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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, December 7, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Rodney Weston**



## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Tuesday, December 7, 2010

•(0855)

[English]

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

We have some committee business to attend to before we move forward with our draft report.

Last week Mr. Donnelly served a notice of motion. You have the motion in front of you.

I will ask Mr. Donnelly to move his motion at this point in time.

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

I'd like to move the motion that's in front of you. I believe it has been circulated, and everyone has a copy in both French and English.

Do you want me to read out the motion?

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** The motion reads as follows: That, in light of the federal government's plan to explore for oil and gas in Arctic waters, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee conduct a study on that matter at its earliest opportunity, calling witnesses to comment on, among other things, the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution in Arctic waters.

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

You've all heard the motion. You have the wording in front of you in both official languages. On the motion, is there any discussion?

Mr. Allen.

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

It will be a surprise to no one here that I'm going to say that I will not be supporting the motion as presented, for three major reasons.

First, there's a little bit of inaccuracy in the actual motion as its worded.

Second is the scope of this motion and where it possibly would go, especially as it relates to committee business, since we have a lot of committee business on hand, including our crab report.

Third is the duplication with what I believe is already going on with the National Energy Board, Mr. Chair, as we found out in some natural resources testimony of November 2, 2010.

With respect to the inaccuracies, the first line says "in light of the federal government's plan to explore for oil and gas", but I don't think it's the federal government that's going to be exploring or doing natural gas exploitation. Between INAC and the NEB, of course there will be a decision on whether they will approve it or not, or whether they'll let any company go forward in Arctic waters, so I don't think that is really accurate.

The motion also says we'd be "calling witnesses to comment on, among other things", which is, I think, a little bit of a scope statement that could open this up to a fairly broad hearing, as opposed to the next line, which says "the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard". If we were looking at this from a fisheries committee that dealt specifically with the coast guard aspects of this, then I could probably be convinced to send it to the subcommittee to actually deal with it as part of our future agenda.

The third thing relates to the testimony of Mr. Gaëtan Caron, chair and chief executive of the National Energy Board, given on November 2, 2010, to the natural resources committee. He talked about how the NEB is now undertaking an Arctic review that would be conducted in three phases. I will quote from his testimony in a few places:

On September 20 the NEB announced that the Arctic review would be conducted in three phases. The purpose of phase one, which is in progress, is to gather the best available knowledge about offshore drilling in an Arctic environment.

Phase two of the review will give the participants an opportunity to examine the information collected, to ask questions, and to provide their comments on the information. Then there will be meetings, and then the NEB will be proposing a set of requirements.

Finally, we announced that we would make up to \$300,000 in funding available to assist participants with travel costs related to attending phase two meetings.

So it will be a very inclusive process.

One of the topics the NEB will examine during the review is the area of emergency response.

So this review is going to be undertaken. As committee members are aware, the permitting process includes INAC and it includes NEB for anything Arctic. This review is going on, which will be much more comprehensive than anything we could ever undertake as a fisheries committee.

So unless Fin wants to tailor this a little bit to say that we look strictly at something from the coast guard perspective, and look at it as a very tight scope, then I think all we're doing is muddying the waters for our work plan as the fisheries committee, and I suggest that we vote this down.

•(0900)

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

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to raise two points. A resident of my riding has already shown a great deal of interest in fishing in the Arctic Ocean. When we were researching it, we learned that a great many departments have jurisdiction in this area, including the Privy Council Office, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Department of the Environment, the Department of National Defence, and Natural Resources Canada. Of course, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans also has some jurisdiction in the matter, but it's only a small part of the whole.

I also think that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans does not have the authority to act on a lot of the issues presented here, even though I am really interested in the Arctic issue. I do not think that it's up to us to do this kind of research.

Regretfully, I will not support Mr. Donnelly's motion.

[English]

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

Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** I was going to try to speak in English, but I don't want to upset you at this point. I would like to applaud the fine efforts that Mr. Weston and others, like Mr. Allen, have made in speaking French. I appreciate it very much.

I can accept the way the content is being delivered, but the content itself is something else. We can agree on the format, but the content is another story.

