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# **Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, October 3, 2012**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Mark Warawa**



# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC)):** I'll call the meeting to order, this being the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

I want to welcome our witnesses today. We will begin with Mr. Gordon Brown.

MP Brown, you have 10 minutes. We will follow that with each of the witnesses for 10 minutes. Then we will have questions until five o'clock.

Mr. Brown, you have 10 minutes.

**Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to first of all thank the members of the committee for their swift consideration of this bill. We just voted on this bill a week ago Wednesday. Sorry, that was two weeks ago today. It's Wednesday already.

I'm happy to be here in front of the committee to talk about Bill C-370 and to answer any questions you may have about the bill. It is a short bill, but it will make a huge difference in my riding.

I want to thank you on behalf of everyone who wishes to see this happen and to see it happen as quickly as possible; I should note that this includes all of the municipalities along the length of the park. They have all passed resolutions supporting this bill. The native community, residents, and businesses in the region are also very supportive.

There's a number of key points to my belief that the name of this park should be changed. I'd like to go over these as quickly as I can so that you can have an understanding of why this bill is so important to economic development in my riding of Leeds—Grenville.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park, which was established in 1904 as the first Canadian national park east of the Rocky Mountains, celebrated its centennial in 2004. The park is located in what is popularly known and identified worldwide as the Thousand Islands.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is located in an area of rich biodiversity. It is at a naturally occurring confluence of important geological formations, and it is also at a naturally occurring confluence of the cultural history of our nation.

Formed as a result of the last ice age, the Thousand Islands region provides a land bridge across the St. Lawrence River for plants and animals. It joins the Canadian Shield in the north and the Adirondack Mountains in the south. The Great Lakes—particularly Lake Ontario—which lie to its west, provide a heat sink, which helps moderate both winter and summer temperatures in the region, and which in turn attracts flora and fauna that might not otherwise be found in the area.

As a result of all of this, the area in which the park is located has been recognized by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve.

The park itself consists of several ecologically important mainland properties and several islands that lie between Kingston and Brockville. The visitor centre at Mallorytown Landing provides an introduction to the park, with a hiking trail, interpretive programs, exhibits, and family activities. The park is a partner in encouraging sustainable lifestyles and in protecting the ecosystems of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve.

When Europeans first discovered this region, the French named it les Mille-Îles, and the English named the islands in 1816 with important names from the British navy. Traders and settlers heading into the Canadian interior passed by. Throughout its known history, it has continued to be identified as the Thousand Islands. Today, many people in the area already refer to the park as “Thousand Islands National Park”, because this is how the region is known.

Visitor services are a growing and important part of the economic development of the region that encompasses this park. Visitor services are increasingly important, as the economic mix of the region has changed from manufacturing over the past 15 years, and visitors from around the globe flock to the area to see the Thousand Islands.

Brockville Mayor Dave Henderson was planning to be here with us today at committee, but he is unable to appear. We wish him a speedy recovery, given his recent health issues.

His personal business is printing. Had he been able to be here with us today, he would have told you that he has seen a major change in his business. Ten years ago, most of the printing came from the industrial sector on both sides of the St. Lawrence River. Today most of his business comes from tourist operators on both sides of the border.

The latest statistics that are available from Statistics Canada indicate that in my riding there are 438 enterprises that consider themselves visitor-based. These employ almost 6,000 people. Scattered throughout the riding but concentrated in the area closest to the Thousand Islands, visitor services are a very large employer in my riding, by any account.

Our government has been very supportive of this economic change by helping to fund the Maritime Discovery Centre in Brockville, which is now known as the Aquatarium and is going to open next year, in June of 2013. This attraction at the eastern end of the park will concentrate its exhibits on the Thousand Islands.

• (1535)

In 1911, Canada led the world by establishing a national service dedicated to parks, and today Canada has one of the greatest national parks systems in the world.

Parks Canada manages 42 national parks, 167 national historic sites, three national marine conservation areas, and 10 of Canada's 15 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In the past six years our government has taken steps to add 90,000 square kilometres to the lands and waters of our national park system.

When Parks Canada celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011 and the parks were advertised across the country to promote this anniversary, there were once again questions raised about the name of this park.

From coast to coast to coast the national parks are generally named after the most significant feature of the area. When you hear the name St. Lawrence Islands National Park, you do not grasp where the park is located. The St. Lawrence River is long and the park could be anywhere on its length from Kingston to the Gaspé.

Probably one of the most important aspects of this bill to change the name of the park has to do with branding. Marketing associations describe a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers.

Among other things, branding is about getting your target market to choose one product or destination over the competition and, hopefully, to see your product or destination as the best choice. One of the objectives that a good brand will achieve is delivering the message clearly.

The Thousand Islands is the drawing card and the clear message for the region. It is the brand upon which the region hangs its future and reviews its past.

My home town of Gananoque bills itself as "The Canadian Gateway to the Thousand Islands". Brockville calls itself "The City of the 1000 Islands". From Parks Canada's description of the park, we read that "St. Lawrence Islands National Park is located in the heart of the 1000 Islands area".

The federal tourism strategy released last year has a section that specifically deals with national parks. It notes that our country has one of the greatest national park systems in the world. They attract visitors, generate economic activity, and bring our natural heritage

closer to Canadians and visitors from other countries. They help protect and manage ecosystems so that we can all understand, enjoy, and appreciate them, while preserving them for future generations.

There is no doubt that Canada's national parks are important to this government and important to Canadians, and they will continue to be a valued asset in this country.

The tourism strategy has a specific goal for national parks. It states that over the next five years visitation to national parks will increase by 10%, in part by increasing their attractiveness as destinations and improving the quality of visitor experiences.

One of the ways we can achieve that goal is by providing the branding necessary for identification and research by the travelling public.

While Parks Canada is working to certify park and site interpreters to offer a more complete experience for the visitor, it is important that the visitors can properly locate the parks.

The tourism strategy also encourages Canadian tourism enterprises and attractions to develop what they call signature attractions. Already in the Thousand Islands, tourism operators are taking advantage of this. The brand that local tourism operators use to describe their area is simply Thousand Islands.

