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Chair

Mr. Rodney Weston

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• (1105)

[English]

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

Minister, I'd like to welcome you to the fisheries committee, and the officials that are accompanying you today. I think you're quite familiar with the practices here at our committee. We generally allow a 10-minute presentation before moving to questions and answers. Maybe, during your presentation, you could take a few moments to introduce the officials with you as well.

Minister, the floor is yours.

The Honourable Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here today.

With me are members of the DFO senior management team, which includes: Matthew King, deputy minister; Jody Thomas, Canadian Coast Guard commissioner; Kevin Stringer, senior assistant deputy minister of ecosystems and fisheries management; Tom Rosser, senior assistant deputy minister of strategic policy; and Trevor Swerdfager, assistant deputy minister of ecosystems and oceans, science sector. Our chief financial officer, Marty Muldoon, is with us again.

I want to begin by reiterating the point I've made at past committee appearances that our government has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to protecting mariners, managing Canada's fisheries, and safeguarding our waters.

Today I'll provide members with a brief overview of DFO's 2015-16 main estimates before speaking to the recently tabled budget and what it means for my department.

I'm also here to speak to Bill S-3, amendments to the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act. Illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing is a scourge that threatens our oceans and takes money away from fishermen. I hope that the committee will see fit to pass this important bill.

In regard to the main estimates, my department's request for this fiscal year amounts to \$1.9 billion. This figure represents a net increase of \$283.9 million over last year. This increase is mainly due to funding for the renewal of the Canadian Coast Guard fleet, including both vessels and helicopters, funding to renew the Atlantic and Pacific integrated commercial fisheries initiatives, and additional investments in small craft harbours across the country.

As you are aware, budget 2015 was recently tabled. We committed to getting real results for Canadians and these invest-

ments will protect our environment, ensure the sustainability of our fisheries, and support our government's priorities of creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

Under economic action plan 2015, I'm pleased to report that both the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard will be delivering a number of important investments to Canadians.

These include \$5.7 million over five years to help secure new market access for Canadian seal products, and \$30.8 million over five years to enhance marine transportation safety in the Arctic and further strengthen incident prevention preparedness and response south of 60°. Over the next five years, \$34 million will be used to continue to support year-round meteorological and navigational warning services that will support northern communities and safe marine navigation in the Arctic.

Budget 2015 also includes \$75 million over three years to continue to support the implementation of the Species At Risk Act to protect Canada's diverse species and secure the necessary actions for their recovery. In addition, \$2 million is earmarked for the Pacific Salmon Foundation to support the Salish Sea marine survival project.

I'm also pleased to report that an additional \$10 million annually, over the next three years, will be used to extend the recreational fisheries conservation partnership program, which will help support an already robust and successful initiative.

More good news for Canadian fishermen comes from increasing the lifetime capital gains exemption to \$1 million for owners of a fishing business, which will allow owners to maintain more of their capital upon disposition of their fishing property. This will make a real difference for our hard-working fishermen by allowing them to keep more of their hard-earned money.

Finally, recognizing the important role of small businesses in Canada as job creators, the government is further encouraging small business growth by reducing the small business tax rate to 9% by 2019.

As you can see, these investments continue to demonstrate our government's ongoing commitment to marine safety, to supporting responsible resource development, to protecting Canada's marine environment, and creating jobs and economic growth.

We're committed to ensuring that our fishermen are able to get delicious Canadian seafood on plates around the world. We have embarked on the most ambitious trade agenda in Canadian history and those in the seafood industry stand to benefit greatly. For example, Canada embarked on a historic trade agreement with the European Union. This was not only a game changer for Canadian businesses but a watershed moment for our fish and seafood industry in particular.

Canada is the world's seventh-largest exporter of fish and seafood products. The European Union is the world's largest importer and the demand from this market will only continue to grow. By opening up new markets in the EU and improving access for fish and seafood, CETA, as well as our trade agreement with South Korea, will result in job creation, higher wages, and greater long-term prosperity for our fishing industry.

• (1110)

As the government we're continuing to look to the future on how we can unlock even more international markets for Canadian businesses. Of course, unprecedented access to global markets is a moot point if we're not making significant and strategic investments here at home. As you know, this past November, Prime Minister Harper announced significant federal funding for DFO and coast guard infrastructure projects. Over the next two years, we will invest an additional \$288 million in a vast network of more than 1,000 small craft harbours across the country.

With respect to the Canadian Coast Guard, over the next two years an additional \$183 million will be authorized for repair, life extension, and procurement of vessels and small craft. This funding is in addition to our unprecedented investment in the coast guard's fleet renewal program. The coast guard vessels and small craft benefiting from these new funds will support activities linked to search and rescue, gathering scientific data, responding to maritime incidents, and assisting conservation and protection officers.

In addition to this work, Fisheries and Oceans is also responsible for the stewardship of a number of laboratories and other federally owned assets. Over the next two years we will allocate an additional \$80 million in 195 projects to upgrade science facilities, Atlantic salmon fishways, lighthouses, search and rescue stations, and federally owned buildings across the country. These infrastructure investments will help support the continued delivery of quality services and support the science and research that represents the foundation of our work.

In Canada we take pride in knowing that our fisheries and aquaculture operations are sustainably managed. This is the case for all species, but I'd like to note in particular our commitment to the conservation and protection of wild salmon. Our scientists are actively monitoring salmon populations in key indexed rivers to better inform our management decisions. We've also implemented more stringent measures for recreational salmon fishing in some locations in support with this rigorous enforcement effort. On the west coast we're seeing the benefits of this work with improved returns of some important salmon stocks. With Atlantic salmon on the east coast however there are still concerns, particularly in the southern region.

I'm personally committed to this issue, which is why last December I announced the establishment of a new ministerial advisory committee on Atlantic salmon. The committee is made up of key stakeholders, who will provide me with recommendations on the future direction of conservation. Last month I attended the committee's inaugural meeting in Halifax, along with experts from across the Maritimes and Quebec. Together they will examine conservation and enforcement measures, as well as predation issues. They will also develop a strategy that addresses international fishing in areas for advancing science. I'm pleased to report that this work is already coming to fruition. After just two meetings I asked the advisory committee to submit a set of interim recommendations that could be acted upon immediately. Based on these recommendations, I recently announced new conservation measures for Atlantic salmon recreational angling throughout the gulf region. All of these management measures were supported by key stakeholders and further demonstrate how we are listening to the concerns of local fishing and conservation groups.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing is another area where we're taking decisive action. Canada, of course, has been a leader in global efforts to deter this type of fishing. We know that strong governance of the high seas through regional management fisheries organizations is integral to reducing illegal fishing and protecting the interests of legitimate fishing. Bill S-3, which is before you for consideration, proposes some amendments to the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act in order to fully implement the international port state measures agreement. As you're aware, this bill proposes amendments that, if accepted, will broaden enforcement authorities and strengthen prohibitions against the importation of illegally acquired fish and marine plants.

Canada already has a robust regime in place to control access of foreign fishing vessels to Canadian waters, but we know that more needs to be done on a global scale, and that's why passage of Bill S-3 is important to our government.

I urge the committee members to improve the amendments proposed in Bill S-3. Again, the sustainability of our fisheries is a top priority for us. Together with our partners we're committed to improving the way fisheries and aquaculture are managed through science-based reforms, stakeholder and aboriginal engagement, and better access to export markets for Canadian fish and seafood. We're also committed to renewing Canadian Coast Guard assets and its services to Canadians to ensure a safe and efficient navigation and bolster our already robust response to maritime incidents. Going forward we'll continue to ensure Canada's natural resources are developed sustainably and responsibly through strong regulatory frameworks, sound science, and strategic investment.

Over the last year you've discussed and considered many important policies and issues facing our fish and seafood industry at this committee. As we look ahead, I want to thank the committee for your hard work and your assured commitment to Canadians.

I will now ask Mr. Muldoon to explain the estimates.

• (1115)

The Chair: Mr. Muldoon, I believe you're going to do that at the beginning of the second hour. It was my understanding that you were going to do your presentation at the beginning.

Mr. Marty Muldoon (Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): That's fine.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go into questions at this point in time. We'll start off with a 10-minute round, with Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Minister, it's good to see you. I hope you will appreciate that we in this caucus have 10 minutes to ask you questions. We have many questions we would like to ask, so we're going to try to use our time quite judiciously, and with all respect I'd ask you to do the same, if you wouldn't mind.

I'm going to share my time, Mr. Chairman, with Mr. Cleary.

Minister, as you know there has been some considerable concern over proposed changes to the aquaculture regulations that deal with the release of toxic substances into the aquatic ecosystem. I'd like to ask you what your department has done to respond to these concerns and when can we expect these regulations to come into force.

Hon. Gail Shea: Thank you for that question.

The aquaculture activities regulations provide more clarity and more consistency and transparency to aquaculture. They bring greater oversight, which includes the obligation to report all drug and pesticide use at aquaculture facilities. They also require immediate notification if there is any wild fish mortality.