I am willing to support Mr. Donnelly's motion, for various reasons, and I invite the committee members to expand its scope. The Arctic waters are one thing, but we also need to consider the ecosystem of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There, too, we are talking about exploring and developing everything oil- and gas-related. It's not an environmental concern, but simply the concern of one member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. It worries me a lot.

The day before yesterday, I was watching a show on Radio-Canada called *Découverte*, which I recommend you watch. Every time I do, I learn something about our planet, how it works, and so on. In this episode of *Découverte*, they were talking about the issue of exploring for and developing oil and gas. The person representing the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board candidly, and very simply, explained that, for them, there is no question of drilling or requiring a relief well when oil development is being done. He said quite simply that it wasn't necessary.

But I don't live on another planet. I suppose that this person and the board do not live on another planet, either. They must surely be aware of what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. The catastrophe happened precisely because of the lax attitude of government organizations, the lax attitude of the private company that, claiming

to have the best technology, worries very little about what might happen in the event of a catastrophe. Those responsible say that their instruments and tools are the best in the world, and that there is no need for a backup plan should an accident happen.

Furthermore, we visited a fish hatchery on Vancouver Island quite recently, a very small, family-run business with limited means. We're not talking about the same means as BP that, through its lax attitude, allowed a catastrophe to occur. No, this small company not only has an A system of generators, since it doesn't have electricity at its facilities, it also has a B system, a C system and a D system; in other words, it has four systems in case one of them fails. This just shows that small is beautiful.

I would like big businesses to share this concern. Unfortunately, a big business's reason for being is to make more and more money, and one way to make more and more money is to take short cuts.

● (0905)

With fishery resources, when we take environmental shortcuts, we find ourselves in situations like the one we're in now. As for British Petroleum's well and the spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the excuse given was that they were saving \$200 million. But that incident led to a catastrophe that was like an earthquake, a world war, or I don't know what, for the resources and the fishers. That's what really gets my goat.

I hate to say it, but it's undoubtedly a good thing that this catastrophe happened because it gave us a wake-up call. It let us see what could happen. We know it, and everyone else knows it very well too: the Gulf of St. Lawrence is much smaller than the Gulf of Mexico. It's scientifically proven. So an incident like this, one that we are not immune to, would have huge repercussions.

I can't talk much about the actions of the previous government because I don't know much about it. I am more familiar with the current government, and I have the impression that it is eager to develop our Arctic resources. I'm thinking here about the Arctic waters. This eagerness really sets my teeth on edge. It's like someone who comes in saying that something must be done immediately, that there is no time to wait because of this or that. Taking shortcuts is dangerous. I am going to listen to the debate, but I am telling you right now that I am in favour of this motion and that I intend to broaden its scope so that it also covers the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The National Energy Board has a job to do. In my opinion, it is not doing its job very well. We also have a job to do, specifically thinking about everything that might happen, checking that we have the right tools to handle the situation, to help our communities, and protecting sustainable fishing and the principle of resource conservation. We need to be concerned about all these issues. But the National Energy Board doesn't have them in its sights or on its radar, not in the slightest. What's its role? I think that it wants to provide conditions that will allow us to chip away at the resources more and more. What am I going to do? I'm going to fight with all my might against sacrificing the fish industry for the benefit of the petroleum industry, for all the reasons you well know. There is no doubt about it.

I'm also wondering about the Coast Guard, about its tools and how it proceeds. You'll recall that this committee has had the opportunity to have some witnesses testify in the past few months. After the incidents in the Gulf of Mexico, I asked, as you did, I think, the people from the Coast Guard and Fisheries and Oceans what contingency plan had been prepared for an incident like that. Unfortunately, the answer was far from satisfactory. By and large, these people told us that they already have all kinds of tools to deal with this kind of situation. But these tools don't measure up.

Surely you know what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. As you can see, the methods used by the government of the United States, the most powerful country in the world, whose means are far greater than those of Canada, were, shall we say, prehistoric. We'd do just as well using shovels on the beach to clean up the oil. What are we coming to?

• (0910)

We set up devices or something to protect the shoreline. We tried to contain the oil spill. We put dispersant and chemicals in the water to make sure that the oil was less harmful. It doesn't make sense to have gotten to this point.

For all these reasons, I am strongly in favour of a motion like that one. I sort of regret not having proposed it before. I feel it is important to have a debate on the issue. Despite what Mr. Weston might think, the National Energy Board is not God almighty, far from it.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** *Merci, monsieur Blais.*

Ms. Murray.