It is important to understand that this is not a new brand for this area. It is one of historical and cultural significance. Thousand Islands is the name that is used by everyone in the region to differentiate themselves from any other region.

In naming national parks, national marine conservation areas, national historic sites, or geographical features in a park or site, Parks Canada follows the general principles of the Geographical Names Board of Canada. There is no historical record about how and why St. Lawrence Islands National Park acquired its name. The general procedure to propose a new name or change a name states that a federal authority would generally investigate a name by consulting the residents of the area, historical documents, files, and other sources, and Parks Canada has completed this.

When I began working on this issue, I consulted with business owners and members of municipal councils throughout the region. Some were actually surprised that the park wasn't already named Thousand Islands National Park, as they had been referring to it by that name for many years.

If you conduct an Internet search for St. Lawrence Islands, you find very little information. If you conduct a search for Thousand Islands, you will find a great deal of information all tied to the region where the park is located. This is an indication that the Thousand Islands name is the one that is popularly used to describe the region and the place where the park is located.

To sum up, future economic development for the region demands that the park be easily identified in its location on the lengthy St. Lawrence River, and that location is the Thousand Islands.

• (1540)

Thousand Islands National Park is the natural name for this park.

Thank you very much.

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

Next, from the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, we have Mr. Don Ross.

You have 10 minutes.

**Mr. Don Ross (Executive Director, Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve):** Thank you very much.

Some of the points I'll make will actually duplicate a little of what Mr. Brown has said. I apologize for not having complete notes. I'm just back from England and still adjusting to time.

As a little bit of perspective of where I'm speaking from, back in the seventies and eighties I was an employee of Parks Canada. I was a biologist and managed the visitor services staff at Point Pelee and the St. Lawrence Islands National Park at the time.

I left the parks system to go into private business in Brockville for two decades, in retail business and sporting goods. During that time, I wrote the nomination papers for the third land trust in Canada, which is in that particular region and was named the Canadian Thousand Islands Heritage Conservancy. Also, just after that time, I was one of the authors of the nomination papers for the UNESCO Frontenac Arch world biosphere reserve.

So I come to you from a variety of points of interest.

Back in 1673, Champlain showed up on the shores of the eastern end of Lake Ontario and immediately asked, because he hadn't been there before, what all that shimmering was in the east. The first nations people told him that it was a lake of a thousand islands, and we've been following that nomenclature pretty much ever since.

The creation story has that as being an international border, even back in the creation story days of good versus evil...scooping up great handfuls of land masses and hurling them across the border at the evil side, creating a thousand lakes on the Canadian side and two thousand islands in the St. Lawrence River. Obviously, right from the get-go this has been very much the symbology of the region—it's "the thousand islands"—so it's only natural that the name would carry on.

Back when I was working for Parks Canada and came to the Thousand Islands.... I was brought to the Thousand Islands in the 1970s because there was quite a controversy going on at the time about the expansion of the national park, which probably could have been handled a little differently than it was. But I think it was actually a crystallizing moment for people in the region, because they began to realize, out of a potential expropriation of private properties, just how valuable this asset in their backyard was.

There was an advisory committee formed to discuss how all of this should take place. One of the recommendations that came out—and was signed by Judd Buchanan back in 1983—was that the name of the park should be changed to Thousand Islands National Park. Originally when the park was established, it was done so at the will of the residents. They actually petitioned to have a national park in that area.

Although it's the first national park east of the Rockies, it was proposed as a national park 10 years in advance of the creation of the Banff National Park. It's actually the first proposed national park in

Canada. At the time, it was supported by a fellow by the name of John A. Macdonald, and it was heavily advocated for in local newspapers. Landowners actually donated property to establish what was then called the Thousand Islands National Park.

When the park was actually created, it was a little bigger than it is now. There was an event called the St. Lawrence Seaway, which came to be in 1959, and a couple of other national park islands, further down river in the St. Lawrence River than they are today, are currently under water with the seaway. So it has actually consolidated the holdings a little bit in the upper part of the St. Lawrence River and truly in the Thousand Islands. Over and over again, we see the Thousand Islands name popping up.

A couple of years ago, a previous Conservative member of Parliament by the name of Jim Prentice, who was Minister of the Environment at the time, suggested in a news article that this was probably the best national park location in Canada to discuss amongst Canadians the value of national parks and the national park system. This national park sits within a five-hour drive of 53% of the population of Canada. If you extend that drive outwards to a full day, there are 85 million people within that day's drive of this national park.

● (1545)

It's probably the most accessible national park in the entire national parks system, and yet until just a few years ago it was the smallest of Canada's national parks.

To show further how the community values this national park, one of the efforts that the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve undertook, along with the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust, was a consultation with the province, where Gord at the time was chair of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. With Gord and the commission, we negotiated transfers of property, nearly ten square kilometres that were provincial holdings along the St. Lawrence River, to the national park. This was done for less than the average price of a house in Canada, if you can imagine that, in that particular region, because people wanted it to happen.

It cascaded another community event in bolstering the size of the national park. Several landowners came forward via the land trust and donated considerable other properties to this national park. Very rarely do you see occasions where people are willing to give up private land in such a valuable real estate region as this one to augment what they see as an incredibly valuable not just local but national asset. So it's very important that this happens.

In terms of its ecology and its value, Gord had mentioned as well that this is the most biodiverse area of Canada. That's the foundation for the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve coming into place. It only took five months to go from nomination to designation. Of all of the 583 UNESCO world biosphere reserves, this set a speed record in the UN for this thing to happen because of the recognition of its globally significant natural assets and also because of the total of 25 signatories, with all of the municipalities and organizations, to the nomination papers to make this happen.

It is an incredibly significant area, and the national park has played a very strong role in stewardship in the region. It also has been a guiding light with regard to science and education within the region. I do hope that significant budgets can be replaced into this particular national park, and supporting the biosphere reserves associated with any national park, because they bring this kind of awesome value to the community where it's taking place.