They do not allow aquaculture operators to use any drugs they are currently not using; they do not approve any types of new drugs. These drugs are regulated by Health Canada. They do not allow for any new substance to be added to treatment regimes.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I take from this that the concerns of the 120 signatories to a letter who made representation to you last month didn't have any impact.

The second part of my question was about when those new regulations will come into force. I'm going to ask that somebody take note of that. I'm going to ask you another question, again trying to use my time wisely.

The second question I want to ask you has to do with DFO deciding to open the herring fishery both last year and this year in the territories of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Haida Gwaii, and the Heiltsuk first nations. In the face of and as a result of their opposition to the decision to open that fishery, there was some real conflict pending and much concern on the west coast over the way this was being handled. I wonder whether you could, please, give us some assurance that your department is working with those first nations—as we speak, in effect—to make sure this doesn't happen again next year.

• (1120)

Hon. Gail Shea: I can assure you we are working with first nations.

DFO consults widely, not just with first nations but with all fishermen, when it comes to species management and developing fishing plans. At the end of the day our decision is guided mostly by science, so we share that science with the different groups. It's not just for herring; it's for every species. We do a tremendous amount of consultation, and obviously we don't always agree at the end of the day.

In this particular case, the science showed that we could open the fishery, and they gave us a number for the quota we could safely fish without hurting the growth of the stock. We actually took a more conservative approach and went to only half that amount of quota.

As I said, we don't always agree, but our decisions are based on science.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: My concern, Minister, is that, for two years in a row, there either weren't the fish there or there ended up being a very serious potential of conflict. It was almost as if the first nations' recommendations were completely ignored. I urge you to please ensure that it doesn't happen again.

Mr. Chairman, I'll turn it over to Mr. Cleary.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chisholm and Mr. Chair, and thank you to the minister.

I have two sets of questions and I'm going to get both sets of questions out before I ask you to answer, Ms. Minister.

I will reiterate, though, what Mr. Chisholm said about our having 10 minutes on this side to ask questions; that barely skims the surface in terms of the budget and the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act.

My first question has to do with northern shrimp and the science around the setting of this year's quota. In October 2014, at the 36th annual meeting of NAFO in Spain, it was recommended to place a moratorium on northern shrimp in the NAFO regulatory area of the Grand Banks, so everybody in my province, Newfoundland and Labrador, expected a huge cut in the quota for 2015. But what happened at the end of the day, as you know, Ms. Minister, is that the 2015 quota is left pretty much unchanged from 2014. What we heard in Newfoundland and Labrador was that there was new science. The reason the quota is static for 2015 is due to new science.

Can you comment on the new science and can you release that new science? What exactly is that science?

The second question has to do with northern shrimp, but with the LIFO policy, the last in, first out policy. I know that for the second year in a row a delegation was up in Newfoundland and Labrador—I believe they met with you yesterday, Ms. Minister—and the headlines back home in Newfoundland and Labrador have the minister apparently softening her stance on the LIFO policy, considering its economic impact on rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Are you softening your stance?

So there are two questions there, Ms. Minister.

Hon. Gail Shea: Thank you.

What I can tell you is that the science for 2015 was presented to the northern shrimp advisory committee on March 4, and consultations were held with them. The science was better than was originally expected.

What is really good news is that the price of shrimp is predicted to be up again, to as much as \$1.40 a pound. I remember not that long ago, in my early days in this portfolio, when they were negotiating from 35 cents a pound, so it's quite significant.

On the LIFO policy—

• (1125)

Mr. Ryan Cleary: I'm sorry to interrupt, Ms. Minister, but most of your comment had to do with the price of shrimp. Can you release the science? Will your department release this new science that the decision to keep the quota static was based on?

Hon. Gail Shea: I'll ask Trevor to respond to that.

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager (Assistant Deputy Minister, Ecosystems and Oceans Science, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you, Minister.

As the minister has indicated, at the northern shrimp advisory committee meeting we tabled all the science we have. All of the findings of our stock assessment and stock surveys were tabled at that time, and essentially what we presented was new data in the sense of a new year's worth of survey information. I suppose that's new information, as we just collected it, but other than that there's no new science that has generated this year's quota.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Can you table that science here, sir?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Well, we've tabled already the northern...but we certainly could table that which we tabled at the advisory committee. I don't see a problem with that.

Hon. Gail Shea: On the last part of the question, I did meet with the all-party committee yesterday on the northern shrimp. They had requested a meeting with me so that they could present a report on the economic impact of the LIFO policy. I've said nothing to them about the LIFO policy. I listened to them, asked some questions, received the report, and will be reviewing the report.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Thank you.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Let me go back, Madam Minister, and ask you about the oil spill response. We just had an incident, of course, in English Bay. But I take you back to what a federal panel noted in 2013, that there are gaps in the government's oil spill response. It stated that a "timely response to a spill is a key factor in mitigating its effects". Then in October 2014, it took 20 hours for a coast guard vessel to arrive on the scene off Haida Gwaii, and we've had this recent incident in English Bay. This affects not just the west coast but the east coast.

I wonder whether you would assure members of this committee that, in spite of the fact that there has been a reduction in the budget as it relates to this issue, your department is going to make sure work is being done to provide better and the actual world-class response time that you proclaim.

Hon. Gail Shea: Well, I just have to correct you. There is no reduction in the budget. The reduction that you see in the budget is the result of a project that was completed, and that was the removal of the fuel from the *Zalinski* off the coast of British Columbia. That project was completed.

What we have done over the last three years is add \$183 million to that budget to build our world-class system.

But I will ask the commissioner of the coast guard to respond to that.

Ms. Jody Thomas (Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you for the question.

As the minister noted, there has been no reduction to the coast guard environmental response budget, and there has been no reduction in our on-water response capacity in terms of response specialists.

With regard to the *Simushir* incident, in fact that was a very well-executed response. A freighter off Haida Gwaii, not in Canadian waters, not in the 12-mile zone, was adrift, and we kept it off the rocks. We kept it safe until an ocean-going tug—we're not tow operators—could arrive to tow it into Prince Rupert. The coast guard did exactly what it was expected to do. It arrived, assessed the situation, and saved that vessel from the rocks through some quite brilliant seamanship, in fact in very difficult weather conditions.

With regard to the *Marathassa*, the coast guard was on the scene within 20 minutes of a notification of sheen on the water. It worked from five o'clock on Wednesday evening Pacific Time, well into the day, 24-hours straight, to get that vessel identified, to have the master admit that it was his vessel, to skim the pollutant off the water, and then to boom the ship, and it continued that work. Today we expect the *Marathassa* to leave Vancouver harbour. I have been quite vocal that it was quite an extraordinary response by the Canadian Coast Guard, and I still believe that it was.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Welcome Minister and officials. It's nice to see you again.

I have a couple of questions—and, oh, before I start, I'm going to be sharing my time with Mr. Weston. I'm going to ask both questions, and then we'll turn it over to Mr. Weston after the answers.

I see in your brief that we have an increase of \$283.9 million in these estimates, and that one of the reasons is the funding for the renewal of the Canadian Coast Guard fleet, both vessels and helicopters. I'm interested in that. Could someone please talk about the significant funding increase, and tell us what the vessels are, what we may have delivered, what we're going to have delivered, and where they may be built?

My second question is related to species at risk. When I look at the main estimates, it looks as though there is a decrease in funding, but I'm wondering if that's due to a sunset of a program. Could somebody address that, and also whether there are other species being examined that would be added to the list, or what is the process to do that?

Thank you.

• (1130)

Hon. Gail Shea: The difference that you see for the species at risk is because it was a sunset, but that has been renewed in the budget. It will be \$75 million over three years to carry out the species at risk program, and most of that of course is with Environment Canada.

On the fleet renewal, in the past while we have accepted nine new midshore patrol vessels. We have accepted two hovercrafts. We have five new lifeboats; these are 47-foot lifeboats. There are three other specialty vessels, three nearshore vessels, and of course many small boats and barges.

As you're aware, the Prime Minister made an announcement of more than \$5 billion in federal government assets, so part of that funding goes to procuring more vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Minister.

Can anyone tell me whether or not there are other species being examined under the species at risk?

Mr. Kevin Stringer (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Ecosystems and Fisheries Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Sure, I can give some information.

Currently there are 111 aquatic species that are listed under the species at risk. COSEWIC, which is the independent scientific body, makes recommendations to the minister. There's a process to consider those recommendations. We do a recovery-potential assessment—can you recover the species?—we do a socio-economic analysis, and we do consultations on it as well.

We have a number of those in the hopper. There are some interesting ones: Atlantic cod, some of the Atlantic salmon, and a number of other species that are currently going through that process.

As I said, there are 111 species that are already on the list, so they've already gone through that process, and it is a regular cycle. I'll get you the specific number. I think there are 25 that we have not listed, but there are 107 that are in the process of a decision about whether to list them or not.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you. On the *Marathassa* spill, “world class” means excellent. It doesn't mean perfect. I commend you and all your colleagues on the all-night effort and your commitment to do an assessment to make sure we're always improving and doing better all the time. That's world class.

Minister, thanks for being with us. I think it was an extraordinary budget for fisheries.