[Translation]

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will follow the example of John Weston, my colleague from West Vancouver, by trying to present my point of view in French.

I want to say that I support the motion presented by Mr. Fin Donnelly. It's something that the leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Ignatieff, had already...

This morning, it's still too early to continue in French.

• (0915)

[English]

Mr. Ignatieff has already committed to a moratorium on oil and gas exploration in the Arctic for just the reason

[Translation]

that the protection is not quite reliable enough, that the experience in the Gulf of Mexico showed us that the methods of cleaning up pollution caused by oil haven't really changed in the past 10 years.

[English]

We haven't managed to move forward with better means and mechanisms to clean up the oil and to protect from this kind of blowout and spill. That became clear in the Gulf of Mexico disaster.

So in June Mr. Ignatieff committed to holding off on oil and gas exploration and activities in the Arctic until such time as we can be assured that the risks are negligible. We need to always keep in mind that if we were to have a disaster in the Arctic or on the north Pacific coast of British Columbia as serious as the one that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico, or in Prince William Sound in Alaska, the Exxon Valdez, we would never be able to go back. We will have changed our shoreline, our coast, our environment forever, and we will have changed Canada for the worse.

That risk is far too huge to take without being very cautious.

[Translation]

Developing natural resources is a Canadian right and privilege. It is important for our current and future economy. But it is important not to be in a hurry about it. It needs to be done gently and slowly to protect the environment and all the coastal jobs that depend on a healthy environment. Oil spills are very harmful to maintaining a region's jobs and sustainable economy. We are still witnessing this in the Gulf of Mexico and in Alaska. Jobs are being lost as we speak, and they can never be restored because of the water pollution and oil spills.

For all these reasons, I will support the motion.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Murray.

Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm just very concerned about where this committee is going in terms of a lack of focus. I haven't been on the committee very long, but we've been trying to work on this snow crab report for as long as I've been here. It hasn't been going very fast, and I'm concerned about the fishing industry. It seems like whatever the issue of the day is, another resolution or motion comes forward to study it.

I'm concerned, first of all, about what direction of the committee we're going to stay focused on. If the opposition parties in the coalition get together and vote whatever motion they want to bring forward, that's fine, but I'm simply trying to think of the productivity of the industry we're supposed to be focused on. That's my first point.

Second is the issue of going to the subcommittee. I don't know if they'll decide where the priority is, because I know that Ms. Murray has a motion that's been put forward. I don't know whether that is to be debated, so we have to figure out what our work schedule is.

Third, if we're worried about tanker traffic, then why aren't we studying it on the east coast as well? I think it's pretty hypocritical to say only the west coast. If you're coming from British Columbia and are concerned about the economy, you should be concerned about the environment on the east coast as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Shory.

• (0920)

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** I thought about trying to speak in French. Unfortunately, I couldn't come up with some of the words.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** At any rate, I do have a couple of quick comments on this.

To my understanding, the federal government has not specifically laid out any plans to explore oil in the Arctic yet.

On the other issue, when the motion says “among other things”, that confuses me a little bit more. What are those “other things”? To my understanding, it would be wide open to any and every kind of discussion in any area that we could imagine. I don't know if we'd be able to finish this study in years if we started talking about other things.

Maybe it would help me to understand it better if Fin made it some specific study—for example, if he says he is concerned about Canadian Coast Guard problems; that would help.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any other comments or questions?

Mr. Donnelly.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Mr. Chair, I would comment on the last point, about what the study is focused on.

It does refer to “on that matter”, referring to the first part of the sentence, which talks about the plan to “explore for oil and gas in Arctic waters”.

This motion is about the department's ability to address any particular spills, environmental spills, oil and gas spills. It's just in terms of calling witnesses to comment on “among other things”; that specifically relates to that study.

Hopefully that clarifies the concern about what the study would focus on.

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

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Given what I just said, I would like to present an amendment. I also recognize the value of Mr. Allen's argument—I think it was him. It's true that it is not the federal government as such that is developing the deposit. So, I would cross out “federal government”. Also, following “in Arctic waters”, I would add “and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence”. In addition, at the end of the motion,

where it says “in Arctic waters”, I would add “and the Gulf of St. Lawrence”.

