



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

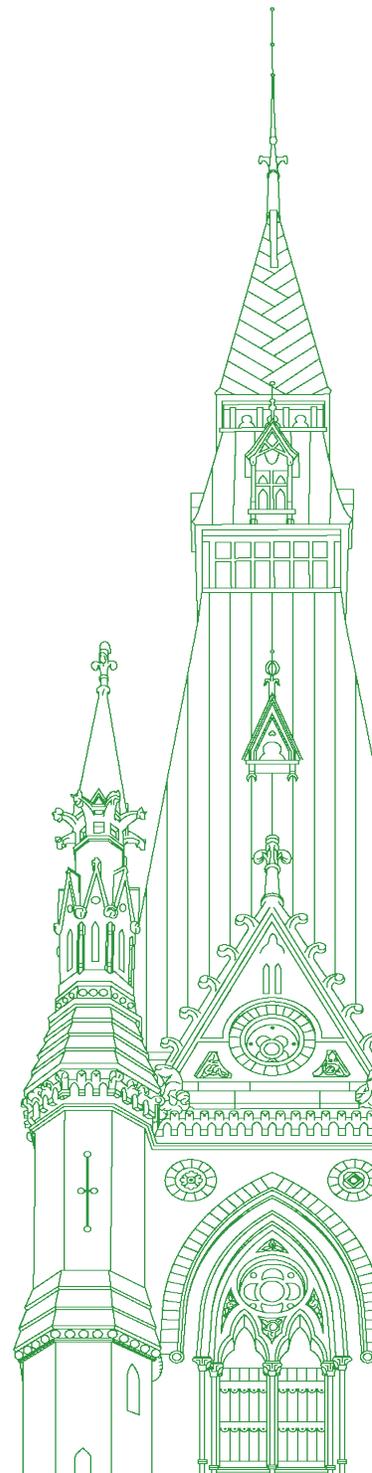
EVIDENCE

NUMBER 025

PUBLIC PART ONLY - PARTIE PUBLIQUE SEULEMENT

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald



Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (1600)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)): Mr. Morrissey, please go ahead.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Chair, now that we're in committee business, I would like to present the following motion. I move:

That, in light of new regulations the government has implemented for owner operator and fleet separation in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and the need to ensure that ownership and licence transfers continue to be transparent, that the committee undertake a study examining the process and structure for corporate offshore licences and quota transfers; that the committee receive witness testimony from officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and industry representatives; that the committee also accept written briefs from individuals or organizations who wish to submit input.

Mr. Chair, I would like to make a minor amendment to this: that the committee hold two two-hour meetings.

The Chair: Is that the entirety of your motion and amendment?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Yes.

The Chair: I don't know if we have to deal with an amendment separately. Do we consider it?

I'm being told to do the amendment first.

Please repeat it.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: The amendment reads, "That the committee hold two two-hour meetings".

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Chair, I have an amendment to the motion that was circulated. I had a motion very similar to Mr. Morrissey's, but I have a couple of amendments that I would like to propose to his particular motion.

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey has added an amendment already, so we have to deal with his amendment first. Then I'll go to you, and to anyone else who wishes to discuss it.

Everybody has heard the motion, and the amendment proposed by the mover.

Is there any discussion on the proposed amendment?

Mr. Williamson, go ahead.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): I'm wondering about the rationale for limiting it to two two-hour meetings. That seems like a pretty meaty motion to study or review the legislation, the changes, the impact on inshore fisheries and, of course, the corporate angle, which you also mentioned.

I'm curious about the limited space, which allows for a really small handful of witnesses.

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey, would you like to respond to that?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: It was the same request made by your colleague.

Mr. John Williamson: I've got a few more ideas, if you want to follow our lead.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: The two two-hour meetings are enough to study it, but I will respect the wishes of the committee.

Mr. John Williamson: I'm not sure how to proceed, plus we have more motions coming from my colleague, Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Morrissey, would you agree to table that for now, so we can figure out what we're studying here first, and then we can look at how we're going to close it off?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Chair, it's your call, but I'd prefer that my motion be dealt with.

The Chair: The motion and the amendment have been presented, so we can't do anything further until we deal with the actual amendment, as proposed by the mover.

Mr. John Williamson: I'm sorry, Mr. Morrissey. I wasn't suggesting you table your motion—far from it—just the amendment to that on the time, and we'll come back to it. I'm not suggesting you withdraw it, but we'll perhaps talk about the study and other amendments to it that might impact the length of time we want to give it. That's all.

The Chair: We have a point of order from Mr. Beech.

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): I just wanted clarification. I'm sorry. I didn't catch the actual wording of the amendment. Is it two meetings for two hours, or is it "at least" or "no fewer than" two meetings for two hours?

• (1605)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: It's that the committee hold two two-hour meetings.