In terms of the Pacific Salmon Foundation, I would appreciate if you could comment on what led to our government investing the \$2 million. We know the Pacific Salmon Foundation promotes science, education, and habitat, engages with 30,000 to 40,000 volunteers in the province of B.C., and has a 10 to one return on investment. For others who would think of approaching our government in budget 2016, what would be some of the best practices that might be embodied there?

Before you answer, I would appreciate also posing another question. You referred to science and infrastructure, and mentioned that there is an \$80 million amount in the budget that would bolster our commitment to the quality of science. It would be interesting, I think, for us to hear how you see the government maybe deploying that \$80 million amount.

If we have time, I would love to hear from the coast guard on what they think about an idea I have vetted publicly to impose criminal liability on those who would abandon vessels on the coast of B.C.

• (1135)

Hon. Gail Shea: Okay, well there are a number of questions in there.

I will just respond to the Pacific Salmon Foundation. They currently have a research project where they're going to study sea survival of wild Atlantic salmon. I don't have to tell you how important wild Atlantic salmon is to British Columbians. There are several partners in that project and with the \$2 million in the budget the federal government will become a partner.

As you know we support the wild salmon fishery in British Columbia in a number of different ways. One is through supporting the education of schoolchildren and supporting hatcheries. We support hatcheries to the tune of \$26 million. That combined with an additional investment in the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program will do a lot of good work in B.C., on top of the work we have already done. The current budget has \$30 million for the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, which is on top of what we have already spent.

I will ask the commissioner of the coast guard to speak to the science because the science will be invested in our world-class tanker safety system, which is part of what the coast guard does. I'll ask Jody to respond to that.

Ms. Jody Thomas: It's probably Trevor on science.

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: I can talk about the science aspects of it.

With respect to the infrastructure commentary around the \$80 million, there are a number of different things. We operate, as you know, out of 11 major research institutions across the country. They are a variety of laboratory and operational facilities.

The money that is coming into those is quite varied. It varies literally from the rather, frankly, humdrum—we're going to fix the HVAC at a particular building that's in need of repair—through to more substantial upgrades in our wharf structures in a couple of places.

A big push that the department is making is to expand its capacity in the genetics-genomics area. Biocontainment is very important for us. We're upgrading a number of our laboratory facilities to improve our ability to work on a number of genetic experimentation areas where biocontainment is very important. We also have, on the physical oceanography and physical chemistry side of our work, a fair bit of work under way to upgrade our ability to process samples at a higher rate. I won't go into the details on that, but there are a series of automations in there.

All of this will come together to position ourselves in a way that we can generate science advice in a much more timely and effective and broad-based fashion.

Hon. Gail Shea: If I could add as well, some of that science will inform decisions taken with regard to what the coast guard does in responding to incidents.

Ms. Jody Thomas: The science is a critical element of how we respond to incidents. Understanding the behaviour of substances in the water is critical in terms of knowing how to respond. Knowing what the habitat is in the area and all those kinds of things are critical to an effective response.

With regard to derelict vessels, we're working with Transport Canada now to look at how to manage the derelict vessel problem. Certainly with the cost for remediating a 100-foot vessel varying between \$10 million to \$50 million it is a significant problem. It is about the owner of the vessel being responsible, absolutely. Some sort of sanction to force owners to be responsible for their vessels is critical.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you for that.

I would just like to point out the excellent work that's being done on the west coast by your scientists, including Dr. Miller. You probably know about it. She is working with the Pacific Salmon Foundation on a review of over 30,000 fish, looking at 45 different pathogens across five different tissue areas. It seems to be world-leading research that is going to inform some of our policies and what we do in both the public and private sectors.

Do you have any comment on that element of the science?

Hon. Gail Shea: I'll ask Trevor to comment on that.

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Dr. Miller's work is indeed world class. She's part of a comprehensive team. She's part of a big lab, and she's by no means working alone. Her work is, as you've already described, really important in enhancing our ability to understand interactions between wild and farmed animals in the sea.

She's doing an awful lot of work, as you've suggested, in the area of pathogens, but as I mentioned, she's not alone in that work. Dr. Johnson, Dr. Jones, Dr. Beamish, to name but three, are also heavily involved in trying to expand our understanding of how that particular suite of ecosystems on the west coast in Haida Gwaii south, if you will, in that kind of context, are affected and influenced by ocean conditions, by the changing ecosystem structure, and so on. So there's quite a wide range of work there to enhance our understanding of what's happening in that part of the world.

• (1140)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Weston.

Ms. Murray.

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

Thank you for being here to talk about the estimates and the department.

I'm going to focus my comments on my concerns about the poor response to the fuel spill in the Vancouver harbour, and how that ties into budget cuts in the estimates. I note that there has been a more than 50% cut in environmental response services since the 2013-14 budget, so it's not surprising that the response to this unfortunate incident in Vancouver harbour was so far from world class.

The first question I have is on the briefing yesterday. On page 6 it says that the coast guard will take over the response to a marine pollution incident if the ship owner is unwilling to, unable to, or is unknown, and will provide on-scene commander roles.

Is that the situation with this Vancouver harbour spill from the *Marathassa*?

Ms. Jody Thomas: In the case of the *Marathassa*.... Number one, I have to clarify there has not been a 50% reduction to the environmental response budget.

Ms. Joyce Murray: That's in the estimates document we have here.

Ms. Jody Thomas: Right. We had a one-time infusion of money to respond to the *Brigadier General M.G. Zalinski* wreck in northern B.C. That was \$46.5 million for one year. We spent under \$25 million cleaning that vessel and that money is no longer in the budget. It is not a cut to the A-base budget.

We have had a small reduction in the budget due to—

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay.

In terms of the on-scene commander, was that the case, since the vessel was not identified until a number of hours after the spill was first called in?

Ms. Jody Thomas: The polluter-pay system is very clear that the polluter is responsible, and if the polluter cannot be identified, then yes, coast guard is the on-scene commander. That was the role we played.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you.

According to the Premier of British Columbia, there did not appear to be an incident command protocol in place, which may explain the confusion and the absence of notification of the City of Vancouver for 12 hours.

I'd like to clarify something, Ms. Thomas. You made a comment to a previous questioner that the coast guard was immediately taking action, etc., but according to the former commander of the coast guard base, there was just a rubber boat on site, because the hovercraft in Richmond couldn't operate on the oil slick on the waters, and it was actually 12 hours after the spill notification happened that the absorbent booms were finally in place.

Is having the booms in place in a close-in spill in clear weather and calm waters...? Do you see that as a world-class timing for a spill in a location like this?

Ms. Jody Thomas: That's a relatively simplistic explanation of what occurred.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Could you just answer the question?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I am.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you.

Ms. Jody Thomas: We were the incident commander, which is different from being the on-scene commander. The incident commander is in the integrated command centre where we bring everybody involved in the spill into a centre. We were in charge there. There was never a loss of coast guard leadership in the incident command.

Ms. Joyce Murray: I'd like to contest that because apparently it was two days later before the coast guard actually had a command centre set up to coordinate that, and a lot of the concerns the city and the province had were about the lack of clarity as to who was to do what and the lack of coordination by the federal government.

Ms. Jody Thomas: The coast guard took charge of the incident within 20 minutes of being informed of a sheen on the water.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you.

Do you see as "world class" a 12-hour delay in having absorbent booms in place when every other factor is in favour of a quick response? If so, I'd like you to table any information that would support that as an adequate, never mind world-class, response.

• (1145)

Ms. Jody Thomas: There are multiple elements to a response to a leak of fuel. Number one, identifying the vessel was critical. That took a long time.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay, so thank you. I asked a very specific question about a 12-hour timing before an absorbent boom is in place—

Ms. Jody Thomas: Yes, but I'm explaining—

Ms. Joyce Murray: But I'm not getting an answer so...

Ms. Jody Thomas: Well, you're not letting me answer.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Well, I'd like an answer to that.

Ms. Jody Thomas: I'm telling you that there are multiple steps and it doesn't go straight to booming. You have to identify what vessel is sinking.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay, thank you. Now would you table any data that would show that a 12-hour delay is an acceptable delay, never mind world class. Thank you. I will appreciate that.

Apparently the coast guard leadership and the government claimed that the Kitsilano coast guard base closure would not have made any difference. However, a former coast guard base commander, Fred Moxey, claimed the coast guard base did have the capacity to respond, and did have the booming capacity to respond. They would have been onsite within six minutes and could have had booms in place within an hour.

That was then confirmed by Mike Cotter, who is a long-term executive manager of the Jericho Sailing Centre, and who, for 25 years, had worked hand in hand with search and rescue on these waters. He took photos of a response vessel that was actually located at the Kits coast guard base and was based there.

I will quote Mr. Cotter. He said there were:

...various reports from the Canadian Coast Guard officials stating that the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station was not equipped with pollution response equipment. I know this not to be true, having been familiarized with the Station, and having witnessed their environmental response to several incidents over the 25 years I managed the...Centre while the [base] was open...

Then he enclosed photos of this pollution response vessel that was based at Kits.