My amendment aims to clarify the motion and broaden its scope, of course. So, we would remove the reference to the federal government and add the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the appropriate places.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blais, we'll just hold for a second here while the clerk finishes making the changes and we make sure they're accurate.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** It's less complicated than the last time, with our table. I hope that the amendment that I am presenting is much less complicated.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes.

It has been moved by Monsieur Blais that the motion be amended by deleting the words “federal government”, and adding the words “and the Gulf of St. Lawrence” after the words “Arctic waters”. And we have to add an “s” to make “plan” plural, otherwise the context would not be proper.

So the amended motion would read as follows:

That, in light of the plans to explore for oil and gas in Arctic waters and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee conduct a study on that matter at its earliest opportunity, calling witnesses to comment on, among other things, the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution in Arctic waters and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

You've heard the amendment brought forward by Monsieur Blais.

Are there any comments or questions on the amended motion?

Mr. Kamp, and then Mr. Cuzner.

• (0925)

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

I understand the intent of the amendment, but if the primary purpose of this whole motion—and there may be others—is to take a look at the Canadian Coast Guard's ability and capacity to deal with oil spills that may well happen in the Atlantic and on the east coast and the Pacific coast, as well as the Arctic waters, it seems to me that if we want a motion to say let's bring in the Canadian Coast Guard to talk about it...because there has been an internal audit that's raised some deficiencies, and we certainly acknowledge that. Let's bring them in to see how they are prepared to handle oil spills, wherever they might happen. We're not opposed to that kind of thing

So now we're just worried about the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Arctic, and not the Atlantic or the Pacific? The amendment is actually constricting it more than I think it needs to be.

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

Mr. Cuzner.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** I don't disagree with Randy's comments that this probably could be a broader-scope study. I also share Ron's concerns with the focus of the committee.

Reading through some of the testimony that has come up during the course of the crab study, the greatest frustration that the crab fishers face is sometimes getting information when it's too late to act on it, or it's too late to respond to, or whatever. If we want the recommendations from the crab study to really count for anything, it's imperative that we have this thing ready to go in a timely fashion.

I understand and support the intent of the motion, and even the broader scope for something like this, but I still think it's imperative for the committee to finish up the two pieces of work that are front and centre. I have groups contacting me on a pretty regular basis looking for us to take on their cause, or to bring their issue before this committee. I'm sure we all do. My piece has been that we want to get the job done on the crab fishery first. If we continue to mount things in front of that, then I think it becomes a problem and our position becomes a little less defensible.

I hate to bail out on the steering committee, but perhaps I could put to the steering committee that if we want to get something done, I think it would make sense to maybe put forward a broader motion. I still think our priority has to be getting the other two studies completed.

• (0930)

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

Mr. MacAulay.

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

I've been on this committee for a while, and we've worked very well. I think we just have to be a little careful of continually going off in new directions. I agree completely with Rodger and support what he had to say: we have to complete something.

There are a lot of issues, but something has to happen here; or perhaps it has to happen at the steering committee or somewhere. This is an important committee that does good work, if we do it. There are too many different directions we seem to be heading in. And they're all good directions. Are we just going to go in different directions, or are we going to focus?

It's concerning for me at the moment, truly concerning.

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

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** I share those concerns as well, and I agree with Rodger and Lawrence.

My assumption was that, in whatever form, this motion, if it should pass, would then be referred to the steering committee to figure out when that earliest opportunity is. I certainly hope that the earliest opportunity is not until after we've finished at least the snow crab report, if not something on the aquaculture industry as well.

I think we all agree that we may have a tendency to be a bit scattered if we're not careful here. If this motion were to pass in,

perhaps, this amended form, it might well be that the steering committee agrees that they want to expand the scope slightly and kind of reword whatever the study is, without being completely tied to only looking at the Gulf of St. Lawrence or Arctic waters.

I think we need to agree as a committee that our priority needs to be this snow crab report, then the aquaculture report after that.

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

Mr. Donnelly.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** I wanted to add my comment about the wording in the motion.

I included "at its earliest opportunity" for a reason, and that is exactly what's being discussed. I agree with the issues about focus. It was fully my intention that this would, if approved, go to the subcommittee for determining where on the work plan it would fall.

