. And I imagine that those same people think that the experts on the east are people from the east. That's how it works, that's fine. It's sort of a mutual respect. We end up figuring things out.

I also think that crab is important. We will study aquaculture in whatever manner you want us to. I don't think this will be easy but those are the kinds of challenges we face. We'll have to find a way of undertaking two studies at the same time. That's what will happen, or just about. I don't want to trivialize or ignore what is happening in the west for the benefit of what is happening in the east, by saying that one is more important than the other because of some number. That will be our challenge. Undertaking two studies at the same time is almost physically impossible. But apparently, politics is the art of making things possible, or the art of making the impossible possible.

I hope that my comments will elevate the debate in order to reach a consensus. We have to. Otherwise we are going to get more and more stuck and eventually we'll feel threatened by what you're thinking. The opposite is also true. Perhaps you're right. We mustn't hide things from each other. Like it or not, everyone here has to protect their own interests.

• (1700)

The issue being what it is and the tradition in the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans being what it is, we always end up reaching some form of consensus. There are currently two priorities. You will describe yours as I have just described mine, which is the snow crab. I'm more familiar with that. I might have some difficulty in expressing this now but I will listen to what you have to say about the priority of aquaculture. I will go ahead with you. We will try to figure out an agenda or a schedule that will allow us to do this. I don't know how much time is provided for this. That's the worst part of it. That's what I see for now.

It's difficult for me to vote for or against Mr. Calkins' amendment. It will be difficult for me to support it as worded but that doesn't necessarily mean that I am completely disregarding concerns related to aquaculture. I would like to find another amendment that will allow us to do both. I don't want one issue to be dealt with to the detriment of the other. I realize that both are important.

• (1705)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Chair, I don't think I can say anything that hasn't already been said. When I put up my hand, I was going to make a few comments. I have nothing further to add. I'm ready to go to the question.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Simply to correct the record, Mr. Chair, I know Mr. Byrne isn't at the steering committee, and when we worked on this work plan my recollection is that we did talk about aquaculture and B.C. issues. And as has been said a couple of times, I think, we were not clear in our minds whether by moving in that direction while there was a new regulation process going to regulate aquaculture and the Cohen inquiry taking place our presence would be helpful or counterproductive. But we did agree to get an update from the director general for aquaculture on the regulation-making process, and we did hear a motion from Mr. Donnelly, which we supported, to hear from Alexandra Morton. Our side introduced an amendment to that motion to also bring in Dr. Sheppard so we could kind of get a sense about where the issue is. So we've been interested in this issue, and to try to make it sound like we're not insincere, I think.

It seems pretty clear... I don't know how we'd get there at this point, because we've got multiple things on the floor, and I think Mr. Blais was trying to get there as well. We need to accept the fact that we've got the Fisheries Act coming at some point. It won't be that long, I think, and then we'll be interrupted by that, whether we like it or not. Until then, we've got a limited amount of time. We have two

priorities kind of floating around and kind of equally represented, I think. Perhaps it needs to go back to the steering committee to try to work out about how we spend seven or eight meetings, perhaps, not to mention the main estimates, which are still out there, and eco-certification floating around too.

I think we're really confused at this point. So if we could find a way to dispose of these things or find a way to refer this to the steering committee for further study, or a motion to defer this, perhaps, until the steering committee has a chance to figure out how we would possibly do all the things on our plate.... You know, we understand the interest in all of these things, and we have a limited amount of time. Our concern is that, in the midst of a few witnesses, all of a sudden we're onto another topic unrelated to eco-certification, unrelated to the main estimates, unrelated to the Fisheries Act.... We look pretty silly at times going hither and yon without a real plan, and none of us wants to look like that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** I certainly know that for a year I've been pleading for this committee to look at west coast issues, including aquaculture. I always thought there was good support for that.

[Translation]

Maybe I was a Quebecker in another life because I agree with Mr. Blais. I listened to everything he said with great interest and I agree with him. I think that if we set a schedule for these projects we'll be in a better position to decide what we're going to do.

[English]

I don't know the procedure, Chair, for how we do this, or whether it requires that the movers withdraw that so we could ask that our steering committee, with enthusiasm, go back and review a plan to present to us, which would cover aquaculture, crab, eco-certification, main estimates, and the Fisheries Act. I think we'd all be happier and maybe less tense about how we decide what to do. Could we get some guidance on how we might get there, in case there's consensus that that would be a good thing to do?