It has been very puzzling to people in Vancouver why the coast guard and government have been making claims that appear to be not true.

Ms. Jody Thomas: The coast guard has not made any claims that are not true. The Kitsilano coast guard station was a search and rescue station that was equipped with a boom to respond to small spills that are connected to an incident where a vessel sinks—a small pleasure craft. They had 700 feet of boom at the maximum, and on the day that station was closed.

Fifteen hundred and twenty metres of boom were used to boom the *Marathassa*. The response that was designed by coast guard leadership in conjunction with WCMRC was to use the most effective, most professional, most trained individuals. They are the response organization in WCMRC. They are the responders for Vancouver harbour.

With the polluter-pay system as it exists in Canada, every vessel must have a relationship with a response organization or be able to respond to a spill. WCMRC is that response organization on the west coast of B.C.—

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you.

I have some other questions, and that information has been contradicted by actual commanders of the Kitsilano coast guard base who have said there were over 600 metres of boom available at the Kitsilano coast guard base.

How does the coast guard plan to improve its oil spill response immediately? What is the process the coast guard will use to restore confidence that has been lost in our province, our city, our provincial government, and our residents due to the confusion and delays in response to the spill?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I will reiterate that there should be no confusion or no confidence lost. The coast guard responded. We are drafting a terms of reference for a post-op that we will do. We do this after every incident. This one is no different.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you. We'll be interested to see that.

I would also appreciate the data, the research, that would support the coast guard's contention that two days after the spill, or less than two days, the spill size was 2,700 litres. Apparently that was just from a visual look and had nothing to do with the crude oil bunker fuel that had sunk below the surface. Also, the assertion was made that 80% had been recovered at that point. I would like to know on what basis, what factual basis, those claims were made early on.

Would you or the minister table any information to support those assertions in fact of the size of the spill, which the city is contesting, and the percentage that had been cleaned up?

• (1150)

Ms. Jody Thomas: In terms of the estimate, that came from Transport Canada and Environment Canada. They have a highly technical and scientific process called the national aerial surveillance program. That flight—

Ms. Joyce Murray: So the coast guard itself had no data to support that?

Ms. Jody Thomas: We worked—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Murray. Your time is up.

Ms. Jody Thomas: If I could just answer? The—

The Chair: I'll let Ms. Thomas finish, but—

Ms. Joyce Murray: [Inaudible—Editor]...it's not acceptable to me—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Murray.

Ms. Murray, I said I would let her finish. Please, let her finish.

Ms. Jody Thomas: The coast guard works in tandem with Transport Canada and Environment Canada. They provide us that piece of information.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you. So the coast guard did not have the verification...?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Murray.

Ms. Jody Thomas: The coast guard did have verification.

The Chair: We'll move on now to our next questioner, Mr. Sopuck.

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

It's a pleasure to be here with you. I'm always impressed by the competence and professionalism of DFO's senior staff. That is not a hollow compliment. We meet with a lot of staff, and DFO senior staff are certainly right up there.

Unlike my colleague opposite, I'm more interested in results than in process. Of course, the method of the response to the oil spill—

A voice: [Inaudible—Editor]

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I didn't speak when you spoke. I expect the same courtesy.

The response to the *Marathassa* incident is very important, but I'm actually interested in the results. I presume there were analyses conducted during and after the event. What were the actual environmental effects of that spill once the response was completed? Are there any lasting effects or have things been returned to a largely pristine condition?

Hon. Gail Shea: I'm going to ask the commissioner to respond to that, but I just want to say for this committee's information that all MPs were offered a briefing with the coast guard. Very few took the opportunity to sit down with the coast guard and listen to the facts of what actually happened in the *Marathassa* spill.

Ms. Jody Thomas: Thank you, Minister.

In terms of the ongoing situation in Vancouver harbour, the unified command that managed the spill has now been stood down, but the coast guard has created a project office to work with the Ministry of Environment, first nations, the city, and Environment Canada to do ongoing water monitoring. We will look at surface, mid-level water column, and the seabed to ensure there are no long-term or lasting impacts from the spill.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I know it's difficult to predict, but is the expectation that the area will be returned to its original condition?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Yes, that's absolutely the expectation. There is one beach left to open. The rest have been opened over the course of the last three days. We expect the last beach to be open today, but we're not guaranteeing that.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I think your cautious and, dare I say, conservative approach to doing this is the right approach.

To switch gears completely, we were very pleased to see the additional \$10 million in each of three years for the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. When the program was initiated a couple of years ago, one of my concerns was the department's ability to manage such a wide-ranging and diverse program, with projects all across the country. I'm extremely pleased with what I saw, and I want to again put that on the record and commend the department for its very competent management of a very difficult program. I'm in touch with the user groups on a regular basis, and they are extremely pleased, not only with the program but with the relationships that they have built up with your regional staff.

Can you, Minister, or one of your staff, describe to us the results of the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program to date and what you expect going forward?

Hon. Gail Shea: To date, of the \$25 million that had been committed previous to this budget, \$16 million had been committed to more than 280 projects across the country, varying from smaller to larger projects and from one partner to multiple partners in projects. All this funding is leveraging more funding and is a tremendous investment in our fisheries habitat.

It's well received by all the groups. We see more groups are forming because they see the opportunity to do something with fishways, and I have to commend you, Mr. Sopuck, for the work you have done and the support you've given for this program, because it is turning out to be very much a success.

• (1155)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I think again lots of people talk about fish habitat, but what I like about this particular program is that fish habitat is conserved, enhanced, and protected in conjunction with local groups that have a vested interest in those recreational fisheries. Of course, the benefits of that program go far beyond recreational fishing. Any time water quality and aquatic habitats are improved we all benefit.

I'd like to talk about the Atlantic salmon review task force that you initiated a few months ago. Can you elaborate on what the results are and what you see going forward? I'm very pleased with what I see; from what I hear the situation is a very important one. The resource is very important, but what have been some specific results to date and what do you see going forward?

Hon. Gail Shea: When the committee was formed I had a discussion with them, and they requested that action be taken sooner rather than later. I asked the committee if they were comfortable with bringing forward an interim report, which they did. We have implemented the recommendations in that interim report.

The committee is meeting in Newfoundland today I believe and they have one more meeting in Quebec. They're hearing from a number of groups and individuals. We're moving to the catch and release fishery in the gulf region. We have made some other changes as well as extending the bass fishery because they see bass as predators of salmon of course.

I look forward to their final report sometime over the next few months, so we can make further changes, because one of the things that we want to ensure is that anglers are not the only group that will be addressed. It's just one small piece of the puzzle.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I'll switch gears again to seals now. In the economic action plan 2015, something like over \$5 million was allocated for the marketing of seal products internationally.

What is your vision for that program? What results do you see possibly being generated for the sealing communities of eastern Canada?

Hon. Gail Shea: As you know, as a government we've been rock solid in our support for the Canadian seal hunt. We continue to tell the truth about sealing and the affects that the seal population has on our marine ecosystems. We have science that certainly supports that.

The situation we have with the European Union is, of course, we said their ban on Canadian seal products was unfair. However, at the end of the day products from the indigenous seal hunt will find their way to European markets. This funding will help develop those

markets, but will also help to develop new seal products as well, not just for the indigenous seal hunt but for all sealers.

We hope to develop new products and find markets for those new products.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: At the environment committee, which I happen to sit on as well, we're doing a study of licensed hunting and trapping. Dion Dakins from the sealing committee of the Fur Institute of Canada was there and gave us a very fulsome explanation of the seal industry.

Further to that, where do you think we might see new markets and what seal products might be coming on the market over the next little while? Is research being done on the development of new products and other things?

Hon. Gail Shea: Yes, some research is being done. We're working with some companies. For example, seal oil has been seen as very rich in omega-3, so that has a value in the marketplace for health-conscious folks who seem to love seal oil.

There is also a market for meat. I'm told it takes some research to develop those meat products. They're sold locally within Newfoundland or within the Magdalen Islands, but we need to develop those products further in taking them to other markets.

• (1200)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Yes. One would think that with seal protein being of such high quality, the potential should be quite significant.

Switching gears to the west coast, 2010 and 2014 both had record sockeye salmon runs in the Fraser. Can we conclude from this that the system as a whole is capable of producing such large runs? To me, it's a measure of ecosystem health that those large runs actually occurred. The 2014 run was so large it almost overwhelmed the commercial fishery.

Can you or one of your staff speculate on that, Minister?

Hon. Gail Shea: We have made a lot of investment in wild Pacific salmon. For example, we invest about \$65 million in the wild salmon program in British Columbia, \$20 million of that in the Fraser River stocks alone. We do a lot of work, a lot of investment. It's good to see healthy runs of fish come back. It certainly was good news for fishers in British Columbia.

I'll just ask if one of the staff here wants to add to that.

Mr. Kevin Stringer: Sure. Thanks.

Salmon is an extraordinary species on both coasts. It goes in cycles, right? Last year, as was just pointed out, was an extraordinary year. It was in fact one of the five largest returns for Fraser River sockeye, which is the big run. It's not the only big run, but it's the big run. It was one of the five largest returns since we started being confident of the numbers we were tracking from back in the fifties. It really was.