Canada's national parks, national historic sites, world heritage sites, and world biosphere reserves are all incredibly involved in the complex brand that is Canada. These are landscapes that people recognize internationally, our culture and history that people recognize internationally, and they play an important part in the hearts and minds of not only Canadians but the people who visit the region.

To all of us who live in the region, the name change is long overdue. It is someplace around about 300 years overdue. It's really a no-brainer in the region. We have the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. We have St. Lawrence Park in Brockville. We have St. Lawrence streets all over the place, in every town. We don't have anything really to distinguish St. Lawrence Islands National Park from the rest of the community except for this small name change.

This one-sentence bill can do that.

Thank you.

• (1550)

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

Next we'll hear from the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation, from Mr. Tom Russell.

You have 10 minutes.

**Mr. Tom Russell (Executive Director, 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation):** Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. My name is Tom Russell and I'm the executive director of the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation, an organization funded by the Government of Canada to encourage economic development of the communities that we serve, the communities of the Thousand Islands.

I'm here today to encourage your support of Bill C-370, which would see the name of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada changed to the Thousand Islands National Park of Canada. I can understand that some of you might consider this name change as insignificant or of little consequence, but please let me assure you that your decision matters greatly to those of us who live in the region. It matters to us because we fully understand that this simple adjustment will assist us in our efforts to encourage greater visitation to our communities, and greater visitation means greater economic impact for our largely tourism-dependent economy.

The importance of your decision is further validated by many of our local municipalities and chambers of commerce having already formally endorsed the passing of this bill. The vast majority of Thousand Islanders feel the time is right to make this change.

The St. Lawrence River is a majestic and beautiful body of water, but there are many communities that call it home. As such, the St. Lawrence River by name alone is not very site-specific. Simple Internet searches, as Gord has mentioned, of the St. Lawrence River, of the St. Lawrence Islands, or even of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park, could lead you anywhere from the city of Kingston all the way to Quebec City and on to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. For those of us who understand Canadian geography, this might not seem like such a big deal, but imagine the confusion it can create for less-informed tourists looking to visit our region, the Thousand Islands.

On the other hand, if you were to do an Internet search of the Thousand Islands, you'd see that it provides hundreds of links and almost every single one of them is specific to the corridor between Kingston and Brockville. In other words, a search of the Thousand Islands actually takes you to sites located in the Thousand Islands, and isn't that exactly what we want?

Even if you were to simply leaf through our local telephone directories, you would find pages and pages of businesses and organizations named after the Thousand Islands, but a similar review for businesses and organizations named after the St. Lawrence Islands would reveal one entry, the St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

The Thousand Islands brand name is highly recognizable, it is unique to one territory in our country, and it is our local trademark. That's why the organization that I work for is called the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation and not the St. Lawrence Islands Community Development Corporation. It seems like such a small distinction, but I can tell you that the people in our region really do understand the value of this adjustment.

International visitor tourism surveys regularly show that the Thousand Islands is a destination of choice that benefits greatly from name recognition, yet our very own national park is not capitalizing on this opportunity. Professional marketers speak of consistent messaging, multiple exposures, and top-of-mind awareness as critical components to building successful marketing campaigns. At the core of all strategies is the need to build brand-name recognition.

In the Thousand Islands we already have the good fortune of a powerful and recognizable brand name. The power of this brand is the reason why the city of Kingston is promoted as a Thousand Islands destination. It's the reason why the town of Gananoque declares itself as the "Gateway to the Thousand Islands". It's the reason why the city of Brockville markets itself as "The City of the 1000 Islands".

If we truly wish to encourage visitors to enjoy the wonders of this marvellous location, then it will ultimately be the reason why the St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada is repositioned and renamed as the Thousand Islands National Park of Canada. Any other approach or any other decision will continue to stifle the tremendous potential of this magnificent national treasure.

Mr. Brown spoke of our local mayor of the city of the Brockville. He had the misfortune last week of being diagnosed with a cranial aneurysm, a life-threatening condition, and he's here recovering from a five-hour surgery last week. He's here at the Ottawa Civic and I had a chance to speak with him.

• (1555)

He specifically asked me if I would share with you that he would really, really appreciate it if the decision to support this bill was positive, because he really doesn't want to have another aneurysm.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Tom Russell:** I can tell you that across the board, with the people I work with, with the businesses we work with, with the organizations we work with, there is unanimous support for this bill.

It is the reason why our member of Parliament has been pushing so forcefully to see this happen. It is the reason why Mr. Ross has cited the history. It is the reason why so many of us recognize that we have this marvellous gem and all we need to do is make this slight adjustment to allow it to flourish.

On behalf of all of us who live and work in the Thousand Islands, I respectfully ask for your support of this bill.

I sincerely thank you for your time and your consideration. It is very much appreciated.

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

Finally, we will hear from Parks Canada, from Kim St. Claire.

You have 10 minutes.

**Ms. Kim St. Claire (Field Unit Superintendent, Georgian Bay and Eastern Ontario, Parks Canada):** Thank you. *Merci*. Hello. *Bonjour*.

It's with great pleasure that I come before this committee today to talk to you about the proposal of Bill C-370 to rebrand St. Lawrence Islands National Park as Thousand Islands National Park.

[*Translation*]

Parks Canada, which manages national parks, national historic sites, national marine conservation areas and UNESCO world heritage sites in Canada, makes the federal government the largest provider of natural and cultural tourism in the country. We offer iconic destinations, incredibly passionate and knowledgeable staff, like me, and opportunities that reflect the expectations of a demanding national and international clientele.

[*English*]

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is a rather unique park in the family of national parks. Until the relatively recent addition of the adjacent property, it was the smallest park of Canada.

We'll have a quiz later to see if you know what the smallest is.

Today the actual land area of the park is 23.5 square kilometres, but this total area is comprised of small parcels of land spread out over more than 22 islands and four mainland properties that stretch roughly 80 kilometres along the St. Lawrence River from Brockville to Kingston and into eastern Lake Ontario. Although spread out and

somewhat fragmented, this also means that the park has land holdings that are truly representative of the natural and cultural heritage of the complete Thousand Islands region.