Mr. Terry Beech: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Johns, you were waving.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Thanks.

I agree with Mr. Williamson that we can just wait to hear what Mr. Bragdon has to say, because if it's going to be around Mr. Morrissey's motion and potentially expanding it or whatever, let's hear that if we can. It's probably going to give us some scope on how many meetings we have. I don't see any issue with holding off voting on how many meetings we have until we've heard from Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: I'm okay with it.

The Chair: Bobby, are you withdrawing your amendment right now so we can move on to something else? It is still there to be voted on as such, if it remains.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Can I reintroduce the motion after we hear from Mr. Williamson?

The Chair: You can reintroduce the amendment, yes.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: That's fine. I'll withdraw it, then, for him to—

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

With regard to this motion, as you saw, I submitted one that's very similar. Since we're dealing with Mr. Morrissey's motion, I have a couple of proposed amendments. One would be right after—

The Chair: If you have more than one amendment, Mr. Bragdon, can we deal with one at a time?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Okay, we'll deal with this one; this is the first one.

After “structure for corporate offshore licences and quota transfers”, there's a comma. We would amend and insert “how the Government of Canada will uphold principles of fleet separation and owner-operator policy vis-à-vis the sale of Clearwater Seafoods and whether the Government of Canada and Clearwater ownership share a common interpretation and understanding of how policies of fleet separation and owner-operator policy will be applied to Clearwater; that, for this study, the committee hold two two-hour meetings to receive witness testimony”.

It's a long one, but that's the amendment.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: I'll be opposing this amendment. Mr. Chair, I have concerns that we're bringing specific sales of fishing quota to this committee, and that the Conservatives have chosen one that includes the Mi'kmaq and not other sales of fishing quota or fishing licences or sales of companies to this committee. I have deep concern with that.

I think Mr. Morrissey's motion covers this off in terms of the overall scope of the impacts of sales of licences on the east coast, on the inshore fishery as well, and what I think Mr. Bragdon's trying to achieve. I don't understand why they're specifically focused on this sale; I have huge issues with it and so does our party.

The Chair: Before you answer, Mr. Bragdon, Mr. Morrissey is waving his hand, so if he has a concern as well, you can answer both right afterwards.

Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to my colleague, he's mixing apples and oranges. The owner-operator fleet policy separation is related to the inshore fishery; it's extremely specific. Offshore corporate licences do not fall under that policy, so I don't know why we would be trying to study both when there's no relationship between the two.

Here in Canada we have offshore corporate licences that are held by corporations through licensing and quota. The fleet separation and the owner-operator policy is inshore; it's very specific. It was studied at length, and everybody understands it. These are two very different issues and to try to mix them in this study simply would do injustice to the inshore fishermen.

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon.

• (1610)

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to my honourable colleagues, this is in direct response to the correspondence that many, if not all, members of this committee have been receiving, with direct concerns from the fishing associations. These fishing associations have been bringing these concerns to all of us. I believe we have an obligation to make sure their concerns are fully vetted and heard.

Irrespective of whether it's this particular sale or any future sales regarding any number of industry stakeholders across the country, we need to make sure we have a really good understanding and know what principles the government will be upholding in these. This is not about just one particular sale individually. This is across the spectrum. These associations have brought these concerns forward to all of us as members of this committee.

The Chair: I don't see any other intervention on the proposed amendment by Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson: My question's actually for Mr. Johns.

Gord, are you concerned...? Is it this deal? I'm at a loss. There is really only one transaction on offer right now that potentially impacts owner-operator fleet separation in Atlantic Canada. The law that the Liberal government passed on this to protect owner-operator fleet separation is part of the study. Do you oppose a review of that just to ensure the law stands and that everyone's on the same wavelength here?

Mr. Gord Johns: I'm fine with what Mr. Morrissey's proposing, Mr. Williamson. I don't believe the motives are genuine in where you're coming from, in the Conservative Party, and in terms of where you're going with this. I don't believe you would be putting this motion forward if it weren't including the Mi'kmaq. That's how we see it.

That's where I'm going with this. I'm being straightforward on this. I have deep concerns with it. I'm sharing with you my perspective on this. I will be voting against the amendment.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Johns.

Mr. Williamson.

A voice: Call the question.

Mr. John Williamson: I have to respond to that.

You are deeply wrong. I regret that you impute motives to questions. I don't impugn your motives when I hear some of the things that come from you or your bench. This has been an issue down here with a corporate fishery that long predates the involvement of the Mi'kmaq. For 10 years I've been involved with this—long before this deal was established. There has been a constant and ongoing struggle to ensure that inshore licences stay in the hands of individuals who own those licences—that's it.

