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Chair

Mr. Rodney Weston

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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•(1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)): I call this meeting to order. I'd like to thank our guest for joining us today.

Mr. Zealand, we've been trying to connect here for a little bit. We certainly do appreciate your patience in working with us to try to make the accommodation work for all involved.

As you're aware, our study is on recreational fisheries in Canada. We certainly appreciate your taking the time to meet with the committee members to make a presentation and answer committee members' questions. I'm sure our clerk has already advised you that we generally allow about 10 minutes for opening comments and remarks before we proceed to questions and answers. Members are constrained by a certain timeframe, and in light of that, I'd ask you to try to keep your responses as concise as possible to allow as many questions as possible throughout the process.

Whenever you're ready, Mr. Zealand, if you'd like to go ahead and make your opening comments, we'd certainly appreciate it. The floor is yours.

Mr. Gordon Zealand (Executive Director, Yukon Fish and Game Association): Thanks.

Good morning, everyone. My name is Gordon Zealand, and I'm executive director of the Yukon Fish and Game Association.

I've had the good fortune to live and work in various parts of Canada, and I just can't imagine a resource that's as important as the sport fishing sector is in all parts of Canada. I mean, to bring it home to the Yukon, what do we have? We have roughly 35,000 people, and we issue almost that many recreational licences. There's no question that it's very important to the people of the Yukon, but I know for a fact that it applies right across Canada.

This is a sector that we need to pay attention to. We often take it for granted and we assume that it's always there. Like all things man interacts with, however, there are consequences. I'm sure everyone is aware of the various issues that have occurred in the provinces.

Now, there's one thing we've done differently in the Yukon that I know hasn't occurred in the other provinces I have lived in. We have not allowed any non-resident species into the Yukon. In other words, no, we don't have walleye or pickerel in the Yukon. We made sure we didn't bring them into the Yukon and stock any of the lakes.

There's one exception to that. It happened when the armed forces were up here building the highway and what have you. Rainbow trout was brought into one section, and that group is still within the

Yukon. Actually, we've benefited from it, because we're now using the eggs to stock what we call our stocked lakes. These are lakes within the Yukon that have no outlet or inlet. They're totally contained. If there's one thing we've done well up here, I would suggest that this, in combination with sticking with resident species, is it.

We had one resident from Alberta who spent the entire summer doing nothing but fishing these stocked lakes, which are mainly stocked with rainbow trout and Arctic char. He had a great experience. I couldn't believe what that gentleman was able to record in these various lakes within the Yukon. There's no question that it was an amazing experience for him, and from the information he provided us, we couldn't believe there were that many big stocked rainbow still left in these lakes. In any event, it goes to show that we also take things for granted. We didn't realize the significance.

We did have one issue with an area out near Whitehorse that has hot springs. Some folks decided that perhaps goldfish should be dumped there. As a result, we had quite a population growing. In any event, once we found that out, we managed to eliminate that particular problem. We just went in, killed off that whole section and got rid of that issue. As far as we know, we don't have an issue with the goldfish.

I think I'll just leave it there for my opening comments. In terms of the significance, I'm sure you know, because of your further work and your contact with other folks across Canada, that the recreational fishery is important to so many different people. It affects all ages. It affects all sexes. It's an opportunity to get the population out to enjoy the outdoors as opposed to the electronic world.

I'll leave it there for the moment.

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

We'll move to the question-and-answer period. We'll start off with a 10-minute round. We'll lead off with Mr. Chisholm.

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

Mr. Zealand, thank you very much for your patience in finally getting here to speak to our committee, but also for your work in this important area of the recreational fishery. I am interested in the management relationship between DFO and the co-management boards that are established under the land claim settlements. I wonder if you could speak to how effective that is and how it works.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: DFO managed the freshwater fishery, including anadromous species, up until the 1990s, at which time it was transferred to the territorial government. In terms of the interaction of the boards, in my experience it has worked very well. Sure, there are always issues, but at least it creates the avenue to work on the issues. Sometimes they're major, but quite often they're minor issues before they become major ones. My experience with the interaction has been very positive.