This region is recognized for its unique geographical features and its importance to wildlife. The Thousand Islands act as a vital land bridge that joins the Canadian Shield and the Adirondack Mountains of New York, forming one contiguous ecosystem. The islands form stepping stones for migration, and are home to many rare species of plants and animals. People have been drawn to this special region for centuries, and first nations explorers and settlers have all left their mark on the landscape.

Quite simply, the Thousand Islands is a place where nature and culture intermingle. Majestic castles and historic summer homes stand in contrast with rugged islands of granite and pine that are home to lumbering turtles, soaring eagles, and countless other species.

[*Translation*]

Generations of vacationers have sought out the unique and beautiful landscapes of the Thousand Islands. Today, the name "Thousand Islands" itself evokes a sense of place that speaks to a specific region shared by Canada and the United States. It is a region with a world-renowned reputation and UNESCO-recognized biodiversity.

[*English*]

It seems, however, that many of the park's own repeat visitors do not even know the real name of the park. "Thousand Islands national park" can often be heard on the many docks where visitors moor their boats. When the park receives written correspondence, often it does not have the park's correct name. So although St. Lawrence Islands National Park has indeed existed for 108 years, locally it has been known, and no doubt will continue to be, as "Thousand Islands national park".

Anecdotal evidence aside, Parks Canada did undertake social science research with park visitors in 2010. The results indicate that park users were generally indifferent about an official name change, but would be opposed if the costs of implementation were high.

Most of the costs involved in a name change are directly related to redoing the physical signage that exists within the park. In order to keep costs low, Parks Canada would immediately replace four large signage panels located on the park's mainland properties, but would then change island signage over a ten-year plan.

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

St. Lawrence Islands National Park prints promotional materials and pamphlets on an annual basis. These are updated prior to any new printing. As for changes to the park's website, the text is in a digital format, so it is just a question of performing a "find and replace" to update the content.

While the park's visitor concerns may be focused on the cost of such a change, Parks Canada can also see potential benefits for the park. As far back as 1978, a St. Lawrence Islands National Park advisory committee has been recommending changing the park's name.

[English]

“The Thousand Islands” is a globally established brand, and a name change would be an opportunity to adapt and renew the possibilities of this national park. Changing the name will alter how Parks Canada is able to engage and attract members of the public who are familiar with the Thousand Islands image and those who are seeking to create great personal memories through meaningful experiences.

One piece I happened to bring with me is our brochure that we publish every year for all of the parks and sites in Ontario. Our main line for St. Lawrence Islands is: “The beautiful Thousand Islands region is the backdrop for your visit to St. Lawrence Islands National Park”. That’s an example of how we make sure ourselves that we situate the park and try to keep it top of mind that it’s in the Thousand Islands.

The importance of the park is reflected in the fact that the St. Lawrence Islands were the first national park created east of the Rockies. It is the closest national park to Ottawa. Even with the creation of Rouge Park, it remains one of the national parks closest to the greater Toronto area.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park has an exemplary record of working with the community through strong stakeholder relation activities, but in a region where private tourism providers build their businesses by taking advantage of the recognized and powerful Thousand Islands brand name, in using the title “St. Lawrence Islands”, Parks Canada is not talking to the public in the same language.

The current name creates confusion between St. Lawrence Park in Brockville and the Province of Ontario’s St. Lawrence Parks Commission. Confusion over who we are may also make St. Lawrence Islands National Park less attractive as a business partner for those for-profit companies that trade on the Thousand Islands brand name.

As a tourism operator in the Thousand Islands, Parks Canada can see many commercial benefits to a park name that reflects the existing and strong regional brand. In some respects, St. Lawrence Islands National Park is a name that limits Parks Canada’s ability to capitalize on its position at the heart of the world-famous Thousand Islands. The park currently puts a lot of time and effort into identifying how it is a different organization from those down the road with nearly identical names, and it also spends a lot of time trying to explain its location along the St. Lawrence River.

[Translation]

The proposed Thousand Islands National Park name also fits with the park’s place as a traditional first nations territory. The aboriginal presence in this area reaches back as far as 7,000 years, and first nations people have a profound stewardship message, based on respect and responsibility for the land.

Parks Canada has a very positive and active relationship with the Mohawks of Akwesasne that addresses historical and contemporary use of the landscape, including traditional place names and plant use. Resource management practices, visitor experience and educational programs are all enriched through the integration of traditional aboriginal knowledge.

[English]

In the Mohawk language, *Tsitkawenoton* means “many islands”, which is very close to Thousand Islands, so the proposed name may provide future opportunities for the park’s working relationship with the area’s Mohawk communities.

Therefore, in addition to engaging the Canadian public, having a national park that has a strong brand recognition with its location may help Parks Canada strengthen existing relationships, while attracting new visitor and business opportunities.

Parks Canada is encouraged to implement business practices that support its mandate and capitalize on Canada’s vibrant tourism industry. National parks provide opportunities for private companies to provide local jobs, support other area businesses, and generate additional revenue for the park. Taken together, the regional tourism profile grows, creating more opportunity.

“Thousand Islands National Park” as a name would help Parks Canada build awareness of the park by positioning it in a regional and historic context. So while there’s a cost to changing the park’s name, this cost must also be weighed against potential economic gains that changing the name of the park could produce.

If the park’s name is to change, Parks Canada will be happy to gain Thousand Islands National Park. It’s a name that sets the park as a place within the context of its surroundings and within the context of its history. It is a name that is recognized around the world, a name that conjures up images of a unique part of the North American continent, and a name of beauty, nature, and incredible experiences.

*Merci.*

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will begin our first round of questioning of the witnesses, for seven minutes each.

We’ll begin with Mr. Sopuck.

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

I must say I’m very impressed with the organization and effort of this campaign. If the metaphor “ducks in a row” means anything, you certainly exemplify that. Between the federal government, local government, local communities, business people, and of course our MP colleague, Gordon Brown, a lot of thought and work has gone into this. Congratulations for that.