**The Chair:** Basically we need to deal with the amendment that's on the floor and the amended motion. The motion is amended. Then we'd move into the steering committee on how we do this.

**Mr. John Weston:** The only way to get there would be to withdraw those, or is that not possible? Do they have to be voted on as they are?

• (1710)

**The Chair:** I'm not suggesting they have to be withdrawn. I'm saying we have to deal with them.

**Mr. John Weston:** They have to be voted on.

**The Chair:** They have to be dealt with, whether they're withdrawn or voted on.

**Mr. John Weston:** Okay, so withdrawing them is a possibility.

**The Chair:** That's within their purview.

**Mr. John Weston:** To Mr. Calkins and Mr. Byrne, through the chair, would you be willing to withdraw your motions so that we could just ask that our steering committee come to us with a plan?

Mr. Chair, maybe I could ask, through you, to get their responses on that.

**The Chair:** I believe they've heard your comments, Mr. Weston.

Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since we don't actually have a motion on the table to study any B. C. issues, I would like to ask the clerk, through you, if the motion is actually in order. The motion actually refers to the committee completing a study that it has not actually embarked upon.

**The Chair:** The clerk advises me, Mr. Byrne, that there are some issues with respect to discussing a study that has not been proposed. The amendment to the amended motion, if it were to be changed to refer to "a study" instead of "its study", would certainly make life easier in that sense. There are complications that come from the wording as proposed.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Mr. Chair, I believe I still have the floor.

**The Chair:** You still have the floor.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Thank you.

It's important for everybody to come here with their homework done. I heard a comment a little earlier, I'm not sure from whom, about one step forward and two steps back. Yes, that's probably true right now, because when you oppose an amendment to a motion calling on us to complete a study for which we actually have no terms of reference, and nothing on the table actually to complete, and if we were to go to the Liaison Committee asking for resources to be able to study that particular issue and they ruled this out of order because we have not actually voted any motion on it at committee, yes, I would have my concerns too, that this thing is not necessarily going in the right direction. It is going one step forward, two steps back.

What I'd like to do, given the fact that those who have their homework done should have their motions actually heard and voted upon, and vice versa, is to act accordingly. I hope for the sake of those involved in the B.C. aquaculture industry, and those who have concerns about the recreational fisheries, aboriginal fisheries, commercial fisheries, and outfitting businesses in the sport fishery and recreational fishery, that people will come to this table somewhere down the line with their homework done. But they haven't shown up yet.

So let's just get on with this and get this done, and when a motion comes forward for us to actually study B.C. aquaculture, I'll certainly be voting for it. But right now, we have decided there is one issue that is of importance, the east coast crab fishery. There is an actual motion on the table to be able to deal with that.

I'll just give some assurance to those who may have a passion equal to mine that we should look at the B.C. aquaculture industry that they will have my support.

So let's just get this done and move on, and if it requires the steering committee to get some work done, we will let the steering committee do its job, but right now the committee is meeting and is doing its job.

●(1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Quite frankly, Gerry, you're not doing yourself a favour.

Mr. Chairman, I don't think Gerry is doing himself any favours by saying what he did. I'll be frank. I'll continue to be so whether you like it or not. You heard me: whether you like it or not.

Perhaps I'm just too tired to understand everything, but the tone of that last statement was arrogant. It doesn't make sense. He said: "You don't do your homework. Some people do their homework. I do my homework" and so on. What is this? Sometimes you improvise, you do your homework in other ways. I don't like that tone.

Let's get to the bottom of this now. I still see two priorities: aquaculture in the west, that we'll have to define at some point, and snow crab in the east. Those are the two priorities. I've forgotten about eco-certification, we can't do that study. Unless you can convince me that there's a way of doing three studies at the same time—we already have two to do—I know that the steering committee is going to have problems in submitting a plan to you. However we'll do it. We'll find a way of submitting a plan.

It's 5:20 p.m. and in 20 minutes the bells are going to ring. There is perhaps something else that we could do with the most recent amendment. It would allow us to undertake a study on aquaculture in the west. I don't know if there's a procedure that would allow us to suspend a vote on Mr. Calkins' proposed amendment, so that we could come back to the main motion on the snow crab study and vote on that for once and for all. I guarantee that I will support another study that will be called a study on aquaculture in the west. I don't know exactly what it will be called.

Regardless, we have to stop speaking like this. If you are going to continue in this manner, you can be absolutely certain that that is not how you're going to win any points. It's possible that at times I am not right, but if that is the case tell me.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Blais.