I wanted to add that when Mr. Byrne brought forward his motion earlier this year, on the snow crab study, I was certainly supportive of that issue. It was an emerging issue that came up at the time because of the minister's announcement. Although it wasn't on the work plan, I thought it was something we needed to support, which we did. I think that was a good thing.

I was very focused on the Pacific salmon at the time. With the collapse of the sockeye salmon on the west coast last summer, I thought that this needed significant attention. I brought the issue forward and the committee discussed it and agreed that it would become part of the work plan, which was a good thing. We've engaged in that study in terms of looking at aquaculture and the impact of sea lice on wild Pacific salmon.

When those two items came up, they were put on the work plan. I supported Gerry when he brought forward this motion on the snow crab. I think it is important to finish that study. We're very close to it, and that was exactly why I put "at its earliest convenience", assuming that we would complete the study or get it to a point where we feel confident that we have recommendations to deal with the issues that came up at the start of the snow crab season, so that we have something to bring in before next year's snow crab season. That's about now, so we need to get that done. I agree with that.

I'm hoping that if this goes forward, the subcommittee will be able to determine where on the work plan it should fall.

Thank you.

• (0935)

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

Ms. Murray.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Chair, I'm assuming we're speaking to the amendment proposed by Mr. Blais.

**The Chair:** You're correct.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** In my view, the issues surrounding the Arctic have some unique features: the ice, the risk to boats or oil platforms of moving ice packs, the extreme cold, the distance from populated areas, the scarcity of equipment, the difficulty of rescues, the problems with an oil spill cleanup. To me, the Arctic has a distinct set of problems, some of which are similar, but some of which are different from the problems we find in other Canadian waters.

As to Mr. Blais's amendment to include the Gulf of St. Lawrence, I think that once we start to include non-Arctic waters, there is nothing to keep us from studying all waters. A counter-argument might be that there isn't a formal plan to explore for oil and gas on the west coast, but there is no formal limitation on such explorations. In fact, the provincial NDP party, not that long ago, had a premier that was a big proponent of exploring for oil and gas on the British Columbian coast.

I understand and I respect Mr. Blais's concern for the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but I think either this is about the Arctic, because of its unique features, or it is a more general study that includes all Canadian waters.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Murray.

Are there any further comments or questions on the amendment?

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** In light of the discussions, I would welcome with open arms a subamendment that would say not Arctic waters and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but of Canadian waters. Besides, Mr. Kamp said so himself that, when the subcommittee has to make a decision on this issue, it will probably want to broaden the scope of the motion to include all waters.

In fact, I have a priority and, at the end of the day, I could talk solely about the waters around the riding of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, but I am willing to address these incidents from a Canadian perspective. Basically, I think that a subamendment that would cover Canadian waters would be appropriate.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** What?

**The Chair:** Oh, sorry.

[*Translation*]

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Could you please repeat that? You will understand that it's not a problem for me to repeat a sentence.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I asked François how this impacted the seals.

Thank you, Monsieur Blais.

Ms. Murray.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** I would like to propose a subamendment, if that's the correct form. I would begin with, "That, in light of existing and potential plans to explore for oil and gas in Canadian waters", and then the rest of it would be the same.

● (0940)

**The Chair:** The clerk informs me that this would be in itself another amendment, because what it does.... We'd have to defeat—or not—the existing amendment and then propose a new amendment.

In other words, we'd have to call the question on the amendment.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Then I would respectfully encourage the chair to call the vote on the amendment proposed by Monsieur Blais. Then I will put forward another amendment.

**The Chair:** Is this on the existing amendment, Mr. Weston?

**Mr. John Weston:** Yes.

Let me say very broadly that I think the common ground.... Everybody here in the room would say we all are interested in the Arctic. We all are interested in oil. We are all interested in getting some things done so there's a lasting legacy.

Whether it's a subamendment or an amendment, to the subcommittee, please, when you get this, if it passes, focus like a laser beam on what are our priorities so that we can get something done, and get something out of our committee into the hands of people who can really do something with it.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** There's been some discussion here today about the subcommittee. I want to point out that the subcommittee makes recommendations to this committee, and this committee approves the subcommittee's plan that comes forward.