Mr. Russell, I’m interested in your business background in the region. I understand you’re from the area originally.

Could you explain how much business your corporation currently conducts throughout the region, and could you elaborate on the depth of the brand name “Thousand Islands” in the area and beyond?

**Mr. Tom Russell:** Sure. Thank you for the opportunity to answer this question.



Our corporation, if I do say so myself, is one of the largest single players in economic development in the Thousand Islands. That is specifically thanks to the Government of Canada for the investment it has made into our corporation.

I've been in the position of executive director for 12 years, and I worked for the organizations for eight years prior to that. Our impact in terms of immediate direct investment in our community approaches \$4 million per year. Somewhere in the order of \$3 million per year we give in loans to local businesses. We work with 80 to 100 businesses per year. Many of them receive loans, but a number of them also receive technical assistance and work with our investment managers and counsellors to help them along their way in business. We also have about \$800,000 to \$900,000 a year available to invest in community development projects, and that's through the eastern Ontario development program that Mr. Brown was so instrumental in securing for us.

The amount of money that we invest in business and economic development is large. I can tell you that over the last 10 years—because we just looked at these numbers—our organization was responsible, in some part, in assisting or creating over 3,000 jobs. It is a significant organization that has significant impact.

With respect to the name of the Thousand Islands, when Mr. Brown asked if I would speak today, I went to speak to a couple of our chambers. I specifically wanted to know what their interpretation of this bill might be. I asked them how many of their tourism operators would benefit from something like this and how many would be supportive of this bill. The answer from all three chambers of commerce that I contacted was the same: all of their tourism operators would benefit from this, and all of them would be supportive.

It's consistent with the work that we do with our clients. The message is important. The name is important. Identification is important. How you position yourself matters. As I said in my presentation, just doing a flip through the local telephone directories there is page after page of "Thousand Islands", and very, very few of "St. Lawrence", and only one "St. Lawrence Islands".

The name is significant for all of these reasons.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** You talked about—I think it was you—the growth in the visitors services business.

Could you elaborate on the rate of growth you're projecting over the next decade, given your proximity to the high population areas of North America?

**Mr. Tom Russell:** I didn't speak to that issue; it may have been Don.

It was about visitor services?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Yes.

**Mr. Tom Russell:** I did not speak to that issue.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** But the growth rate of the business in the area is quite significant.

**Mr. Tom Russell:** Our community has struggled through some difficult times. There was a time when our communities were more industrial—many multinationals. A lot of those businesses have

closed down. You've seen those replaced with a lot of smaller businesses, a lot of local community businesses. You've seen tourism—I'm sure my colleagues would agree—take on a much more important part of our economy.

The Thousand Islands is our greatest asset, and it is important that we promote it properly. It is important that one of the largest advertisers of the region, the national park, promotes itself as the Thousand Islands National Park, so the rest of our folks can be one of the boats rising with that tide.

• (1610)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Excellent.

Mr. Ross, I was very interested in your testimony as well. I happen to be a biologist, and I have a national park in my constituency that I happen to live beside; it happens to be in a biosphere reserve. Even though I haven't been to the Thousand Islands area, I can appreciate some of the issues you deal with.

Mr. Ross, I understand you've written a book about the islands. I wonder if you could describe, for those of us who haven't been there, what the park looks like, what it contains, and why people from around the world are attracted to it.

**Mr. Don Ross:** Sure. Thanks for that.

Actually, I've written three books about the area. I keep having to write them because people keep buying them; they keep selling out.

It's a very interesting commodity, the Thousand Islands. The Thousands Islands I think is a type of name that really gathers people's interest. As you probably know, it's not the only Thousand Islands in the world. There are about 11 of them, three in Canada. Indonesia, Australia, China, and Poland all have Thousand Islands. I think just that type of name itself evokes a lot of interest in people because it suggests something that stretches on and is limitless, and therefore has a powerful attraction to explore.

The people who come to the region, even though it's such a small region physiographically—and it's only 80 kilometres from Kingston to Brockville—find that there's a depth of things to explore there that is just extraordinary. It brings people back over again and again and again.

The name is not unique in the world, but it's unique as a cultural icon.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Okay.

Ms. St. Claire, very quickly, has Parks Canada ever renamed a park before, and under what circumstances?

**Mrs. Kim St. Claire:** They've never renamed a park before in this type of a situation, where we're linking it up with tourism and branding. Two parks in Canada's north have been renamed. I understand that was as a result of land claims and negotiations. They decided to change Ellesmere Island and Northern Yukon National Park into Ivvavik and Quttinirpaq following negotiations with the *autochtones* up there.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have some visitors, some new people to our committee, and want to welcome them. So next we have Madam Sitsabaiesan, and I hope I pronounced that correctly.

Welcome, and you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** *Merci, monsieur le président.*

I want to say thank you to all of you, first of all, for being here today. We had originally voted against Bill C-370 because we wanted to make sure we had some more dialogue on it. I know Gord and I have had some conversations about this. The reason we had not supported it originally was because we had been trying to find some costing, and whether there had been any costing done. Everywhere we turned and asked, the answer was, no, no, no, we don't have anything. That's why I figured we needed to actually do the due diligence to make sure that it wasn't going to cost an exorbitant amount of taxpayer dollars to change the name of a park.

I'd wanted to know if there were actually any public consultations that were done, and what the local municipalities were saying, so thank you for addressing some of my questions. I was sitting here going, okay, cross that question off, cross that question off, so thank you for being so thorough in your presentations.

Our main concern was fiscal responsibility, and, Ms. St. Claire, you mentioned some of the plans, the changes to the signage and how you're only going to be changing four of the large signage panels immediately, and whatnot, and that would be the only source of costs. Is that the only foreseeable cost that you see? If not, what other costings have been done of this entire project?