That is why, first, the Conservative government moved to clean up and end the controlling agreements that allowed the corporate fisheries, through grey zones and loopholes, to run these boats as if they owned them themselves. Then, following on that good work, mostly done by former fisheries minister Gail Shea, the Liberal government legislated that and it went from regulation into law. They, too, were so concerned about it.

This is a question of the big guy, the corporation, looking to circumvent the laws or regulations that have been in place to ensure the fishery stays communal. It's as simple as that.

You are flat, dead wrong when you suggest we would not be bringing this up were it not for this deal. We've been bringing this up collectively in Atlantic Canada for over a decade now. Ask questions. State your position, but don't impugn my motives or those of any other members on this committee, because we're looking to ensure the fishery here stays communal. Whether that is through indigenous or traditional fishers doesn't matter, but it has to stay local. A corporate fishery would change the very nature of that business out here.

I applaud and appreciate your questions, but please don't suggest the motives here are anything else than what we're stating they are. That's unfair. If that's the way we proceed as a committee, it's going to undercut the trust we have and, I think, the dialogue we ought to have on this committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Williamson, I think the concerns and questions you have will be addressed, and you could have those questions posed to witnesses under Mr. Morrissey's study. I believe you can get the answers you would like and resolve these concerns.

In terms of showing respect at this committee, I have been rudely interrupted and attacked by the Conservative bench at this committee, while I've been speaking, and have had cheap shots taken at me, which you recall. Please don't try to tell me you've treated me with respect and heard me out and heard my opinions, when that actually isn't the case.

• (1615)

Mr. John Williamson: On that, I have never cut you off and I have always treated you with respect; in fact, I've even reached out to you behind the scenes. I regret that you take all members of this committee as the Borg and think we're all one and the same, but that's just the wrong.... Let it go.

Mr. Gord Johns: I'm willing to let it go, but I'm not willing to have this member try to tell me that his party has treated me with respect the whole time. That has not happened. I've signalled my concerns, and that's the truth.

The Chair: Can we stick to the actual amendment when it comes to the discussion? I don't see any more hands up to talk to the amendment.

Madame Gill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

For the benefit of all members, I'd like to clarify one point. Mr. Bragdon wanted to make an amendment. Is the motion that Mr. Morrissey has put forward, as it stands, going to prevent him from discussing what he is adding in this amendment?

We have heard the views of Mr. Johns and Mr. Williamson, but I would like to hear what Mr. Bragdon has to say about it. I would like to know what his amendment contributes and what space for discussion it would open up if adopted.

[*English*]

The Chair: I will just remind people as well that all comments—whether they're against or opposing what somebody else has said—should be addressed through the chair and not to another member of the committee.

I see no more intervention on this, so, Tina, can we go to a vote on the amendment by Mr. Bragdon, please?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: I asked a question, Mr. Chair.

Could Mr. Bragdon answer it? I can repeat it if necessary, but I would like an answer before I take a position.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. Do you want to repeat that for Mr. Bragdon, Madame Gill, on his amendment?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Of course, Mr. Chair.

As I was saying, Mr. Morrissey introduced a motion, which Mr. Bragdon wishes to amend. I would like to know how his amendment is going to open up space for discussion in the study. In other words, if the motion is not amended as he wishes, will that prevent him from discussing the points he wants to make in the study?

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Mr. Bragdon.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mrs. Gill, for your question.

[English]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Look, in regard to this, I feel that the amendment is being proposed because it brings clarity to the issue at hand. It reflects the concerns pertaining to this that have been coming from the fishing associations throughout our region and across the country. We feel as though it has added layers to make clear the parameters around the discussion and what is at hand. We feel as though it adds further clarification and identifies the concerns that were raised directly by the associations.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bragdon.

(Amendment negatived: nays 7; yeas 4)

The Chair: We now go back to the main motion.

Mr. Bragdon, is your hand up?

• (1620)

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Yes, Mr. Chair. I have another amendment to propose.

After the line “receive witness testimony from officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans”, we would add, “the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and industry representatives,” and then add “to answer questions, including those raised by harvester organizations in their correspondence to committee members”.

The Chair: Okay. Everybody has heard the content of the amendment. Is there any discussion?

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Morrissey's amendment on adding the wording about two two-hour meetings. I don't see any hands up, so I presume there's no discussion.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

The Chair: The amendment proposed by Mr. Morrissey is added to the original motion.

• (1625)

Is there any discussion on the main motion as amended? Seeing no interventions, Tina, could you do a vote on the main motion as amended, please?

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 10; nays 0 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: The motion as amended is passed.

Mr. Calkins has a point of order.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Chair, I am loath to bring it up, but given what's transpired at this committee today, while this committee has had generally cordial, if not friendly relations most of the time, I'll refer you to Standing Order 18, which deals with disrespectful or offensive language and so on. It states:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor any of the royal family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government...[any] offensive words against...[the] House, or against any member thereof.