• (1115)

Mr. Robert Chisholm: The department mainly provides technical support to the boards in its decisions and issues around development and habitat management and protection, those sorts of things.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: That's true. The territorial government, though, does hands-on work with various groups, so they're not just providing technical expertise. They are out there doing the actual fieldwork. Sometimes various first nations are involved as well.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Right. Do you get a lot of out-of-territory sports fishermen coming in? Do you have a system of guides and so on?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Yes, we do. There's not a big system of guides, but yes, in the various lakes. River guides are becoming more popular now, especially for Europeans who are going down the various rivers.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Do out-of-territory fishermen have to have a guide to come to fish?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: No, they do not. They can come to fish, yes.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Okay, interesting.

I'm going to pass it on to my colleague Mr. Cleary. Thank you, Mr. Zealand, for your participation.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Zealand, my name is Ryan Cleary. I'm one of seven members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador.

There were a couple of things you talked about I'd like you to elaborate on. You mentioned stocked lakes. In terms of stocking lakes in the Yukon, how much of that is done, how many lakes? Who looks after that? Who's in charge?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: DFO was in charge of it until the whole responsibility was shifted over to the territorial government about 10 or 15 years ago.

There are about 25 or 30 lakes within the Yukon, but it doesn't have to stop there. If somebody wishes to create a lake, it's more about the details of the lake in terms of input water, output water, that sort of thing. If it's a completely contained lake and there's no problem with oxygen during the winter, then I would suggest it could be a candidate.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: What is the budget for stocking those lakes? Which entity looks after the stocking? What are they stocked with?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: The territorial government looks after the stocking of the lakes. We aid them. Some of our members help stock the fish, as compared to the payment for the actual species. Quite frankly, I'm not sure what the budget is these days, but it isn't very large.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: The reason I ask questions about stocking and it always peaks my interest is because we don't stock our ponds and lakes in Newfoundland and Labrador. I've always wondered why we don't do that.

With regard to the health of the different stocks, how is the health? Because of stocking, are the fish plentiful?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: They are, and they grow amazingly well. It depends also within lakes on whether or not there is resident food species present. We happen to have those here in the Yukon, and the individual I was mentioning earlier who fished all our stocked lakes never took less than an eight-pound rainbow out of any of our lakes.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Wow.

Who looks after the enforcement? First, is there a licence system? Do you have to get a licence to go out and get a trout or to fish at all? Who looks after the enforcement?

• (1120)

Mr. Gordon Zealand: The territorial government looks after enforcement in the stocked lakes area. DFO has enforcement on the Yukon River that is associated with anadromous species, but it's mainly the territorial government that has the responsibility for these lakes.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Is poaching a problem at all, or illegal retention of fish? Is that a problem?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: It can be a bit of a problem, but I don't think it's a major one for us, as compared to some of the other areas of Canada.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: If you look at the stocked lakes versus the lakes or ponds—we call them ponds back home—are the water bodies that aren't stocked healthy as well?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: I would say they would be close. The problem we have in the Yukon is that our normal lakes are very non-productive in terms of the fact that our fish reach maturity for spawning when they are very old as compared to the southern provinces. Within the Yukon there are very elderly, slow-growing fish, so it doesn't take very much pressure within a resident lake to really affect them.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: The water is cold. Is that why the fish are slow-growing, obviously?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Yes, it's the cold waters and there just isn't a great abundance of other foods within the lake for them.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: If I lived in the Yukon and I wanted to go fishing—and I would dearly love to catch one of those eight-pound lake trout—would I go to a stocked lake or would I go to one of your natural lakes?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: It would all depend on the given day and the time period of the year. My guess is that if you fished extensively up here, you would be doing both.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: You don't need a licence? I'm sorry, you may have answered that. Do you need a licence?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Yes, you need a licence for all fishing in the Yukon.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: How much is that? How does that work?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: It's \$15 a year for a resident and it's \$25 a year for a non-resident, so it's pretty cheap.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: You don't need a guide.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: No, you don't need a guide.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Is there a catch limit or can you fill your boots?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: No, there are various catch limits. Depending on the lakes there are slot limits in terms of the various sizes you are allowed to keep or not keep. There are lakes that are single hook only, barbless hooks. There are quite a variety of different methods being used to try to keep what I'll call a non-stocked lake as viable as possible.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Again, what is the value of the recreational fishery? Would you call it a recreational fishery? Would you call it a food fishery? I guess there would be a little bit of both, wouldn't there?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: No, it's not a food fishery. It is for the people who do participate, but to me, the value in terms of the equipment that is purchased to participate in accessing these various lakes.... There are people who fly in to lakes. I don't know how to equate or how to put a figure on these numbers, but it's extremely valuable. I believe we should be putting more effort into what is of value and what is the net value of all of this to Canada.