• (1615)

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** We do see signage as being the major part of the cost. That's when I mentioned that we plan on phasing it in over 10 years, and maybe having something temporary for some of the other major signs. We're still figuring out the numbers, actually, just because there are a lot of islands to count. This is going to give us an opportunity as well to double check and make sure that we've got the right number of signs in the right places. It will be a longer-term phase-in of the new signage.

Things such as changing websites and such are essentially cost neutral. As I mentioned, this particular publication is put out every year, so we would simply be reprinting it next year, or whenever it happens, and in subsequent years we would be reprinting it with that new name.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Thank you.

I just want to make sure I understood correctly, that we don't actually have a final costing of the entire project, other than just the four large signage panels.

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** There are more signs than that. The four signs would be at the very beginning.

That's why I say this is giving us a chance to double-check how many signs we have.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay.

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** We have signs on the highway saying that the park is coming up and then we have the great big sign that says

“the park is here”, so we would want to take a look at that, at the size of the signs, and different sizes of signs cost different amounts of money—

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Of course.

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** —so we're currently working through that.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Is it possible at all for you—I guess Parks Canada is the one doing these evaluations or assessments—to provide to the committee that breakdown of the costs?

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** I could go back and see what could be done with respect to providing more information on that.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Fabulous, and it would be something that you would give to the clerk of the committee.

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** Okay. Thank you.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** I'll change gears a little in my questions, because cost was the biggest thing.

Secondly, I wanted to know if there were some impact assessments done on the community, based on the changes. You spoke about a lot of the positive impacts for the tourism industry, which is the largest industry in the community. What would be some of the negative impacts?

**Mr. Tom Russell:** Gord, would you care to field this?

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Thank you for the question.

I can't really see any negative impacts. We have had significant consultations, which were done, first of all, by me. This was driven by the communities. I have been very involved in the communities there for many, many years. First, I served as the president of the Gananoque and Thousand Islands chamber of commerce. Later I was elected to the town council in Gananoque. I was very active. I was the chair of the economic development committee there.

I've been very involved in this over many years and have been well connected with the people in the industry. It was driven by those people. That's why I brought this forward as a private member's bill. The only way to change the name of this park is through legislation. One would have thought that there might be other ways to change the name of a park, but this is part of the National Parks Act, and this is why we're going through this process in Parliament and at this committee today.

In terms of negative impacts, I don't see any. You've heard from Mr. Russell, from Mr. Ross, and from Ms. St. Claire. In terms of things from the community, it's all positive. I think the number we heard was \$138,000 over a 10-year period. In terms of the costs, many of those costs will be for things that will have to be redone anyway during that period of time. It's all positive. I can't think of any negatives.

I'll turn it over to the other witnesses if they can think of any negative aspects of this.

As well, there were consultations by Parks Canada. Ms. St. Claire can speak to those better than I can. But in terms of community consultations and the resolutions that came from all of the municipalities along the area of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park, including the City of Kingston, which is not in my riding, but they also did a resolution to endorse this.... So there are no negatives that I can see.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Thank you.

I know that my time is running short, but I must also say that I'm very happy to have the largest chunk of the current Rouge Park in my home riding of Scarborough—Rouge River.

Oh, Gord wants to jump in there.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

• (1620)

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Thank you, Ms. Sitsabaiesan, for your question.

Now, you have a park in your riding that is known as the Rouge urban park—maybe you can correct me here—but it's known as the Rouge Park, because it is where the park is. If the park were called the GTA national park, it would not represent where that park is, so.....

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** I hear the argument the community is making, and it's good to know that it's actually coming from the community. That wasn't very clear earlier, and then there was no costing. We just wanted to make sure that we're being fiscally responsible, even if it is one park in the whole scheme of the entire country and everything else. We just wanted to make sure that we're doing the necessary due diligence. That's all.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Your time has expired.

Next, Ms. Rempel, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Thank you very much.

I'd like to highlight my colleague Mr. Brown's work on this file. You'll notice that he's handed out an article dated 2009, so I think that shows the commitment he's had to his community and the impact that this—even though it's technically a small change—can have on the community. That's what my line of questioning will focus on primarily: the business case surrounding this decision.

Mr. Russell, you mentioned that as the economy in your region has changed over the last few years, tourism has become a substantive part of the economy. Could you very briefly discuss the percentage of income in the economy in your area that's based on tourism, and perhaps any tourism growth rates in recent years?

**Mr. Tom Russell:** I don't have those stats available to me. I can speak anecdotally.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Even anecdotally.

**Mr. Tom Russell:** I'll attempt to answer it, but I may defer to Mr. Ross or to Ms. St. Claire, or even to Gord. In Don's case, he has worked specifically in the industry. The work I've done is a little bit

more as an umbrella, as an overview. We work with all sectors of the economy.

I can tell you anecdotally that over the 20 years that I've been doing this job, and from the numbers of businesses we work with, there has been a sizable shift. There was once a time when the bulk of our clients were not specifically in the tourism industry, and now we see a number of start-ups that are entirely dependent, or at least in large part dependent, on the tourism industry. So from an anecdotal point of view, we see that.

Given some time, if it's important, I can certainly supply you with the data to prove the case. There's no denying it.

We also have a number of agencies working specifically on tourism. As Gord mentioned earlier, each one of those folks is recognizing this as well.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Just to re-emphasize along that line, then, because of the importance of tourism in your economy, you do feel that this change in brand for the park would help to spur further growth or maintain the growth in that industry. Is that correct?

**Mr. Tom Russell:** There's absolutely no denying that.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Okay. Great.

Ms. St. Claire, I believe you also made a similar comment—namely, that if we can change the brand on this, we can spur further visitors to the park, further revenues, etc. Would you characterize as correct the statements by Mr. Russell around tourism increasing as a result of this brand change?

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** Tourism, and reaching Canadians in general—it helps with awareness of the park and the area the park is in.

One of the changes, from a tourism perspective, that would make this a much more smooth partnership for Parks Canada, I would suggest, is with regard to the fact that 20 or 30 years ago, a lot of our visitors were island-based. It's an island-based park. A lot of visitors had their own boats. They would be a lot of locals who had their boats and had their favourite island and their favourite dock, and they would love to be in that part of the world.