It continues:

No member may reflect upon any vote of the House, except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.

At page 97 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, there is a reference to the rulings of Speaker Milliken in the past in regard to Standing Order 18:

Moreover, personal attacks, insults, obscene language or words that question a Member's integrity, honesty or character are not permitted. It is unparliamentary to state that a Member has deliberately misled the House. As Speaker Milliken observed in 2002: “If we do not preserve the tradition of accepting the word of a fellow member, which is a fundamental principle of our parliamentary system, then freedom of speech, both inside and outside the House, is imperilled”.... However, if a Member who feels that his or her reputation has been maligned by the comments of another Member raises a question of privilege, the Speaker must determine if such remarks “constitute such a grave attack as to impede the hon. Member...in the performance of his duties”.

I'm saying this in the defence of my colleague, Mr. Williamson, whose character and motives, I believe, were impugned by my friend—my adversarial friend, but my friend—Mr. Johns. I don't have the authority from Mr. Williamson to pursue this on his behalf, but I would respectfully ask Mr. Johns to withdraw his remarks insofar as they impugned the reputation of Mr. Williamson.

We are free to agree and disagree respectfully at this committee. I don't like lecturing people and I'm not trying to do that, but I think if we don't nip this kind of behaviour in the bud at this committee, we're not going to do the justice that the fishers of this country deserve.

I would ask Mr. Johns to respectfully withdraw those comments. I'd hate to see this get carried on any further.

The Chair: I think Mr. Johns wants to respond. I will allow that.

Mr. Gord Johns: I appreciate the comments from Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Chair, at the times when I was interrupted and insulted by two members of this committee in the past, I should have raised them to the chair. I should not have carried those concerns forward and let the committee continue without addressing them at the time. I take that on myself for not dealing with it at the time.

This was not about attacking Mr. Williamson, who I actually have great respect for, who has always treated me with great respect and who I really appreciate. This was about defending myself when he cited my concerns and that he felt that he was being attacked when, in fact, I was bringing forward some concerns from the past.

I have great respect for my colleague, Mr. Williamson. I appreciate Mr. Calkins raising this concern. I apologize if there was any offence taken by Mr. Williamson because, again, I have deep respect for him and he has always carried himself very much with respect toward me.

When I talked about his party on this committee, that would be a different situation. I'm happy to highlight the two incidents that took place because they're on record and they're on video. They could be easily brought up so that we could have a broader conversation. I would be happy to address those as well.

• (1630)

The Chair: I appreciate your quick response, Mr. Johns.

I don't see anyone else.

Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson: I want to thank Mr. Johns for that. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Gord.

The Chair: I think we have put that to bed for now. I would like to thank Mr. Calkins for raising it in the manner in which he did.

I will remind people that any time they feel they're being disrespected in any way by another member, identify it at the time and, as chair, I will deal with it appropriately at that time.

I will agree with everything everybody has said to a certain degree, that this committee has gotten along quite well in the past, regardless of which party stripe members have been. I say that even as chair and with former chairs who have chaired this committee. There has always been a certain amount of congeniality toward one another. We might have our little jabs every now and then as committee members, but it's never escalated to anything beyond that. The jab sometimes is a bit of humour more so than something seri-

ous toward another member. I would ask people to keep that in mind in the future.

We'll move on from that. I know that one is done.

Mr. Johns, you had your hand raised second in regard to new business or committee business. When you're ready, please go ahead.

Mr. Gord Johns: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I hope we can proceed in a better way, all of us. I hope we can learn from this. Certainly, I have, a lot.

Mr. Chair, several weeks ago, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans said it would be reinterpreting the regulations and defining what "readily accessible" means when it comes to frozen-at-sea spot prawns. All our offices in B.C. and perhaps everyone here heard from thousands of concerned constituents about how this would impact regional economies and the prawn industry in B.C. and Canada.

DFO has said it's looking at awareness this year. It didn't resolve the problem, and we want to hear from the department and stakeholders on this, on how it will impact them next year and in the future, so I'm moving:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of at least two meetings to understand the impact of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans re-interpretation of the Fisheries Act regulations affecting frozen-at-sea spot prawns; that the committee call witnesses including senior department officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and interested stakeholder groups to testify; and that the committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House.

I don't believe we need to undertake a long study, and two two-hour meetings would be sufficient to hear from witnesses on this.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Johns.

I believe, Mr. Arnold, you've raised your hand to speak to this.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate Mr. Johns' bringing this to the attention of the committee, as we all know of the issue with the spot prawns. It continues with unexpected announcements, decisions or changes in interpretation that are impacting harvesters right across the country.

We see it as an ongoing problem with the minister's and the department's not consulting with the stakeholders or the industry. I think the spot prawn was the first one that really raised it to highlight it to MPs offices. We were all flooded by emails about that.