There is a recreational fishery evaluation that's done every five years, but to me it's pretty limited in terms of what we get out of it. That's just my opinion.

• (1125)

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cleary.

Mr. Leef.

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

Good morning, Gord. It's Ryan here.

First, thank you very much for getting up so early to join us. I know what the time zones are like. Everybody on the west coast who appears before this committee has to get up early, but as they say, "The early bird gets the worm." Hopefully we've set your path right for the day, so when you're out of here you can go fishing.

Would it surprise you to know that in 2010 there was a report from Environment Yukon, "Status of Yukon Fisheries 2010: An overview of the state of Yukon fisheries and the health of fish stocks, with special reference to fisheries management programs", which puts the recreational fisheries industry in the Yukon at a \$23 million a year benefit and contributor to Yukon's tourism?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Not at all. I know it contributes a lot.

I probably should have had my facts together before I came here, but I didn't.

Mr. Ryan Leef: I imagine it would be up now because I think there's been some growth in the fisheries between 2010 and 2014.

You say, and I agree with you, that we need to do a bit more to maximize that recreational fisheries opportunity.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions where the federal government in particular could play a role in exposing the value of recreational fisheries, not just in Canada but particularly in the Yukon, to see a bit of that \$23 million economic boost actually grow?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: To me, I don't know whether you'd call it the easiest.... I just see it as a very functional way to get people involved, be it kids or be it adults.

I sign up as a host to take out some young kid who maybe has no other opportunity to get out—you know, parents who don't participate—or an adult who has never grown up participating in the fishery and they maybe need a little help in terms of how in the heck you go about this industry. All I'm saying is that we need a kind of sponsor or a host to take these people out. I think that applies right across Canada, not just within the Yukon.

Mr. Ryan Leef: More national engagement in recreational fishing opportunities, trying to get Canadians more engaged....

Mr. Gordon Zealand: That's right. I believe that's a good option.

Mr. Ryan Leef: I appreciate that.

We went through the budgets not too long ago, and the federal government has a role to play in supporting the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee. I know we've increased the financial resources to them.

We don't enjoy a tremendous recreational fishery opportunity because of the state of Yukon River salmon right now. That's obviously a particular concern to all Yukoners. Would you share with the committee the role that the Yukon Fish and Game Association plays in terms of its stocking program, both from a numbers point of view—how many salmon you release in Wolf Creek and other tributaries—and what the Yukon Fish and Game Association does in terms of engaging Yukon people and youth in that release program, to the benefit of Yukon River salmon?

Are there any other challenges or issues you might want to highlight that would be good for the committee to know about our Yukon River salmon, and recreational fishing opportunities for them?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Twice a year we have two days when we invite parents to bring their children out. One place is Wolf Creek and the other is one of the stocked lakes. We provide all the equipment for parents who may have a little child who is interested in either putting the fish into a stocked lake, or in the case of Wolf Creek, putting salmon back into the creek. We put in anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 salmon fry each year. We put about the same number of rainbow fry into the stocked lakes.