We are delighted to see many more land-based visitors coming, busloads of people coming from the greater Toronto area, from the Montreal area. As you know, the Kingston-Montreal-Toronto corridor is a marvellous tourism spot. We're pleased that we have a bigger mainland base now to greet those visitors, but it also highlights the importance of partnering with local businesses and tourism operators so that when those people arrive on the mainland, they then have an opportunity to explore the national park, as well as everything the area has to offer, by tour boat and by guided excursions and such.

So it's a good mix.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Great.

Just to carry on some further conversation about costing, would you characterize maintenance of signs as part of routine maintenance that occurs in all national parks?

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** Yes.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** So when you're talking about a ten-year plan to replace signage based on this change—should it pass through the House—that would be incorporated into your regular maintenance, in addition to the large-sign changes that are occurring up front?

•(1625)

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** Yes, it would. We've been having some initial conversations about what the total costs might be, doing an inventory of signs, and thinking about, okay, it takes our maintenance people so many hours to replace a sign, and thinking about just what we would do. That's where we've come up with a ballpark of costing. But we can provide more details.

The signs themselves are in striated blades, so we're hoping that there will be opportunities to pop off the “Parks Canada” on the top, keep the “Government of Canada” on the bottom, replace the middle part that says “St. Lawrence Islands”, keep “National Park”, and so on.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** In terms of the costing we've received, the approximately \$138,000, that's for the main signage that would be replaced out of cycle with routine maintenance. The rest of the costing that you're still looking at deals with coming up with a schedule based on routine maintenance and cost savings based on best methodology to replace it. Would you characterize that as correct?

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** In fact the costing is based on more of a replacement of the sign. That's why it may not cost quite so much as we initially thought, because we might be able to salvage bits and pieces. Some of it will be what we call a capital cost, a one-time purchase of a sign, and then our regular maintenance year to year will be replacing those signs and such.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** To Mr. Ross perhaps, Ms. St. Claire brought up one of the intangible benefits of this name change in that it's creating awareness for Canadians of our national parks system. Perhaps you could speak to how you think this name change might actually impact Canadians from the sense of better connecting urban Canadians with our national parks system though an awareness-building perspective.

**Mr. Don Ross:** Thank you for opening the door on that. As a non-government employee, but having been one, changing the name alone isn't enough. It's vital and critical, in bringing awareness to Canadians about their national brand, to invest a bit more in this national park and the organizations that surround it to pull it all together.

Tom was being very gentle about the region in terms of its economic history. Lately we have lost an enormous amount of industry and business throughout the area. Tourism is not able to fill that gap unless there's an investment in it. It's an old, old model there. The visitors to the national park largely have to have boats to get there.

The largest part of the park now...thanks to the input of organizations in the region, it's to create a mainland national park out of that. There is no visitor infrastructure to speak of there. It's time for investment in this national park.

**The Chair:** Your time has expired. Thank you very much.

Ms. Duncan, you have the last seven minutes.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to Mr. Brown for bringing this forward and to the witnesses for coming.

Mr. Brown, as you know, we are supportive of the bill. We feel you have done due diligence. You have consulted with the community. The support from the municipalities and the support of Parks Canada is very clear, as well as from the business community. I appreciate that.

I'll ask a few questions, so you can show the consultation you've done, and I'll ask a bit around finance.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the consultations that took place? You've been clear about the municipalities, first nations, and consultations with the business communities. Is there anything else we should know?

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** This idea was first brought forward in 1978, when I was a kid growing up in the Thousand Islands. I remember the battles that went on prior to that in terms of the potential expropriation of islands, but it became known at that time.

Over the last number of years, people have often been heard referring to the park as the “Thousand Islands National Park”.

When I was elected in 2004, a number of people and chambers of commerce brought it forward to me, and eventually that led to further consultations with Parks Canada to see if there was something they could contribute to the discussion and consultation. I went immediately to the chambers of commerce and the business community and the tourism organizations, and they all were positive about it. Then I requested the municipalities to have discussions at their councils and pass resolutions, if they so chose.

As well, we thought it was important, because of the aboriginal history in our region, to have discussions with the Mohawks. I can get into the history of our region, but prior to the Europeans arriving here in the 1600s, Champlain, LaSalle, Frontenac, all left their impressions, in a written form, of their view of the Thousand Islands. Prior to that the Mohawks had dominated and controlled the region, for who knows how long.

I'll get back to the consultations, which have led to those—

•(1630)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Yes, the consultations.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** I like to talk about the history.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** It's a good history and we like it.

Tell me about the consultations.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** On the consultations, once all the municipalities had endorsed this, then I proceeded to draft the bill. If you've read the bill, it's pretty simple. It's probably one of the most simple bills to come to Parliament. It basically changes the words “St. Lawrence” to “Thousand”. That's the only real change we're asking for.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Brown, sorry, I have to interrupt.

Basically, this has a history of consultation going back to 2004.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Correct.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Okay, great.

I'll pick up a bit on the finances.

Do we know how many signs there are currently? We must have a record of that.

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** I think 108 is the number I got from the maintenance guys.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Okay, 108. I guess they're of varying sizes. There's got to be a cost associated with each of those signs. Mr. Brown was saying \$138,000. Is that correct?

**Ms. Kim St. Claire:** I can go back and provide that. That was our initial crack at it, based on how many large signs, how many small ones, how many way-finding signs, as they're called. Some are on the islands, some are on the small islets. As I said, this gives us an opportunity to reconcile our list.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** So it's \$138,000 over 10 years, is my understanding.

Perhaps Mr. Brown can then discuss the predicted economic returns in the area. For a one-time cost of \$138,000, over 10 years, what is the return on investment in perpetuity?

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Absolutely. We talked about the branding. If the park name is changed, subject to the approval of this committee and Parliament, there will be initial excitement about that. It will draw new attention to the park. It may, in fact, generate enough revenues just from that initial excitement to pay for the costs in terms of the changes.