I don't know whether we can cover this in just two meetings, and I want to bring to the attention of the committee that we have been postponing motions for study that were on the docket long before this, and which have a much broader scope.

It's fine that it be on notice of motion to the committee, but to further postpone our study into the Pacific salmon, the illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries, and the pinniped issue on both coasts.... I think all of those have a much bigger impact on our overall fisheries in the country.

We keep getting sidelined into other—I don't know whether you call them knee-jerk or reactionary—studies in this committee, rather than focusing on what the committee identified early on in the first session of this Parliament and now in the second session, as we got back under way after the prorogation. We had priorities set out, and I don't think it behooves the committee to continuously change priorities because of what happens to be the issue of the day, because these issues of the day continue to pop up under this current regime.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

Go ahead, Jaime.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): I'm in agreement with the study on the spot prawns, and I believe there's an urgency to it, so I'd like to see it moved up. I was wondering if Mr. Johns could speak to the urgency in this matter, because I believe it's an important one that we need to look at right away.

Mr. Gord Johns: First, I want to thank Mr. Arnold, because he's right. There are these issues that are constantly coming up, and the department are not explaining themselves. They're making knee-jerk decisions that are impacting people's lives. People are out fishing right now, and some are afraid to go fishing. They're afraid that it just takes one officer to enforce the reinterpretation of the rules and shut them down. They're resistant to making further investments in future seasons. It could affect the market. There are lots of things that are coming into play right now, and obviously uncertainty is the big issue right now. They want this addressed right away.

Here we are. It would literally take two meetings to get this fleshed out, and hopefully the department will back down and we can get them to commit to backing down.

This doesn't just affect the prawn industry; it affects all different fishing industries, because if you talk about reinterpreting the rules, and if they can't check frozen-at-sea prawns that take five minutes to thaw out, how are they going to get a fish that's in the front of a hold on a boat and check that and inspect that? This could be over to other species, so I think this is something fairly serious that affects both coasts and multiple fisheries.

I think we should get the government in front of the committee to explain itself on this reinterpretation of the rules, because it's going to end up transcending over to other fisheries as well, and we've got a lot of fishers concerned about it.

Hopefully we can get this cleaned up quickly. That's what we're hoping.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Johns.

Mr. Hardie, you wanted to comment.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Yes. I'll be very brief, Mr. Chair.

This decision comes after decades of what they call “tubbing”, which has been the accepted process up to now. It seems to be arbitrary. It seems to have been done with no consultation whatsoever. Mr. Johns is right that this isn't the only incident. There's another one to do with clams, I think, or it's something that I heard; emails are flying by all the time on some of these issues.

We really do have to look at this through the lens of fair process as well as the specifics of this particular issue.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Bragdon, you had your hand up for discussion.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks, Mr. Johns, for bringing this forward. It is a very important issue.

I think this uncertainty is having an effect from coast to coast with the prawn issue, but there could also be other issues that keep emerging. If these regulations have been interpreted one way for 50 years, and all of a sudden they're being changed or there's uncertainty around them, it really sends shock waves to the whole industry across the country, coast to coast, at a time when they need as little uncertainty as possible. There's enough of that in what we're all dealing with in terms of the pandemic.

I totally appreciate where this is coming from and share the concerns around it. I reference the concern of my colleague Mr. Arnold that we have a lot of things on the docket. If we can incorporate this somewhere, obviously we want to, because this is very important to our fishing industry from coast to coast. We have to alleviate the uncertainty.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bragdon.

Mel.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to draw attention to the fact that we have also heard from the aquaculture industry, and lately the oyster farmers, who possibly aren't able to take their oysters to farmers' markets because of another reinterpretation or sudden change in rules that has affected them. This is ongoing. This is more than just spot prawns. It's a persistent trend within this department and within the minister's offices recently. It's more than just spot prawns.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing no other indication of an intervention, we will move to the vote on Mr. Johns' proposed motion.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11, nays 0)

The Chair: Thank you, Tina.

We'll now go to Madame Gill, please.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to discuss three motions, essentially about language issues.

The first is on the issue of technical testing for witnesses and it reads:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the Committee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advise the Committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Seeing none, we will proceed with a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Ms. Gill, please proceed.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you so much for the wonderful spirit of camaraderie. It's a matter of respect.

The second motion concerns documents translated by the Translation Bureau:

That all documents submitted for Committee business that do not come from a federal department or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon, you have your hand up.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you. I propose a friendly amendment for Ms. Gill to consider. After “federal department”, would she consider adding “members' offices”?