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** I'm wondering if there could be a motion to adjourn, with the understanding that we're hoping our steering committee will come back with a plan that we would vote on these things in a way that would accommodate both studies, which everyone seems to want to do anyway. I don't know my procedure, obviously, as well as the clerk, but I'm guessing a motion to adjourn takes precedence.

I move to adjourn.

●(1720)

**The Chair:** Mr. Weston, were you proposing a motion to adjourn?

**Mr. John Weston:** I was.

**The Chair:** The clerk advises me this is a dilatory motion that we need to vote on, if the motion is to adjourn.

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** State your point of order, Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** I understand that the amendment has been ruled out of order by you. I should say, the sub-amendment has been ruled out of order.

**The Chair:** I'll hear from Mr. Calkins first.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Chair, I would ask for some clarification on this issue.

I have a lot of documentation in my binder that I bring with me every time to the fisheries committee. In this binder I have a document prepared by the Library of Parliament, prepared for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, "Impact of the British Columbia Supreme Court decision regarding jurisdiction over the regulation of aquaculture". I have information from British Columbia on the executive summary of sea lice management strategy and so on, and all of the witnesses that we've already heard from in regard to this issue.

At some point in time, this committee would have accepted a work plan in a report from the subcommittee coming back to this committee. Is that not true? Is that not the case? Because in that work plan—and if the work plan is consistent—the work plan had scheduled dates, which would imply a study on aquaculture.

**The Chair:** The situation is that we had a report that this committee would receive briefings from the director general from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with respect to aquaculture, and from representatives from the Cohen commission, to appear before this committee. Subsequently, we had a motion that was placed on the floor by Mr. Donnelly, as amended by Mr. Kamp—I believe it was—to hear from further witnesses, that being Ms. Morton and Dr. Sheppard. But as far as the work plan indicating a study, it has gone no further than what I've indicated.

I do have to rule that the amendment is invalid because it does refer to a study that does not exist. So the amendment, as proposed by Mr. Calkins, is not valid. Therefore, we move back to the motion, as amended.

Mr. Allen.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Mr. Chair, do I still have the floor?

**The Chair:** No, the floor has been gone for a while for you.

Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess I'm going to go back to my point here of when we talk about the scope of what we're going to try to do, Mr. Blais pointed out that we can probably do two things at once. I'm not sure we can walk and chew gum at the same time, but maybe we can.

We have started hearing witnesses on west coast aquaculture, and I guess the concern I have is implied in this motion, before I propose an amendment: if this motion is passed, does this mean it will go to the subcommittee to prepare a work plan? Because I'm not reading that's the intent here. And would that work plan that the subcommittee is going to do also reflect aquaculture so that the subcommittee would actually develop that? If it doesn't, then I want to propose an amendment to officially put this on the board.

**The Chair:** Just a moment, please.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to propose the amendment. What the amendment would say is.... I'm going to read the whole thing through:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec and west coast aquaculture based on a work plan developed by the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure that would subsequently be approved by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and that the committee report to the House its findings and conclusions.

I'll just point out that this would officially recognize aquaculture as a study, and the subcommittee would then decide how we would blend these two things together and get them done in the time allotted. Because right now I don't know the scope we have for either one of these two studies.

● (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Byrne, you had a point of order.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Is that in order to require or commit the committee to some unknown quantity or conduct of activity subject to the steering committee? It appears that we're binding the committee to an undefined steering committee.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** No, it says "and subsequently be approved".

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** The steering committee decision actually has to be approved by the committee.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** That's what it says.

**The Chair:** Mr. Byrne, as to Mr. Allen's amendment, it is in order because what is being proposed is something that would have to be part of a work plan that would be approved by this committee. As to whether it comes forward in a report from the subcommittee, all reports from the subcommittee have to be approved by the committee as a whole. The amendment as proposed by Mr. Allen would be in order.

It has been moved by Mr. Allen

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec and west coast aquaculture based on the work plan developed by the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure that would subsequently be approved by the full committee, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

I call the question on the amendment as moved by Mr. Allen.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** We now need to vote on the amended motion, which is basically what we read. The amended motion now is:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study the snow crab industry in Atlantic Canada and Quebec and west coast aquaculture based on the work plan developed by the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure that would subsequently be approved by the full committee, and that the committee report to the House on its findings and conclusions.

I call the question on the amended motion.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Unanimously approved. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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