But on the islands themselves—some of them are small, some of them are rather large, and some are not a whole lot bigger than this room—there are signs that would probably be about the size of this desk between where Mr. Ross and I are sitting. There are some larger signs that are at the mainland site, at Mallorytown Landing, and there are a few other signs here and there, but they're not large signs and the cost could be very minimal. They are these slat signs; they could pop one piece out. You're only talking about a piece about this big to change “St. Lawrence” to “Thousand”.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Thank you.

I'll just ask Mr. Russell.... We're talking about a \$138,000 investment over 10 years. What do you see as the ROI, in terms of the business community, the chambers of commerce?

**Mr. Tom Russell:** I don't know that I can give a definitive answer, but what I can tell you is if the St. Lawrence Islands National Park were to come to the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation and request support for the costs associated with this, I think it's a pretty safe bet that my board of directors would support this wholeheartedly, because they would understand that the impact and the return would be well worth the investment.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Thank you.

I have no more questions.

**The Chair:** Very good. Thank you.

We'll begin our first round of five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raynault, you have five minutes.

• (1635)

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the first time I take the floor in the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I am used to being a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I have been hearing about the Thousand Islands for a long time. For a few years, with the Thanksgiving weekend looming, we would go camping in the St. Lawrence Islands. So this is not exactly the same thing, but it was really very nice.

Of course, my committee colleagues have asked many questions. My question is for Mr. Ross.

I recognize the fact that this will increase tourist visits, that people from the region will have more work and that jobs will be created. However, will an increased number of tourists in the Thousand Islands park and the neighbouring villages have an impact on the environment?

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Ross:** Great question. Thank you very much.

That's always a concern in this particular area. As I mentioned, more than half of Canadians live within a five-hour drive. It's also a concern amongst the provincial parks, which are entirely booked up in the region. It's a very heavily visited region. The national park has played a great role in figuring a lot of that out. They are known as the leader in our area on trails development and impact studies and visitor management and so forth. So although there's a potential for more visitors in the region, it's not necessarily going to be to the national park because the physical limitation there is the dock size. But as I said before, the value to Canada is to have more people from urban areas visit this particular region, and under the mentorship of the kind of tourism management that Parks Canada can help bring to this area if there's a reinvestment in this national park and the organizations that surround it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault:** Thank you for your answer.

That's all.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You're all done. Thank you. *Merci*.

Ms. Ambler, you have five minutes.

Before you start, I think I may have consent that this may be the last questioner. Then we'll move on to clause-by-clause. Do I have that consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** You have five minutes.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Brown, for coming to our committee, and congratulations on your bill.

You may know that the most recent report produced by this committee was about the national conservation plan. This committee heard a lot about connecting urban Canadians with nature.

Can you tell us how the newly named Thousand Islands National Park would help encourage city folks to appreciate this specific one of Canada's national parks?

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** First of all, I'd like to speak a bit about what the government did with regard to the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the impact it is having in our very own region. Mr. Ross can speak a little bit to some of the properties in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve that are not part of St. Lawrence Islands National Park. They have recently been designated and protected through that investment that is connecting urban Canadians with nature and the more rural parts of our country.

You have in this particular park, with the expansion about 10 years ago, the lands that used to be administered by the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. It is a provincial government agency that had managed those parks, as well as Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village. I actually acted as chair of that agency for six years, so I was very familiar with it.

I don't want to say anything negative about the provincial agency, but those lands are much better managed today as part of this national park. They get more attention and more protection. This is an opportunity, as Mr. Ross mentioned. There are new trails and new protections for those lands that are part of this national park.

Maybe Mr. Ross would like to comment. He could speak to this probably even better than I can.

• (1640)

**Mr. Don Ross:** Sure. I will be brief.

It's probably premature for an announcement by Mr. Russell, but one of the things we've been working toward in the biosphere reserve network is creating a set of extraordinary experience opportunities for people who are visiting the region by connecting a lot of the dots: national park interpretive programs with paddle trips up the Gananoque River, *plein-air* experiences, stays at local B and Bs, and visits to local restaurants and so on. What hasn't been done to date in our region is connecting these authentic landscape experiences.

Consolidating under a brand name such as the Thousand Islands is going to help a lot in the marketing efforts toward that. What we see is growth and a sustainable tourism approach in the region that is going to float an awful lot more boats than in the past. It will provide that legendary experience that people go to the Great Barrier Reef or Costa Rica to enjoy. And that will happen within an hour's drive of Ottawa.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Calling it cross-marketing is really one way to put it. Once you get them in, you keep them in with other activities and things like that.

**Mr. Don Ross:** That's absolutely right, given a sufficient level of investment by the Government of Canada.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** It sounds like about \$138,000.

**Mr. Don Ross:** That would be a bit of a shortfall. That's for some signs for a national park. What we'd really like to see is an investment in the Canadian biosphere reserves system of \$5 million annually.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Right. I knew I wasn't going to get away with it that easily.

**Mr. Don Ross:** I'm serious.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** There's no doubt about it.

I'd like to hear about how many millions of people are within a five-hour drive. I know from personal experience that the park receives visitors from around the world. When I was very young, I remember my parents receiving relatives from Italy. Being from west of Toronto, we always take visitors from overseas to Niagara Falls. But I remember going to the Thousand Islands, too. Until I came here, I didn't know it was named anything else. I guess that's one of the many examples we've heard today of why the branding really needs to be changed.

Thank you very much again.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to suspend the meeting. We can thank our witnesses for being with us today and we'll move into clause-by-clause.

It's an open meeting, so you're welcome to stay and observe if you want, but we'll move into clause-by-clause.

• (1640)

(Pause)

• (1640)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting to order.

I'd like to introduce Mr. Mike MacPherson. Mr. MacPherson is the legislative clerk assigned to Bill C-370. He's here to help us if there are any issues. I don't expect there will be.

I'm going to go right to clause-by-clause. We have not received any amendments on the clause, so I'm going to ask, shall clause 1 carry?

(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Chair:** My second question then is, shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall the chair report the bill to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1645)

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









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