In addition to that, we help out the department of the environment, for example, by taking their various rainbow trout into Scout Lake or whichever lake where they don't have enough people to get all the fish out at the same time, so there's less stress on it. Our participation there varies from year to year.

I'd say our main emphasis for people and their participation would be the two events: putting salmon fry into Wolf Creek and putting rainbow trout in the stocked lakes. Like all places, Wolf Creek can have 300 people on a given weekend, and anywhere between 50 and 100 people are out with their kids and what have you to put these rainbow trout into the stocked lakes.

• (1130)

Mr. Ryan Leef: You mentioned a little bit earlier, in your opening remarks, non-native species. I know we don't allow live bait fishing in the Yukon. Is there a concern right now about aquatic invasive species? There's been some growth of that with changes in weather and the distribution of people. Is the Yukon facing any particular challenge of aquatic invasive species coming in?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: I would say, yes, there's always that potential. Goldfish are the classic example of fish that can get into a system. They're so hardy that we could have a problem. We don't believe we have one just yet, but that doesn't mean to say we're aware of everything that goes on up here.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Fair enough.

The Yukon Fish and Game Association has representation on the hunter-angler advisory panel. Just generally speaking, how's the participation been on that panel, and how is its efficacy so far?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: To me that is a very good use of our people. It has been extremely positive.

At the first couple of meetings, we were all struggling to get things together, but in the last two or three meetings, there have been very positive steps forward in terms of actually accomplishing things as a group. To me, that group is absolutely essential to bringing issues such as invasive species to the forefront, to the attention of you folks, with regard to how they affect various parts of Canada.

Hats off to you guys for putting that group into a functioning body and enabling it to happen. From my point of view, it's an excellent usage of time.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Super.

Do you know how many members you have currently at the Yukon Fish and Game Association?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Right now we have somewhere between 900 and 1,000.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Wow. Again, percentage-wise, there are 37,000 people in the territory, as you mentioned, so 900 members is an excellent proportional representation of the Yukon's population. In terms of angling licences sold, those are pretty impressive numbers.

The money from fishing licences sold in the Yukon goes into general revenue and not into particular fisheries conservation, is that right?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: That's correct.

Mr. Ryan Leef: You mentioned that you don't know the particular budget of the Yukon government with respect to dedicated resources for fishing and recreational fisheries. That would all be administered by which department?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: It would all be administered by the department of environment within the Yukon government.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Okay, and you have a fairly close relationship at the fish and game association with the technicians, directors, and conservation officers as well.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Yes, we have an excellent relationship with them. They have a lot of great people involved in their department. My hat is off to them in terms of the time and effort they put into it. They certainly go beyond what would normally be expected of workers.

• (1135)

Mr. Ryan Leef: Thanks for that.

You and I have talked in the past about the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program and just the challenges in stacking the provincial dollars, federal dollars, and other program dollars. There's been a recent change to it that allows for the stacking of those funds. I'm just wondering if you've been able to take advantage of that program at all at this point.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: We haven't yet, but because of the change, we have been talking with some other folks in terms of how we might be able to work together with them in terms of putting in an application. So far we haven't. We just found that we were too constrained, and....

If I want to be honest, I didn't want to be going down a path that would get us into trouble.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Thank you for your time this morning, Gord.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Thanks.

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

Mr. MacAulay.

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

Welcome, Mr. Zealand.

On the invasive species issue, first of all I congratulate you. If you can keep it under control you'll save a lot of money, because after it happens it seems to be a desperate problem. I'm sure you're fully aware of that.

Do you have catch and release in the Yukon?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Yes, we do. Absolutely.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Is there much of a mortality rate there?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: From the studies they've done here, at least, I don't think it's any different from the rest of Canada. I guess to summarize, I'd say it's similar.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: On the licensing issue, the \$25 or whatever it is, would you like to see that go into a fund and be dedicated to your organization, let's say, or some organization that can do more to promote the recreational fishery? Whether you agree or disagree, I'd also like you to indicate where your people come from outside of the Yukon. Are they mostly Canadians and Americans? Do you have Europeans? What needs to be done?