This year is not expected to be as big a run, but the fact that we continue to get those runs, the fact that we're estimating increases in a number of runs this year, the fact that sockeye on the Skeena River is likely to be up this year—we're seeing signs of health that give us some encouragement.

We remain concerned. We continue to make the investments to ensure that habitat, at-sea mortality, predation, and all those things are all being studied, but there are some positive signs.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Before we proceed to our second round, we'll take a brief recess to change some seats around.

I apologize, Minister. I meant to thank you for your time with us today. Sorry; I just got a little ahead of myself. Thank you very much for being with us and for answering questions here today.

Certainly we look forward to the second hour with the officials.

Thank you.

Hon. Gail Shea: Thank you very much for having me.

I'd just like to say to the committee members that I know we only have 10 minutes here to answer questions, but I am in question period every day, or my parliamentary secretary is.

• (1200) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1210)

The Chair: I'd ask members to take their seats so we can proceed.

We'll start again with Mr. Muldoon, the assistant deputy minister.

Would you mind walking us through the main estimates before we start into the next round of questions?

Mr. Marty Muldoon: I'd be happy to.

While you find your way to slide 5, where I'll begin, I'll just reiterate a point I'm going to come back to a little bit later, which is found earlier in the deck. That is, these main estimates include only those items, as the committee would well be aware, that had been approved in previous estimates processes. That fact becomes important when I get you to slide 5, and I'll just point out that while there is, as the minister pointed out, a \$284-million rounded increase this year, that excludes the amounts we will bring in through supplementary estimates for the federal infrastructure funding approvals.

On slide 5, you will note the disbursements between our operating and capital expenditures, etc. This is just to give a demonstration of where that \$284 million affects us. The primary driver's on our capital side, and I'm going to just highlight a few more points.

While it looks rather large, remember that this is main estimates over main estimates, so what we started with last year and what we started with this year. Where we ended last year is only \$26 million short of the 2015-16 main estimates. Said again, we are starting with \$1.889 billion in these main estimates, and the 2014-15 ending expenditures for the department will be in the order of \$1.86 billion. It's very close. That's a lot of shifting and mostly just timing.

Let's turn to slide 6. As Minister Shea had highlighted, the main story this year for DFO's estimates is asset renewal. While this page won't add up to exactly this figure, it's awfully close. I would just point out that \$249 million of the \$284 million is about asset renewal for the coast guard fleet—land, air, and marine.

In the first one, approximately \$114 million is for the procurement of light-lift helicopters. I'm pleased to state that the organization has taken receipt of its first helicopter. It was delivered at the very end of 2014-15, and the remainder will follow over the course of this year and next.

The next item is \$44 million for the offshore fisheries science vessels. Work has been done at the Vancouver shipyard. As the committee is probably well aware from the last few different times of main and supplementary estimates appearances, there are three vessels involved in this build. At this point, these funds are necessary for preparations before construction. We've gone ahead with the purchase of long-lead items: the sophisticated navigation systems, the propulsion systems, those kinds of things that are necessary, as well as the engineering and design work.

There's \$41 million for life extensions and modernizations. Just as a point of clarification, the mid-life modernizations are basically an activity we undertake after a vessel has exceeded 50% of its planned useful life, and they don't add to the life. They basically recondition the vessel to continue and meet the full expected life. By contrast, a vessel life extension, which we're using quite extensively right now while we implement our overall vessel renewal program, is an extension to the life of the vessel. If it was meant to be on the water for 25 years, we may get it to 30 years through a VLE, or a vessel life extension. So \$41 million is included in these main estimates for that purpose.

Rounding out that approximately \$250 million are three more items. There's \$40 million for the medium-lift helicopter program. Seven helicopters will be purchased under that initiative. The first is due one year from this summer. As well, though it's not on this list because it's a little bit smaller in aggregate value, there is \$6 million towards the polar class icebreaker that gets us going on some very early stages of that program, and some refit money for the CCGS *Amundsen* vessel.

Then you see the remaining items here. Renewal of the Pacific and Atlantic integrated commercial fisheries programs was announced last year in budget 2014. Last year we supplemented that money, but this year I'm able to book it in through the main estimates, so you see it here. Then the \$22 million was also a 2014 item, and we were successful in utilizing close to half of the \$40 million announced under 2014. We ramped up quickly. We got \$17.8 million into the program and into the field to the harbours that needed it, so the difference, the \$22.2 million, is what you see here being put through the main estimates this time around.

Of course, as we report in every main estimates, this is the final reduction for the department under the reviews, and every other department has incurred outside of targeted review. We were one of the few that went through that and we have successfully met all of those objectives.

• (1215)

I did take notice of a line item on page 5 to note where the funding had increased for the department.

I also wanted to point out slide 7, capital vote redefinition. It's a notable item that any department that has capital in its vote structure will be going through this year, and it is a one-time reset.

Basically what happened was that all of government was looking at how capital is codified in its systems and realized that everybody treats capital projects slightly differently when it comes to work on the borderline between maintenance work and minor capital work, so now all departments that have capital launched a major reset. No money has been taken away from the department. It's net neutral. But basically now all activities that should be in the operating vote are going to be in the operating vote, and capital activities are purely defined against the government's accounting standard.

For us, that means \$88 million is basically moving between votes. It's so many different little places. I can do the bulk of it for you. If you were ever to ask me to unpack that for you, I can kind of describe it. Basically what it means is, for instance under the coast guard, where they would have been, maybe under our acceptable accounting practices, spending a great deal of money to maintain a vessel, through its capital program that money will now be on its operating side. It's still in the program. It hasn't left the department.

There is one example, and that's the last slide, number 8, regarding capital redefinition. This is the only example in our main estimates where we actually move money from one program to another in our program activity architecture, our program alignment architecture. It's very small. It's \$3.8 million shifted between where it used to be spent under operational readiness or fleet readiness. We took the opportunity this time around, because we always, every year, in year, had to transfer this money over to our maintenance dredging program. This time, while we did the capital redefinition, we also aligned it with where the activity actually occurs. I just wanted to point that out for full and transparent disclosure.

I'll pass by the next number of slides. I put them in here every year with the committee to give you somewhat of a better lens, looking by program, of where the organization uses its resources.

I'll draw your attention to slide 13, the last slide. As you're well aware, we won't get the main estimates until they have been voted,

through this process and others, but I would point out that interim supply is now in place. It was passed by the Senate on March 31. We're out of the gate for the first three-twelfths of the fiscal year, with all votes' operating authorities of \$450 million.

Again, this is just a reminder that we will probably increase, I would say, substantially the operating authorities of the department over the course of this year for three reasons. First is the bringing in of the year-one installment of the organization's allocation of federal infrastructure money. Second, we will bring in the operating budget carry-forward amounts that we will be eligible to carry forward, and third, the capital budget carry-forward amounts, as well.

That was it, Mr. Chair, for a bit of a flavour of what the main estimates entail.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Muldoon. We appreciate that.

Now we'll move to a five-minute round of questions, and we'll start with Monsieur Lapointe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I first want to point out how deplorable it is that the official opposition only had 10 minutes to ask the minister questions when we are supposed to be dealing with the fundamental aspects of Bill S-3, Port State Measures Agreement Implementation Act, as well as the 2015-16 Main Estimates. It's a serious breach of the fundamental principles of responsible government. So we will have to focus on the remaining hour, starting with the main estimates.

An amount of \$40.9 million is planned for extending the lives of Coast Guard vessels. Of that amount, \$13.6 million will go to Davie Canada Yard, in Quebec. That's pretty good news, but it is not a lot considering that \$33 billion is currently allocated for the construction of new vessels.

Moreover, when it comes to the construction of those new vessels, the government has experienced a variety of fairly worrisome difficulties, including delivery delays and cost escalation. In 2010, when all that started, Davie Canada Yard was in pretty bad shape, but it was restructured to such an extent that Lloyd's List North American Maritime Awards recently recognized the yard with an award for excellence.

Regarding the issues related to the building of new vessels, can we expect the \$33 billion that has been allocated to ultimately be released? Can we expect future decisions to include the Davie Canada Yard in Quebec City?

• (1220)

[English]

Ms. Jody Thomas: Thank you for the question. Davie shipyard we use frequently for vessel life extensions. In fact, we have two vessels in Davie right now. *Des Groseilliers*, one of our medium icebreakers, is there in order to have a refit done before the Arctic season, and the *Earl Grey* is now in Davie for nine months. The national shipbuilding procurement strategy awarded contracts to two yards. At that time, the two chosen were Irving and Vancouver shipyards. Davie remains available for really critical vessel life extension and refit work. Having three sustainable yards in this country is critical, and the work that Davie is doing now is very important to the coast guard fleet.

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe: As you just said, there are only three major shipyards that can carry out this kind of work.

Are you telling me that Davie could be awarded some of those contracts?

[English]

Ms. Jody Thomas: Davie will not be getting vessels that were awarded under NSPS. Those vessels have been named.