**Mr. John Weston:** Yes, and then we don't follow it.

**The Chair:** Well, that I just won't say.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** I would like to understand something. Why is the subamendment out of order?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** That's because it's not a subamendment, it's an amendment. It changes your amendment. It completely changes your amendment.

So it's not a subamendment, it's an amendment to the motion, is that correct?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** I completely disagree, but it's no big deal. It's not the end of the world. But I am willing to withdraw my amendment, no problem, and I will support the new one.

But I would simply like to add a comment about following our agenda, our work plan. We mustn't forget that Mr. Donnelly's motion says "at its earliest opportunity". That prevents us from going off in all directions. It in no way means that this matter will become the day's new priority. It just means making a little adjustment.

As for the snow crab study, thanks to the superb cooperation of our friends opposite, I think that we'll be able to finish it.

[*English*]

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

Monsieur Blais is proposing that he withdraw his amendment. In order for this to be possible, there would need to be unanimous consent of the committee.

Is there unanimous consent? All right.

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** Now, Ms. Murray, it would be in order if you wanted to present an amendment.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** I'd like to propose an amendment that would begin the motion as follows: "That, in light of current and potential plans to explore for oil and gas in Canadian waters, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee".

The remainder would be as it is in the original motion by Mr. Donnelly.

**The Chair:** Would that be removing "Arctic" at the end of the paragraph, or removing it altogether?

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Thank you for correcting that.

Yes, there would be a period after the word "pollution".

**The Chair:** Ms. Murray has suggested an amendment to remove the words "the federal government's plan" and replace them with "current and potential plans," adding an "s" on the end of "plan," and removing "Arctic" and replacing it with "Canadian" before "waters," and removing the words "in Arctic waters" at the end of the paragraph. That's it.

So the amended motion would read as follows:

That, in light of current and potential plans to explore for oil and gas in Canadian waters, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee conduct a study on the matter at its earliest opportunity, calling witnesses to comment on, among other things, the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution.

That is the amendment brought forward by Ms. Murray.

Are there any questions, comments, or concerns with the amendment?

Mr. Allen.

• (0945)

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

I guess I'm glad we're not running a private business here. We would all be bankrupt pretty soon. One of the things you learn when you're managing projects is that you plan the work and you work the plan. We're not very good at planning the work. We entertain all these other things.

I'm hopeful...and I imagine what will end up happening is that this will go to the subcommittee, but... I would prefer us to tighten it down a little bit to the coast guard. I'm probably not going to win that one anyway, so I'm not prepared to debate it much longer. I've already lost an hour of my life that we could have devoted to the crab report, as Mr. Cuzner and Mr. MacAulay have said.

I guess I'm just going to not support this on principle...that we keep adding these motions in, and I'm hopeful that if it does pass and go to committee, we'll have the respect of the committee, until we're

at least finishing the crab report, that we don't entertain any more work on behalf of committee.

I do appreciate what Rodger is saying: we have a lot of people asking us to do work, and potentially we will have the Fisheries Act too, and that will just throw the cat amongst the pigeons at that point in time.

I hope we'll have the respect of committee that there will be no more motions.

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

Mr. Shory.

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** Thank you.

I agree with Mike. I'm new on this committee, but virtually every second or third week we get a new and interesting motion. We definitely lose some time to focus on the work we have already undertaken.

I'm looking at the last part of the amended motion, where it says "the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution".

I'd just like the clerk to clarify whether there is any recent audit with all this broader scope. Or was there a recent audit only on Arctic waters?

**The Chair:** François.

**Mr. François Côté (Committee Researcher):** The motion refers to an internal audit at DFO that was published in March 2010. It was looking at the broader picture nationally. They concluded that there were problems with the coast guard functioning as regional units and there were no national standards for the environmental response.

I may want to point out also that, as we speak, there's a lock-up on the Hill. The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development is about to table a report that will talk about oil spills and the response to oil spills by the Canadian government.

**The Chair:** Thank you, François.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** I am going to try to keep my calm, even though Mr. Allen's comments are insulting.

Your comments are insulting. It is insulting to hear that we are wasting our time discussing something democratically—listen to me, please, or show some respect, at least—and respectfully. I am never wasting my time when we debate something. Never. It is highly insulting to me to hear someone say that we are wasting our time in the last hour. In the name of democracy, it's dreadful to hear that. This isn't a dictatorship—unless you want it to be, but I certainly don't. I would fight every day, every minute, in every way imaginable to make sure that this is not a dictatorship.