You have, I would think, a wonderful attraction for people who like to be involved in the wild, who like to be involved in the fishery, and you also have, I would think, a market that you're just touching yet, but that could be expanded into a lot more money. I'd like to have your idea on what you think should be done by governments, or your organization, or.... Where do you see it going?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Obviously we are very fortunate in the Yukon. Yes, you're bang on. We are attractive to a lot of non-resident Canadians. We have a lot of Americans. We actually have a lot of Europeans also. How do we help these folks? I guess it's just by making sure we have as good information as possible, whether it's on our website or on government websites. What is it they need? What are the basic things to get people started? Why should they come and see Canada? Why should they come and see the Yukon in terms of the various things we have to offer?

To me, in terms of outside Canada, and maybe even within Canada, tourism would be involved in that sort of marketing. Locally it should be up to us and the Yukon government, obviously. They should be promoting stuff, and they are. We are as well. We try to help everyone who comes by our office and uses our websites or whatever, in terms of providing as much aid as we can and in terms of making sure their trip is a good one and they enjoy it here.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, obviously—

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Sorry, but you had some earlier questions and I think I got sidetracked here and missed a couple.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I was wondering, when you were talking about advertising, if you thought it should be left to governments or should there be a wildlife organization that does promotion.

I'm not fully aware of all that you have in the Yukon, but I would expect that you have a resource that's extremely valuable worldwide. What I'm getting at is, how do you get to the people around the world? There are people all over the world who want to fish and hunt in your area. How do you do this? Do you collect funds from licences? Do you leave that to the Yukon government? Is it under the federal government in terms of tourism?

I think you have a resource that could expand. Could you indicate to me how much expansion there has been over the last five years? Have you enjoyed a large increase in the number of people outside of the Yukon coming to fish in the Yukon? That's what I'm getting at.

If you're satisfied and things are progressing the way you think they should be, that's great, but if you think that there's a potential to increase dramatically, I'd like to hear from you.

• (1140)

Mr. Gordon Zealand: You did remind me of the one question I missed.

In terms of the licence fees and that sort of thing, I believe it doesn't matter what province you're in, those fees should go back into a fund so the money is then used to promote whatever programs are deemed necessary or the critical programs within that particular province. So yes, that definitely should be a fund set aside. Whether you're hunting or fishing, that money should be going back into helping promote the resource.

In terms of how we promote it across the country, everybody's in the electronic age, so we have to have better stuff on our websites. At the same time, I know we provide information. People know if they contact us they can get somebody directly on a line. They can talk to them and get answers. If we don't have the answers, our organization knows where to get the information for these people.

I know that since I've been working with the fish and game association, we've had a lot of growth in terms of actual interaction with the public outside of Canada. It must be from word of mouth, from people saying that if you phone these guys, you'll get some answers, or if they don't have the answers they'll get them for you.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Good luck and thank you very much. You have a resource that I think could be valuable worldwide.

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

Mr. Sopuck.

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

Mr. Zealand, you may have answered this, but I missed it. What are the most important non-anadromous fish species to the sport fishing community in the Yukon?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: I would say that obviously first on the list for the majority of people it's probably lake trout in terms of who's going to get the big fish or whatever, but at the same time probably in terms of the fish species that are the most widely used, I would say that northern pike and the Arctic grayling are the two species that kids get a chance to actually catch and participate with first and foremost.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Okay. Are any of those stocks overfished, and if they are, where are they located?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Yes, some of those stocks are overfished.

Where we have lakes that are close to our larger populations, they're all affected and they are affected because 20 or 30 years ago we had people who put a lot of effort into catching the big lake trout, the big pike. They just took too many of those out of the system, and it's going to take us a long time because of our slow-growing lakes to get everything back on track.