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe: Thank you.

Last year, salmon runs in Quebec rivers decreased dramatically. That makes for an extremely gloomy climate in the wildlife industry.

Do you think the Fisheries and Oceans Canada budgets for conservation, research and Atlantic salmon stock assessment activities are sufficient? If so, given such poor results, how do you justify the positive balance of investments and resources for ensuring the maintenance of Atlantic salmon stocks in rivers not only in eastern Quebec, but also across the Maritimes?

Mr. Kevin Stringer: Thank you for the question.

[English]

Salmon really is a significant issue. The minister spoke to the advisory committee that was recently established and which has had meetings across the Atlantic. Our first meeting was in Halifax, then in Moncton, St. John's now, and then there's a meeting in Quebec. At each of the meetings the advisory committee meets with a group of stakeholders to talk about what is happening in that particular area and what specific issues and steps can be taken to address the concerns that everybody has in the stocks. The reality is that it is a challenge across the Atlantic. It's doing well in some areas. Newfoundland and Labrador are still doing fairly well. In the southern reaches it's a big concern.

With respect to the resources and the funding we have for Atlantic salmon, we spend annually about \$11 million or \$12 million on Atlantic salmon specifically. I would add to that, and the minister spoke to this, the recreational fisheries partnership program's significant investments—

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe: Sorry for the interruption, Mr. Stringer.

You said that consultations were held with stakeholder organizations. That's always a good thing.

Mr. Kevin Stringer: Yes.

Mr. François Lapointe: You are also saying that the steps to be taken have been identified.

Could you tell us what those steps are and how the budget of about \$11 million you just mentioned would be sufficient for those steps?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Stringer: We haven't got the report yet from the committee. We got an interim report that actually said we think you should take a number of steps, for example move to catch and retention only in the gulf area. We did that. We'll look very carefully at the final report that we get from the committee. If it speaks to financial issues, we may look at how we do our spending now, but we don't have that yet.

We had a number of discussions with the committee, some very open and transparent discussions in terms of “Here is how much money we have. Here is where we spend it. Here is what we think the priorities are. What do you think of that?” I very much expect we'll see in the final report views with respect to that and we'll look at that.

• (1225)

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe: Is it not worrisome—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lapointe.

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe: —that we are still thinking about the way to deal with the issue?

[English]

The Chair: I am sorry, your time has expired.

Mr. François Lapointe: That's it.

The Chair: Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you Mr. Muldoon for your helpful presentation on the main estimates. We always appreciate it. I do have some questions on the main estimates but I only have five minutes. To be frank, I'm disappointed and concerned that one of our honourable members of this committee has said, I think, that the commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard hasn't been telling the truth about what happened in English Bay and how they responded, and so on.

In the five minutes I have, I wanted to give Commissioner Thomas an opportunity to walk us through the event in detail and the response of the coast guard to it. Along the way, in your presentation, can you tell us how, if at all, the response would have been different if Kitsilano had still been operational?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Thank you for the question.

In terms of the incident itself and how it rolled out, at 4:48 p.m., Pacific Time, on April 8, the coast guard received the report of pollution in Vancouver harbour. It was described as a sheen. Port Metro Vancouver tasked a vessel to go look at that sheen, and the coast guard sent a vessel to English Bay.

Concurrently, we alerted emergency management partners, including provincial and municipal authorities. We started the process of alerting immediately, and had informed all of our partners by 9 p.m. that evening.

Initial reports from the scene indicated unrecoverable sheen, and we didn't really have a good indication of what exactly the complexity of the situation was until we had photos from overflights. It was an aircraft of opportunity that saw something looking unusual on the water. It was a flat night. The sun was setting, and it was hard to see the oil, the substance, on the water.

We went to the anchorage and looked to see what vessel it could be. There was no gushing spill. It was a slow leak from what we now know to be the *Marathassa*. The tide was changing, so the substance was moving quite significantly.

We contacted the master of the *Marathassa*. He denied it was him. We ended up boarding the vessel and inspecting, but because of the nature of the actual problem on the vessel, it was difficult to determine who was leaking. By nine o'clock, we had determined that the situation was significant and contracted with the WCMRC, which is the response organization and the responsible party for oil spills in Vancouver harbour, to come out and start addressing the incident.

The way we attacked the problem was twofold. We started by skimming, because at that point we still didn't know it was the *Marathassa*. Skimming the substance that was sitting on the water surface ensured that the substance didn't reach the beaches and it prevented a significant problem on the shores.

Over the evening, despite the master's refusal to accept responsibility, we boomed the vessel; 1,520 metres of boom were used. We boomed and skimmed at night. That was the first time we had ever done that. WCMRC has recently invested in new equipment to allow them to operate at night. That was a first for Vancouver harbour.

An incident command post was set up. We had an incident commander on Wednesday evening. By 10 a.m., Pacific Time, we had an incident command post with all partners established in Port Metro Vancouver. By the end of the day, on the 9th, we had a unified command, which means the coast guard was sharing the decision-making of how we were going to attack the problem with every partner who wanted to be involved. At that point it was the Ministry of the Environment, Environment Canada, Transport Canada, several first nations, the City of Vancouver, other municipalities, and multiple private sector partners, including the people who respond to dangers to wildlife, birds, mammals, and fish.

We focused our operations on the high-impact areas, based on the information we had from Environment Canada. We work as a partnership. The coast guard is the operational arm. Environment Canada and Transport Canada regulate and provide scientific information to us.

Based on information on the scene, on Thursday the 9th Transport Canada began to identify that it was in fact the *Marathassa*. At this point the master was still denying it was him. We sent samples of the substance to a lab to determine what the vessel had on board versus what was in the water, and to ensure it was a match. At that point we were able to identify unequivocally that it was the *Marathassa*.

Through the unified command, we continued to coordinate response efforts until today. At the height of the response, we had 75 personnel in the incident command post, and 100 personnel working on the water and the shorelines.

• (1230)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Cleary.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks again to the witnesses.

When the minister was here, she made a comment on the seal hunt. She spoke about her "rock solid" support. I kind of snickered at that. I didn't mean that as a sign of disrespect, but considering the circumstances that we're in with the seal hunt.... Under this Conservative government, we've seen the most bans in history on Canadian seal products. That's not debatable. It's just a fact.

We've seen bans in Russia, the European Union, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Taiwan, and now we have this announcement in the budget of \$5.7 million over five years to market Canadian seal products. That money comes in the context of Carino, one of the largest buyers of seal products, which has decided not to buy any seal pelts this year. Instead, it's going to rely on its inventory. Also, the Canadian Sealers Association has closed its office.

So for the \$5.7 million, while it's welcome, and while it's good news, I couldn't help but snicker when she talked about rock solid support.

I have two questions on that. Number one, where do you hope to get the markets? Where do you plan to focus that \$5.7 million effort over five years? Also, will the money be spent directly by DFO or will the money be spent by the Canadian Sealers Association?

Mr. Matthew King (Deputy Minister, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Just before you start, Tom, I'd like to respond to the first part of the comment.

I couldn't agree more. It's been very frustrating for DFO and the Government of Canada to see countries progressively banning seal imports. It's no surprise that Minister Shea sees this as quite unfair. I myself have spent time in China and in other countries in Asia directly questioning them on the rationale for the ban.

I think there may be forces that are obviously bigger than DFO at play, but I want to assure the member that we continue to go to these places and put our case forward, and we do see the ban as selective and ill advised.

Mr. Tom Rosser (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): To elaborate just a little on that, in terms of our ongoing activities and those that we anticipate, they will be supported by the measures announced in the budget earlier this week. We had, as many committee members will be aware, challenged the European Union's ban on seal products. The—

Mr. Ryan Cleary: I'm sorry to interrupt but I only have a few minutes. My specific question was on the \$5.7 million. Where do you hope to focus that money? What markets do you hope to penetrate? Who's going to spend the money, DFO or the Sealers Association?

Mr. Tom Rosser: We have regular ongoing discussions with representatives of the industry and other concerned federal departments about potential markets, as the deputy indicated. Ministers and deputies, not only from our department but from others, will regularly advocate on behalf of the Canadian seal industry in their travels overseas. We work in close collaboration with stakeholders, and we'll work with them to figure out where best and how best to target the available resources to open markets for Canadian seal products.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: I was in Taiwan a couple of months ago with a parliamentary delegation. One of the reasons I wanted to go to Taiwan was that they decided to ban Canadian seal products in 2012.

When that happened, the anti-seal hunt groups billed it over here in Canada as yet another country coming out against the Canadian seal hunt, but when I got over there and spoke to everybody, from their president to their government officials, what they said was that the ban was more about banning the trade in marine mammals, specifically Japanese whaling and Japanese dolphin-hunting. It had nothing to do with Canadian seals.

Here's my question. The \$5.7 million for markets is one thing, but what exactly is the Canadian government doing to combat the anti-seal protest groups? In Taiwan, for example, their officials were quoting IFAW and Greenpeace in terms of why there shouldn't be a seal hunt because they were killing baby seals. Nothing could be further from the truth.

To summarize, what's being done on the diplomatic front?