So, if debating topics that concern us, like oil development in Canadian waters, is a waste of our time, I would like you to please repeat that into a microphone outside, in public. In fact, no one would accept such a statement. It's insulting toward what we are discussing here. In debate, I always show the greatest respect for the attitudes and positions that you adopt. It's your position, not mine, but I respect it. I would never dare say that you are making us waste our time when you disagree with a position put forward by another member or by me. In the same way, I don't do that when a member of the Liberal Party or the NDP presents a position that I feel makes no sense. If it's my opinion, I'm going to express it, but I'm always going to respect the proposal in question. What you just said is disrespectful and insulting.

Furthermore, this isn't a private business, and that's a good thing. I have nothing against private businesses and it's great that they exist. But this is the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, not something else.

If you want to change things, hold an election, seek a majority government and try to make the change. Until then, I will never allow myself to be told that I am wasting the time of the committee and the people who listen to me when I debate an issue respectfully. If I was disrespectful in doing so, I would understand, but I think that Mr. Donnelly, myself and everyone who has spoken so far has been respectful.

● (0950)

[English]

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

Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not going to enter that debate. I just think it was taken out of context.

I support the spirit and intent of the motion. Just from hearing what our analyst said about a report coming later today, I think it would be prudent for the committee to maybe wait to hear the results of that report.

I move to defer the motion.

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

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** Further to what Mr. Blais said, I would like to say that...

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Kamp, on a point of order.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I thought I heard a motion here.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** I moved to defer. It's not debatable.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** It's on the floor at this point.

**The Chair:** I apologize. I missed that.

Sorry, Mr. Cannan, I did miss your motion to defer.

Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

So Mr. Cannan has moved a motion to defer.

Is the exact motion that the debate now be adjourned?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** No, it's just to defer until Thursday, to our next committee meeting.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**The Chair:** Sorry for the delay.

Mr. Cannan has moved that the motion be deferred until Thursday. That takes precedence over the amendment that we were debating at this point in time. It is a debatable motion that the motion be deferred until Thursday.

So on the question, are there any questions or comments?

Ms. Murray.

● (0955)

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** I don't support that at all, because we just will enter into the same conversation. I think we were very close to having a vote on my amendment to the motion, then a vote on the motion, and then we'd be done with it and on with the snow crab.

To bring up this whole topic and discussion so that we have to revisit it all over again would be just a big waste of time, which I think all members are trying to avoid.

So I'd suggest we just get on with the vote, put it behind us, and get back to snow crab.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Murray.

Monsieur Lévesque.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** As for Mr. Cannan's opinion on the matter, if and when the report, which will probably be ready Thursday—isn't that right, Mr. Côté?—responds to the issue that the motion currently presents, the subcommittee will make a decision on whether to recommend to our committee that Mr. Donnelly's motion be withdrawn.

As Ms. Murray just said, right now, we need to vote on the amendment and the motion. Then we will move on to something else.

[English]

**The Chair:** Well, we have to vote on Mr. Cannan's motion first. I appreciate what you're saying, but we have to deal with the motion that's on the floor. It's not a dilatory motion, but it takes precedence over the other motion at this point in time because it is a motion to defer. Mr. Cannan has moved that the motion be deferred until Thursday.

Are there any other questions or comments before we call the question on the motion?

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** Mr. Chair, I am sure that no matter what the outcome is of the vote we're about to hold, the soon-to-be published report will influence what we do next. So, the subcommittee, or the committee thereafter, will have to consider the findings of the report that is going to be published.

[English]

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

Are there any further questions, comments, or concerns?

Mr. Cannan has moved that the motion be deferred until Thursday.

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** We're back on the amendment by Ms. Murray.

Go ahead, Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Can we immediately call the question on this, Mr. Chair, so that we can get on with the crab report?

**The Chair:** I'll call it when we finish with the discussion.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Thank you for your comment, though.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment as moved by Ms. Murray?

Now we'll call the question.