The Chair: Seeing no further discussion, we can vote on the proposed amendment first, and then on the motion as amended.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

• (1645)

The Chair: We'll go now to the motion as amended from Ms. Gill.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Ms. Gill, we can now go to your third motion.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: The third motion concerns substantive motions and written amendments to substantive motions in both official languages:

That the text of any substantive motion or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all Committee members before the Committee begins debate on such a motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any interventions?

Mr. Calkins, go ahead.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Could the clerk remind the committee, for my benefit at least, what a substantive motion entails?

The Chair: Ms. Vohl.

Ms. Nancy Vohl (Legislative Clerk): I can certainly answer that. A substantive motion is any motion that is not a dilatory motion or that is not a motion, for example, to adopt a clause or paragraph or something like that. It is any motion that is, basically, a text that would be debatable and amendable.

• (1650)

The Chair: Not seeing any other interventions, can we vote on the motion?

Ms. Vohl.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: In that case, Mr. Chair, if the committee were to adopt the motion, the clerk and staff would probably need the committee to give guidance on practical terms for what it means on a daily basis for a regular meeting, and what the expectations are while we meet.

The committee can definitely adopt and proceed to the vote, and give guidance if it's adopted, or members can ask questions right now, and they can vote after.

The Chair: I'm not seeing any hands up.

We can vote first, and if we need some guidance, we'll get it then, depending on if the motion is adopted or turned down.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Do you have any questions on practical terms and clarifications?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, the clerk is suggesting that we would have to give clarity, should we adopt this motion, on a number of issues and directions. There are ramifications from the result of this vote on how this committee operates that are substantive enough that the clerk has concerns.

I would like to know if the clerks would like to elaborate on what those kinds of ramifications and implications are, before I cast my vote.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calkins.

Ms. Vohl.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

With respect to substantive motions and any motion introduced on the floor during a meeting, you have passed a motion that the text of the motion should be distributed beforehand in both official languages.

If a text is produced and the quality of the translation is fair to middling, who is responsible for checking the quality of the translation?

The clerk is not an official translator. If a text is provided to us directly during the meeting, does that mean we have to send it the Translation Bureau and wait for a response?

Mrs. Gill could perhaps offer her opinion on how to proceed. I am thinking, for example, of a situation that occurred in the fall. We had a motion that was moved in public and it had several amendments.

How should the clerk and the chair react and proceed in a situation like that, and what does Mrs. Gill think?

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Gill, do you want to hold up for one second?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Yes, of course.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Battiste has his hand up, as well. Maybe you can answer both concerns together, please.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Based on those points raised by the clerk, I'll be voting against.

The Chair: Okay. I thought you had a different intervention.

Madame Gill, please, perhaps you would like to respond.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: The idea behind it is that, as a lawmaker and a parliamentarian, I want to have the text in both official languages so that I can consider the subject in an informed way. That's the first thing: I can consider that, as a parliamentarian, I have the right to receive the text in my own language. Of course, there are some nuances. When it's a matter of one or two words to be translated, it goes very quickly. However, I seem to recall some instances where the text of motions or amendments was very long.

I recognize that the interpreters have a job to do, and they have to work very quickly. They are efficient and I thank them for that. However, there are situations that most people on committees do not usually experience. For example, committee business can have already moved on while I am still listening to the interpretation. This causes a lag for me. It also affects the interpretation; we need to think about the interpreters as well.

Because I have to follow the words as they are being interpreted, I need to listen, understand, and think at the same time. That's why I would like to have the translated text right then. I don't necessarily want to have it in advance, but I want to get it so that I can make informed choices.

I mentioned nuances. We can make a distinction between words, paragraphs and pages. Earlier, I gave the example of my colleague Mr. Williamson. He made a lot of amendments at one point. That represents a lot of work for me and certainly for the interpreters—I want to think of them too. In that situation, I can't be as efficient as you can because it's in your mother tongue.

That's really my concern. My goal is not to make it so we can no longer introduce amendments on the floor. I don't want to delay the meeting, I want all parliamentarians to have the same rights. Imagine if the situation were reversed: if the meeting were held in French and the majority of the amendments were also presented in French and I was the only one who could understand, apart from Mr. Cormier, who is sometimes here, and Mr. Williamson, who

speaks a little French. You would want to have the substantive motions and amendments in your mother tongue. You will understand that this is more difficult for me—although I do speak some English—because it would be difficult for you as well.

I am simply aiming to strike a balance and achieve fairness as much as possible. Again, the goal is not to burden the committee, but simply to facilitate informed decision-making during the course of its work.

• (1655)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Johns, you waved your hand.

Mr. Gord Johns: I support Madam Gill. In fairness, especially on these substantive, longer motions, we should ensure that it is interpreted so that it's in both official languages.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Williamson.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Williamson: I agree wholeheartedly with Mrs. Gill.

I thought it was already established that, when a member proposes amendments, they are translated for the other committee members.