• (1235)

Mr. Matthew King: Mr. Chairman, in every country that I have visited—and I actually had quite similar reactions in some—we are using our embassies abroad to open doors for us and to get us audiences with decision-makers in those countries. When I was last in China, I met what I'm sure is the first-ever animal rights group established in China. It was a very vocal group. I wouldn't say that it was the most coherent presentation I'd ever heard, but it did drive home to me the idea that if we're to do this, it's going to take a constant diplomatic effort.

If I could get back to your question on the \$5.7 million, I think what Tom is saying is that we only got the money in our budget a couple of days ago, but we do work very closely with the industry in this country and we're going to meet with them very quickly and try to find a way to maximize the impact of this \$5 million. But at the end of the day, it's going to be about continuously representing Canada's position in these countries and continuously driving home

the point that we believe the ban is ill advised, and that will be sustained. It has to be, I think.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Cleary.

Mr. Leef.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses.

When I look over these estimates, there are always bigger numbers in them. In our review of them, I think, like Mr. Sopuck indicated, that I'm interested in results and not always the process of things. I just want to highlight a couple of points to you that I think are more congratulatory in nature. I've obviously spent some time travelling around the country and I have a couple of recent examples that I'd like to just bring to your attention.

You know that the results that you're providing and these asks that we're seeing in some of these line items are good investments. I've met with a number of consultative working groups that meet on a regular basis with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, including members of the hunting and angling advisory panel, and they're very pleased with the work and relationship that they have with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I heard that very recently.

They also highlighted to me, which I think is worth passing on, that the educational strategy that has been deployed at the front-line level by officers instead of enforcement response actions has been well grounded. It seems as though their education and discretion in deployment is winning favour in the communities across this country that I've spoken to. I think that's equally important for you to realize because a lot of what you're doing, a lot of what we're asking for in this budget in terms of big numbers, makes a difference to day-to-day Canadians and individuals in this country.

In respect to the coast guard, I had a great opportunity several months ago to board the *Laurier* with Captain Bill Noon. At that time he was doing a huge school engagement when they returned from the Franklin expedition and had the bell on display. I can tell you right now that the coast guard connecting with Canadians, in particular the youth of our country, is a great way to build those bridges and a great way to invest in the historical contributions that the coast guard is making.

In respect to the investments around the helicopter fleet, there was an interesting anecdotal story there about how the coast guard pilot at the time was engaged in three different activities, one being scientific research and one being a search and rescue mission, on the very same day that they discovered pieces that helped lead us to find the Franklin ship. It shows the diversity and the interoperability of those services and the exchange that the coast guard has with Canadian Forces, particularly in the high Arctic.

I know your investments in small craft harbours are making big differences in Arctic communities. The recreational fisheries partnership fund, with 2,000 linear kilometres of stream habitat restored now, is a wonderful investment. There are great community-based projects with thousands of volunteers, millions of dollars leveraged, great community partners, and smaller contribution agreements like the ones that you sign onto with the salmon subcommittee for the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to let them do the important work that they need to do across transboundary waters.

I think it's important for us as parliamentarians to thank you and acknowledge the great work that you're doing, which makes a meaningful difference in individual lives and are very much kitchen table discussion items for families in this country.

I want to ask one piece about the Pacific and Atlantic commercial fisheries initiative. I'm just wondering if you can provide some information about detail around first nations participation and maybe some other accomplishments in the program, because I do see line items around aboriginal strategies and governance. I was pleased to be at a fisheries hatchery fully run by first nations communities in Penticton recently. These are great success stories, and if you could just provide a little bit of information on how these main estimates will deliver those programs for Canadians and first nations, it would be wonderful to hear.

• (1240)

Mr. Kevin Stringer: Thank you very much for all of that.

In the main estimates the two programs, the Atlantic integrated fisheries program and the Pacific integrated fisheries program, are both highlighted to the joint tune of \$33 million per year. It does important work.

Our overall relationship with aboriginal groups is enormously important and we have a set of programs. We have those two. We also have the aboriginal fisheries strategy program, which is \$22 million a year, and we have the aboriginal aquatic resource and oceans management program as well, which is \$14 million a year. Then we have a species at risk program with first nations and aboriginal groups.

All are important in terms of the relationships and they are bearing results. They do assist us in terms of effectively managing a fishery and the other things that we have to manage effectively. We're also seeing results in communities. They're becoming major players in the fishery themselves. The training aspects of these programs are around business development, around fisheries management, around training in governance, around developing operational policies, and around harvest training. All those types of things are bearing fruit.

What we're also now seeing is an expansion of aboriginal groups using their own funds and funds from elsewhere into other parts of the fishery, by becoming involved in hatcheries, becoming involved in aquaculture, becoming involved in processing, becoming involved in vessel maintenance, and developing those types of facilities with the core funding that we've been providing over the years. AICFI and PICFI are the two highlighted this year, and with some important funding.

You've asked for some numbers. In B.C., 97 first nations participate in 25 groups. These are groups of first nations that work together. On the Atlantic, with the AICFI program, it is 31 first nations of the 34 involved. It really does get most of the first nations that we have relationships with involved in the fishery and becoming players and partners with us in it.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Leef.

Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you for your work and what you do, especially in British Columbia. I'm sure that my colleagues from the Maritimes would say the same thing, but as a British Columbian we really care about fisheries and the environment. Every day we see a different story, which I'm sure is challenging for you.

I would appreciate getting back to the abandoned vessels questions. My colleague, Ms. Crowder, has brought in a private member's bill. At one level I applaud what she's done because she has spurred a conversation about a very intractable problem, a problem that covers different jurisdictions and that always leads to the question—where does the money come from when a vessel needs to be towed? There is also the question of identifying the owners.

I wonder if you'd care to discourse a little on funding a response and identification of owners. I raise this issue of liability, which I've been discussing publicly, of trying to impose some higher sense of accountability on those who would abandon vessels. In the Squamish area, for instance, one individual has abandoned four vessels and is renowned for doing this because he thinks he can.

Ms. Jody Thomas: I know the individual you're speaking of and we have done significant work to clean up many of his vessels.

The private member's bill is admirable in its intent but it doesn't get to the problem. Other jurisdictions, Washington state notably among them, which has enacted similar legislation, have found that in fact it's had the perverse outcome of allowing ship owners and wreck owners to walk away from the vessels, leaving the liability in this case for the state.

When we do go to clean up an abandoned vessel, and when we know who the owner is, we go after the owner for the funds for the cleanup. If they're unable to pay there is something called the ship-source oil pollution fund in Canada, which is an insurance regime, essentially, and it's part of an international regime. We go to them to be reimbursed for the expenditures dealing with any cleanup.

It is a big problem and we are working now with Transport Canada to look at how we can bring firmer regulations around the issue of wrecks to make owners more responsible.

• (1245)

Mr. John Weston: I'm glad you're doing that.

If we can get back to the infrastructure issue, Mr. Swerdfager, you touched on this earlier. We see there's \$80 million in the budget to bolster laboratories and federal plants around the country. You mentioned there were 11 of those. Can you give us some idea of how stakeholders can effect the deployment of those funds when we have people who, at least in British Columbia, really care about science and scientists? For instance, if they knew the work that Dr. Miller was doing more, then they would be very happy to hear about that.

Do you have any suggestions on how members in the community can support the work that's being done in laboratories, and influence how the funding is to be deployed?

Mr. Matthew King: I'll just make a couple of contextual comments, and then if Trevor could speak to the science-specific part of that, that would be very helpful.

Minister Shea did announce this funding in October, I believe. Part of the \$551 million in infrastructure that's coming to DFO, indeed \$80 million, has been reserved to help us update our real property. I would remind members that I think we are the third or fourth biggest real property holders in government, so this is money that is very much welcome. There's a direct line of sight to our corporate risk profile that's set out in the RPP.

This \$80 million indeed will apply to our science facilities, but it's also eligible to be applied to other projects like our Atlantic salmon fishways, search and rescue stations, or even departmental buildings. It's additive to our A-base real capital budget. As I say, it will make a real difference over the next two years.

Trevor, did you want to speak to the science part of it?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Thanks, Deputy.

There are a couple of things to say in response to the idea of involvement in not only the allocation of some of the resources the deputy's spoken to but science in general in the department.

All science that's effective is done in partnership with others. No one does effective science on their own. A big part of our work is to work very closely with academic institutions across the country; with science providers like the Huntsman Marine Science Centre, for example, down east; with a whole range of science practitioners, both domestically and internationally. Certainly the first avenue in, if you will, is through many of those academic institutions.

The Canadian Consortium of Oceans Research Universities has been very active in seeking to articulate a national oceans research agenda. There are 11 major universities involved in oceans research, and we're working with them both individually and collectively to work out something of a research agenda and how we plug into that more effectively.

The bottom line in all of this is that what we're trying to do is continue to drive our science very much to our program goals and objectives, and to support those, so we work also quite closely with folks in industry and others to make sure that the work we're doing aligns with the decision-making that the minister has as her responsibilities.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Murray.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you.