It was moved by Ms. Murray that the motion be amended by replacing the words "federal government's plan" with the words "current and potential plans", by replacing "Arctic" with "Canadian", and by removing the words "in Arctic waters" after "pollution".

Is that correct, Ms. Murray? All right.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we will deal with the amended motion. The amended motion reads as follows:

That, in light of the current and potential plans to explore for oil and gas in Canadian waters, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee conduct a study on that matter at its earliest opportunity, calling witnesses to comment on, among other things, the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution.

Are there any comments, questions, or concerns on the amended motion?

Mr. Weston.

• (1000)

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** I am now going to respond to Mr. Blais. I don't think it was a personal slight. If you felt insulted, I apologize on behalf of the team.

However, it is an insult to democracy if we do not finish what we need to do. One of the criteria of democracy rests on what we do after the debate, on the impact of all the words. Once again, I want to

stress the need to finish something in committee. I want to stress that for the subcommittee.

Please...

[English]

give us the guidance we need to get through the crab report, the aquaculture report, and maybe the Fisheries Act, when it comes, and all these wonderful things that we need to look at—but look at in priority.

We need that clear focus on priorities. Then democracy will be served.

That's what I would ask.

Thank you.

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

Are there any further comments or questions?

Go ahead, Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** As I mentioned before, I support the spirit and intent, but I just think the timing is wrong. With all the directions this committee is going in, it reminds me of the saying that if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.

The fact is that democracy is having your say, but not necessarily your way.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Shory.

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** Mr. Chair, I don't know if this would be called a subamendment or a proposed subamendment. Basically, it is about the words "among other things".

I don't know if Ms. Murray wants to replace these words, but where it says "calling witnesses to comment on, among other things," I would say "calling witnesses to comment on it and also on".

That would be instead of saying "among other things".

**The Chair:** You're moving an amendment to the amended motion?

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Sorry, no, the amended motion hasn't been voted on at this point in time.

You're moving an amendment, Mr. Shory, and I'll ask you to repeat it one more time for the clerk's benefit.

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** In the third line, it now says "calling witnesses to comment on, among other things," the audit of the Canadian Coast Guard, and I want to replace that part with, if possible, "calling witnesses to comment on it and also on" the audit of the Canadian Coast Guard.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shory's amended motion would read as follows:

That, in light of the current and potential plans to explore for oil and gas in Canadian waters, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee conduct a study on that matter at its earliest opportunity, calling witnesses to comment on it and also on the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution.

That's how the motion would read with the amendment.

Mr. Kamp.

• (1005)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** I don't want to muddy the waters any further, but I might here.

I just wonder whether there is a simpler way to do what Mr. Shory is wanting to do. I support the attempt to take out that clause between the commas, and suggest replacing it with "taking into consideration".

I'm not sure what Mr. Shory thinks about that, but it would read: "conduct a study on that matter at its earliest opportunity, taking into consideration the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard", etc.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shory.

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** Mr. Chair, let me attempt to save some time. I'm willing to withdraw my wording if everybody will accept that. Replacing it with "taking into consideration" is livable.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shory would like to withdraw his amendment. He needs unanimous consent to do so.

Does he have unanimous consent?

Those opposed?

Hearing no opposed....

You are opposed? Lovely.

Ms. Murray, you're next on the amendment as moved by Mr. Shory.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** I just didn't understand this; I thought it muddied up the motion by using the word "it" without it being clear what "it" was referring to.

I want to suggest that we call the vote on that amendment and complete this event.

I respect Mr. Shory's intention to clarify, but I didn't think his intervention was useful in that way.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Murray.

We'll call the question on the amendment made by Mr. Shory. It was moved by Mr. Shory that the motion be amended by replacing the words "among other things" with the words "it and also on".

Those in favour?

(Amendment negated)

**The Chair:** We will revert to the original amended motion. The amended motion reads as follows:

That, in light of the current and potential plans to explore for oil and gas in Canadian waters, the Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee conduct a study on that matter at its earliest opportunity, calling witnesses to comment on, among other things, the recent audit of the Canadian Coast Guard that identifies the Department's need for training and up-to-date equipment necessary to properly handle oil spills and offshore pollution.

Are there any questions, comments, or concerns on the amended motion?

Are you ready for the question?

Those in favour?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're going to take a short break while we move in camera to deal with the snow crab report.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]







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