So I totally agree that this needs to be done. I will vote in favour of Mrs. Gill's motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: With respect, Mr. Williamson, that would have then made your amendments, or at least the amendments that Mr. Bragdon had to Bobby Morrissey's motion, very long, very time-consuming and impossible to do in a session. Think twice about that vote.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Madame Gill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Actually, it might not have been impossible to introduce the motion during the meeting. In my opinion, members have a responsibility to have motions translated before they are presented to their colleagues.

I believe that Mr. Bragdon did his job conscientiously and thought through his motion before he introduced it. He could very well have had it translated without putting a heavier burden on the committee.

Once again, I'd like us to vote in favour of Mr. Bragdon's motion. However, I consider it a matter of basic respect, not only for my work as a parliamentarian, but also for the French language, that I be given the means and tools necessary to think and speak in an informed manner on behalf of my constituents.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Seeing no further intervention, I will ask the clerk to do a recorded vote. Keep in mind the concerns of all members of the committee on this particular issue. Thank you.

(Motion negatived: nays 8; yeas 3)

The Chair: Mr. Hardie, you're next on my list.

• (1700)

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'm honoured. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, in light of the recent Pacific salmon investments in the 2021 budget, I'd like to move that the committee allocate no fewer than three two-hour meetings to hear testimony and recommendations from experts on how best to allocate this money for Pacific salmon restoration.

The Chair: We've heard the motion.

I will check, Madam Gill, did you hear the substance of the motion translation?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: I heard the interpreter, but I don't have the motion in writing. My motion was defeated.

However, Mr. Chair, I would like to remind—

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: On a point of order, Chair, I'm not getting interpretation.

The Chair: We are in committee business, so I will ask Mr. Hardie to repeat it slowly, please.

Madame Gill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: I had previously put forward a housekeeping motion that overlapped with part of the motion that was just defeated, that is, that the text of a motion must be presented in both official languages. The motion has therefore already been adopted.

Can Ms. Vohl check that? If it is the case, I should receive the motion in French as well.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Mr. Chair—

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Clerk.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Actually, Mrs. Gill, I too was looking for the French version of the motion. I don't recall any notice being given on this motion.

I may be wrong, because I'm now also working on another committee.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: The motion had carried. So no notice was given.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: No, I'm not talking about yours.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Okay.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Your first motion was and remains carried. However, I don't recall seeing the written version of the one just put forward.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: I'm sorry, I think there has been a misunderstanding. Mr. Hardie wanted to move a motion, as I understand it. However, I don't have that motion in writing. The motion I was referring to carried several months ago. According to that motion, I was supposed to receive the motion in writing.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: We don't have your first motion in writing either, as I recall.

Would it be possible to send it to us?

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Yes, I can send you my first motion in writing.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: No, I'm talking about Mr. Hardie's motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Hardie's motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Mrs. Gill's motion carried at the first meeting. According to the motion, motions for which no notice was filed are to be forwarded to committee members in writing. That motion definitely carried.

However, the clerk and I do not recall seeing a written version of the motion Mr. Hardie has just put forward, but perhaps we are mistaken.

Would it be possible to send us the text in question?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Hardie, do you have it in text form?

• (1705)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Yes, Mr. Chair, I do. I hope that staff are listening in and can get it to Nancy right away.

The Chair: We'll wait and see if they're able to get that to us.

While we're waiting for that, I will remind members that, if for no other reason than to be co-operative, it would be great, if anyone knows they're putting a motion forward during committee business, to please supply it in at least one language to the clerks. That way, it can be translated for all members of the committee and distributed, so we would know and have knowledge of what is coming forward.

Ms. Nancy Vohl: Perfect. I got the text, so I'm sending that at the moment.

It's gone; you should have it now.

The Chair: Thank you, Nancy.

I'll give everybody a minute to receive it and to read it.

Has everybody had a chance to receive the motion and to read it? I see Madame Gill giving a thumbs up, so I would think everybody else has it.

Mr. Beech.

Mr. Terry Beech: I have a question for the mover of the motion. It doesn't say this outright in the motion, but can I assume that you're...? This isn't a separate study; you want this tacked on to the current salmon study. I'm trying to get your intention.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Yes, that's correct, because it fits hand in glove, obviously, with the intent of that study, which is to look at options to restore Pacific salmon.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold, go ahead, when you're ready.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It seems highly unusual to me that the committee should spend this much time looking at a government budget line or a program. Although I certainly support anything we can do to restore our Pacific salmon stocks, I believe it's beyond the scope of the committee to determine how the government spends those dollars; that's the department's work.