We are attempting to do that through these slot limits, through using catch and release, and through the various things that we do have some control over.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Earlier in the study we were given the astonishing statistic that Canadians release some 60 million fish a year. They catch 100 million fish and release 60 million fish, so that has been a remarkable transformation in recreational fishing. Has the catch and release ethic taken hold in the Yukon?

•(1145)

Mr. Gordon Zealand: It has been part of tradition in this part of the world as long as I've been here. I've only been in the Yukon 35 years, but I remember people doing that when I initially came here. I had only seen it in British Columbia prior to that, but at the same time, yes, it has grown.

I would say the reason it has grown is because people are concerned about the same things that we—when I say we, that's including yourselves and ourselves—are all concerned about in terms of ensuring we have that resource for the rest of Canada.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: In terms of recreational fishing regulations in Yukon, what's your evaluation of the efficacy of the regulations? If there are some deficiencies, what are they and what would you like to see changed?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: I would say, generally, that they're well put together. They go through a system where the public has input into the changes.

What would I like to see changed? Obviously, we'd all like to see a process that's easier and more common sense to deal with, but at the same time I think we're just stuck with the beasts that we have. If you want the public to have input and to have them participate, then I'm not sure we can change it much in terms of making things happen. That to me would be the biggest thing, making things happen quicker than we currently have in place.

That's only a minor issue. I don't see that we have major ones that I'd want to see changed right now.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Does the Yukon government engage in fish stock assessment programs where biologists go out and do index netting, and creel censuses of anglers' catches, and those kinds of things?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Absolutely they do, but at the same time they're a very minor portion of the Yukon government's budget compared to, let's say, the mineral industry.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: What's the interaction between the mineral industry and the recreational fisheries industry?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: I think most of the miners like to fish too, but at the same time there have been issues over the years in terms of what happens between the industry and the sport fishing groups. I'd say generally it has been reasonable in terms of the interaction between the groups. It has certainly been a lot worse in other areas.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Do you see the mining industry contributing some resources to the conservation and enhancement of fisheries habitat? Is that something they seem willing to do?

Mr. Gordon Zealand: They haven't in the past, but I actually had people talking to me at our last get-together in Ottawa about some of the major players in Yukon that could be interested. We have a real problem right now with Yukon chinook salmon. I've heard rumours that some of them may be interested in that, but maybe I'm talking out of turn here now in terms of what's supposed to be in the public and what isn't. In any event, yes, there are some discussions that I certainly haven't heard in the past.

At the same time, I have worked with a lot of industry that are very respectful. They're as concerned about the environment as we are, but they obviously have a different role to play. Often it's that

interaction between ourselves and the people who actually call the shots within that particular mining group that can make the difference.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I think my time is nearly up, but what I would recommend is this. We have the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. The budget is up to \$55 million now and it's a partnering program. These are basically 50¢ dollars for organizations like yours, so if you can get industry to come up with half the money for, let's say, a \$30,000 project, the federal government, I would suggest, would be glad to kick in the other amount. I would urge you to have a look at that program.

Thank you very much.

•(1150)

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

Mr. Gordon Zealand: That's a good point.

The Chair: Mr. Zealand, I want to thank you once again on behalf of the entire committee for being so accommodating with our committee and making sure we had the opportunity to meet together and for you to answer our committee members' questions. We certainly do appreciate it. Once again, thank you very much.

Mr. Gordon Zealand: Likewise, thank you, folks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Zealand.

We'll move on now to Monsieur Lapointe. You wanted the floor.

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

[*Translation*]

I know that my NDP colleagues are in favour of my motion to examine the effects of the declining American Eel population, but I'd like to know whether all the committee members support the principle that a federal committee should examine the declining American Eel population in Canada.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Lapointe.

The following motion has been moved by Mr. Lapointe:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study as soon as possible to examine the effects of the declining American Eel population in order to develop an action plan, jointly with the plan prepared by the Quebec Department of Energy and Natural Resources, designed to: (1) reverse the decline in the population; (2) increase the economic activity generated both domestically and internationally by this fishery; (3) preserve the eel fishing techniques in Kamouraska as part of our intangible marine heritage; and (4) designate the American Eel as a species of "special concern" under the Species at Risk Act, and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House at the earliest opportunity.