Just to follow up on that, I was trying to understand how the science and research budget has changed since the 2013-14 estimates. Could you give me one aggregate figure of change to science and research funding?

Mr. Marty Muldoon: I can take a quick look, sure.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Perhaps I could do some of my other questions while you're looking for that.

Mr. Marty Muldoon: Sure.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Back to the Vancouver area oil spill, I have to say that I was very disappointed that the Conservative members of this committee have decided to have the posture of cheerleaders when, although the coast guard members themselves are professional and responsible, it's this government's cuts to things like budgets and the Kits coast guard base that have led to a confusing and slow response, and a real failure. The residents of metro Vancouver are very concerned that safety and services are being compromised, yet their interests are not being defended at this committee by their members of Parliament. I find that very disappointing.

In addition to coast guard cuts, Transport Canada has cut its marine safety budget 37% since 2007. Environment Canada has transferred the local environmental emergencies office to Montreal. When the boaters called them, the first response was, "What province are you calling from?" These are all very concerning.

I'm going to conclude this part by saying the cuts to the Kits coast guard base were strongly objected to by the search and rescue network in Vancouver. There were 20 million human transits annually within a 30-minute response radius of that base. This is the first time in 100 years that Vancouver does not have a federal full-time marine life-saving station. It was a very bad decision. We're seeing some of the consequences of it today and the members should be holding their government to account.

I have a question about that. Compared with the 2013-14 estimates, how would the reduction of \$6 million in expenditures for search and rescue services, and the decrease of \$18 million in spending for environmental response services, affect the coast guard's ability to respond in a more timely effective way in the future?

• (1250)

Ms. Jody Thomas: Those cuts I can't speak to, but our chief financial officer can.

There has been no reduction to environmental response capacity. It was a one-time accounting for the *Brigadier General Zalinski* operation. The A-base budget for the coast guard for environmental response has not been reduced.

In terms of search and rescue, we reorganized the coast guard in 2012 and we had realignments of programs. We increased money for the inshore rescue boat in Vancouver and we increased money for the auxiliary Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue in Vancouver. Other than that there has been no reduction in the search and rescue budget.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Some of the key search and rescue network people made it clear that the alternatives the coast guard proposed were in no way comparable to what was taken away.

I do want to ask about the Bunker C. According to Transport Canada only 5% to 10% evaporates. In previous spills, Bunker C has been detected years later. What is the response plan? What is the toxicity and the impact on the benthic community and human beings of Bunker C, which is so toxic residents were advised not to clean up this material off the beaches because it takes hazardous waste disposal to deal with it? Can you explain the toxicity and how the department plans to clean it up from the seabed floor?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I can ask Trevor to speak to the toxicity.

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: There are a number of aspects to that. I apologize for not having the figure in our overall budget handout. I wanted to get that—

Ms. Joyce Murray: Could you table it afterwards please, the research cuts?

Mr. Trevor Swerdfager: Not a problem, we can do that.

Essentially the key thing is that many of the resources that we have available in the science sector now are focused very much on oil spill preparedness, response, and understanding things like and including Bunker C. We look at three things: how something behaves when it gets into the environment chemically and so on; what is its fate, i.e., where it goes; and what its impacts are.

Bunker C, or fuel oil number 6, is well known to us not only in DFO but within Environment Canada, which is really the expert on fuel content and quality. We are at a point where we know that we have some significant history with this particular substance. It behaves in a way that is quite predictable. Most of it as a result is skimmable. I don't know if that's an actual word, but we are able to skim very easily most of that off.

If we have large amounts of it that get into the ecosystem and persist for a while—as you point out it does have a degree of persistence to it—toxicity is always a measure of amount versus exposure. In this case we think that the exposure level to organisms is quite low. We have not yet detected any significant impacts from the spill on the biological community. We have not yet completed sampling of the sea floor, and the nematode community, and so on. We expect, but we don't know yet, that the impact of that will be minimal. I can't say for sure that those sampling activities have been done because it's a bit too early yet.

By and large the point is that this chemical, or this fuel rather, is well known to us in the community. We've worked with it extensively and we think we have the measures in place to deal with it.

• (1255)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Thank you very much.

I have a couple of things but I just have a couple of minutes. I want to go back. I had asked the minister about the aquaculture activities regulations changes, and she didn't get a chance to respond.

I'm concerned because I believe the people who have raised these concerns have a great deal of credibility. I raised the question: why didn't you consider their concerns?

I guess in your wisdom you decided that it was going to be okay anyway. The second part of my question was this. When are those regulations going to be implemented?

Mr. Matthew King: Thank you for the question.

Mr. Chair, we are hoping to have the regulations up and in force in 2015.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: The other question I have is that in the estimates there's quite an increase in the aboriginal strategies and governance budget. I raised a question earlier about the tension, the conflict, that's happened around herring with first nations in British Columbia, the Nuu-chah-nulth, for example. Even though the Supreme Court in 2014 confirmed that in fact they do have commercial access to the resource, the Government of Canada has taken them now through another process where there has to be some further analysis.

I have two questions, then. First, could you explain what this budget line item will do? Second, could you give me within the time I have a brief explanation of what DFO's strategy is with respect to recognizing the constitutional rights of first nations and their access to the resource, not only in British Columbia but in this country?

Mr. Matthew King: Thank you for the question.

I can start off, and maybe Kevin can come back to the two programs in question.

The issue of implementing the section 35 rights is something, I think, that is at the forefront of everything we do in our department, particularly in British Columbia. There are a number of processes going on now that were announced by the minister of AANDC last summer. For example, we are now happily back at the treaty table in British Columbia, where we anticipate accelerating work with five or six first nations who need to complete fisheries chapters to complete a treaty. We're hopeful that the work will carry on over the summer and into the fall and yield results.

We're just at the beginning stages of doing what could be interesting work with, for example, the Haida, where we are just now sitting down with them and trying to work out terms of reference and a way forward, where we'd get into sustained discussions and consultations about what incremental treaty arrangements would be, again with the idea that we are going to give life to the section 35 protection, but not necessarily inside the treaty process.

Similarly, we are starting discussions with the coastal first nations. Here we're asking and wanting to sit down and begin to have discussions about what non-treaty arrangements would look like.

These initiatives, I think, are to a major degree influenced by the various reports of Mr. Doug Eyford, who did quite a lot of work on behalf of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. We are now on those three initiatives working quite closely with our colleague departments in British Columbia and with first nations to find a way forward.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Kamp, you have two minutes.

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

I want to return to Ms. Thomas, if I can. I appreciated the very helpful detailed response to the previous question.

My understanding is that since the Kitsilano station was closed, there have been in the neighbourhood of 900 or so, perhaps a few less, distress incidents in the greater Vancouver area. In every case, with the newly configured arrangement of resources with Sea Island, the inshore rescue boat station that runs several months of the year, and a greater role for the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, there's been an effective response.

But with respect to this particular incident, are you saying that there wouldn't have been a different response if Kitsilano had still been operational?

• (1300)

Ms. Jody Thomas: First, the search and rescue system in Vancouver harbour is working exactly as we had expected. Vancouver remains the most serviced port in Canada.

In terms of this particular rescue, whether the coast guard had been the on-scene commander or the federal monitoring officer, we would still have used Western Canada Marine Response Corporation to respond to this spill.

The amount of equipment available at Kitsilano was not sufficient. It was a complex operation. We didn't have the skimming capacity within the coast guard. Also notwithstanding the "polluter pays" regime as it exists in Canada, no matter what role the coast guard is playing, whether FMO or on-scene commander, we go to the response organization to do the response.

The boom that was available at Kitsilano was not sufficient. They were a search and rescue station. They had some environmental response equipment stored there. They were not environmental-response first responders.

We have a professional team at Sea Island with highly trained environmental response officers, and they were on scene with WCMRC.

The Chair: Mr. Muldoon, before we conclude, I believe you've found what you were looking for.

Mr. Marty Muldoon: I had two things. I just wanted to correct a matter of record.

Earlier in my remarks, at the very tail end, I said there was \$6 million for the polar class icebreaker. Then, as well, the refit money is in the budget. I said that was for the CCGS *Amundsen*. Actually, I wanted to state for the record that it's for the *Louis S. St-Laurent*.

Second, regarding the member's question on the science program, I admit I wasn't quite sure where you were seeing that number, because in our department we treat science as an enabler of many different programs, so it doesn't show up as a line item in the main estimates. But to answer your question and, I hope, to adequately remove the need to provide an answer to you in writing, over the last couple of years, as the committee is well aware, we have seen a lot of severance settlements, and those kinds of things in the government as we have gone through those changes, from an HR perspective. That was the same for the science side.

You will see as a printed item in our main estimates under the science program, "Hydrographic Products and Services", a \$4 million reduction. Two million dollars of that is due to us no longer needing the money that was provided to pay those severances. The other \$2 million had to do with some royalties we received. This year we don't have them, so they're not there. It's a reduction in the main estimates, but it's not an actual take-away from the science program.

The Chair: On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank the officials for appearing before us today and answering our questions. We certainly do appreciate your time.

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned.

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