On the motion, Mr. Kamp...

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): First of all, Mr. Chair, I suggest we follow our usual practice and go in camera for the discussion of the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe: I'd just like to point out that it's not a practice we agree with.

[English]

The Chair: That's fine.

It's been moved by Mr. Kamp that the committee move in camera.

Mr. François Lapointe: Can we record the vote on going in camera, please?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: We'll suspend for a moment until we go in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

- _____ (Pause) _____
- _____

[*Public proceedings resume*]

• (1155)

The Chair: Before we adjourn, Mr. Weston, you wanted the floor.

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

[*Translation*]

Author Stephen Covey said that it's important to mark passages in life, family and business.

[English]

He said that the values of organizations are important and I think we need to mark a passage today.

There's a person on our committee who has served a long time, probably longer than any person in Parliament on any committee. He has certainly served the longest as a parliamentary secretary that I know of. In a system that is constrained by the adversarial nature in which we find ourselves, he has always tried to find common ground. He's made it a pleasure for me, and I think my colleagues on all sides, to come to this place. He has been the author or the progenitor or the colleague of many reports that have come from the committee, and he has done something in a world where we truly strive to preserve a resource not just for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren, and that is the fisheries.

I just want to pay tribute to our friend and our colleague Randy Kamp. We're going to miss you here and we're very grateful for the work you've done over 11 long years. Thank you, Randy.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: It's too bad that we didn't go out of in camera to say this.

I've enjoyed working with you, Randy, over the past three years. You've been a good parliamentary secretary to work with, given the constraints under which you work. Of course your demeanour has always been such that you were able to put me in my place in the nicest possible way without raising your voice, something I've never learned how to do. Anyway, I know this is an issue you've always been pretty dedicated to and I wish you the best.

Thanks.

• (1200)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chisholm.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much.

Randy, yes, you've been a true gentleman and if you can keep Chisholm in his place you deserve a lot of credit. He never has very much to say, Mr. Chisholm, but whatever.

Randy, you handled the issues around this committee in a very decent manner. It was interesting. I didn't always agree with the outcome, probably not very often, but the fact was that you did it with true decency. Without question, as an old clergyman said to me one time, "If I could put on my tombstone, he was a good man". I can say one thing about you, Mr. Kamp, you are a good man and you served well and I thank you very much.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Before we rise here today I want to echo a lot of the sentiments, Randy. As chair of this committee it's been a real pleasure to work with you over the last almost seven years. Certainly I think we've done a lot of good things here together as a committee, and to all committee members today, it's been a great experience working with all of you.

One of the things that I take a lot of pride in as part of this committee for the last seven years is that we've always had unanimous reports. That's something that other committees cannot say. We may not have produced a lot of reports at times but we have always had unanimous reports and we've gone that extra mile. I certainly appreciate the efforts that all of you have made over the last seven years. I especially appreciate your contribution to that, Randy.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Is this our last meeting?

The Chair: No, but just in case it is.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: If it happens to be, I wanted to thank the clerk and the analyst and the staff who have supported this committee, as I'm sure others would. We really appreciated all the work and support and we've always felt well served.

Thanks very much.

The Chair: Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: In that regard, as Bob said it's a shame these comments are in camera. Are we able to get unanimous consent to take the comments public starting with the tribute to Mr. Kamp?

The Chair: If the committee agrees—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I think it could be dangerous to take it public because I said things about Randy that were wonderful.

The Chair: We would need unanimous consent.

Georges advises me that if the committee agrees, the comments can be taken out of camera and printed if that is the committee's wish.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: I want to change what I said.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Cleary.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: I would say one thing. I found you to be a very fair and good chair.

You can't speak French, can you, Mr. Chair? That's too bad because if you did I think you would have made a fine Speaker. Unfortunately your party is not going to have a chance again, but thank you.

The Chair: On that note we'll adjourn.

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