Mr. Chair, can Mr. Hardie provide a little more background on why he thinks this is necessary? The Pacific salmon study has been dragging on for such a great length of time that I don't know whether we will ever see the end of it if we keep tagging on new things. We've certainly heard testimony that conservation work is needed, but let's.... Can we maybe get a little more clarification from Mr. Hardie?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Don't answer yet, Mr. Hardie. A couple more people have questions or concerns.

Madame Gill.

• (1710)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My remarks were along the same lines as Mr. Arnold's. I was wondering if it is the committee's role to tell the government how to allocate the money in the budget. I would imagine that some thought has already been given to that.

I am always willing to help in any way I can, but I believe that countless avenues that the government could use as models have already been suggested in committee testimony.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've heard really good testimony that talked about the urgency of resolving the situation. The budget has now provided the ability to move forward. I think some of the Indigenous communities have stated that they want to be heard when looking at solutions, so this isn't us telling the governments how to spend it, but hearing from those stakeholders as to how they would like to see it done.

I think it's an important thing to do, and we've come this far within the study, so let's make sure it's done right.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Hardie, you'd like to respond to those comments.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Obviously, this is a very interesting development and it was borne out by the fact that because many people here on the coast know that I am on the committee, I was approached as soon as the budget came down by people who definitely wanted to tell us what they thought should be done with the kind of funding that's been available.

In many of his interventions or questioning, Mr. Johns has brought up the fact that to this point, the resources have not been available to do important things in his riding and along the west coast of Vancouver Island. Finally, I think we now have an opportunity, because this isn't just hypothetical; these are real things that can be done, and we can now start to get our head around prioritizing things. This can influence our recommendations and certainly help us expedite the work that needs to be done quite urgently.

The Chair: Mr. Arnold, you had your hand up.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll go back to comments I made previously. We continue to add on spur-of-the-moment studies here, detracting from the key studies that this committee already identified that we would prioritize.

For example, there is the study on IUU fishing. We know we can produce more fish, but if we continue to let them be captured through illegal, unreported and unregulated harvest, they're of no benefit to Canadians. Madam Gill is waiting for her study on the Quebec sport fishery. The committee already discussed long ago that we would try to represent all Canadians. We've done a study on west coast issues. We've done a study on east coast issues. The IUU study would cover all coasts: east, west and north. We have tried to be balanced on this committee.

Now we seem to be chasing tails around all over the place. We really need to focus on what's going to make the biggest difference to fisheries in general right across Canada. I put faith in the department, to a certain extent, that once it has the funds available, it will be able to find places to use those funds to make the most significant investments in the restoration of our salmon stocks. However, for this committee to try to be informed and to make expert decisions or recommendations in even just three meetings would be quite a challenge. I really hesitate to.... I question Mr. Hardie's motives here and want him to recognize how he's delaying these other motions for studies that we have all agreed to as a committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

Before I go to Mr. Hardie to respond, I'll go to Mr. Calkins.

• (1715)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In light of the massive undertaking that we've already done when it comes to the state of Pacific salmon and the study that we are winding down right now, would Mr. Hardie please enlighten me on any witnesses he would call for the study that he is proposing right now who haven't already come to the committee under the context of the current study to testify about the very same issues regarding Pacific salmon? It feels as if we're going to be doing a micro-set of the macro study we've just done, and I'm not sure that's the best use of the committee's time. I remain to be convinced, however.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Thank you, Mr. Calkins and Mr. Arnold.

With regard to Mr. Arnold's point, the IUU study is important to us, too. I must say that we have supported that one all along.

As per our earlier discussions on the prawn fishery and the oyster fishery, I don't know if I can put this delicately, but I don't think we should leave the DFO to its own devices. I think we need to step in and provide the kind of leadership that it apparently needs from time to time, especially when it's dealing with something as important as this amount of money and a very transitional approach to a problem that has yet to be resolved: the disappearing salmon on the west coast.

Mr. Calkins, I have a list. I just don't have it here in front of me. However, I'd be more than happy to share that with you. You'll see, in the context of the people who now want to talk to us, the importance that they see, first of all, in the budget line, and second, in now how they see themselves participating in the restoration efforts for salmon.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Ken, can you...? We have identified almost every witness, every expert and every stakeholder for Pacific salmon. Who is new in this context? Who would be new? Who hasn't already just been here?

Mr. Ken Hardie: There are some new ones, Blaine. I don't have the list in front of me, unfortunately, but I'm more than happy to share that with you.

There are people identified on that list whom I don't recognize from our previous testimony. They have approached us. They have something to say. I think that because we are on the issue anyway, it's worthwhile, given the kind of investment we're talking about, to take the extra time to make sure it's as inclusive as possible in terms of the people who can play a role in helping us deal with our crisis with regard to Pacific salmon.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Arnold.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tina Miller): I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but the bells are ringing for a vote in the chamber.

The Chair: Are they 15-minute bells or 30?

The Clerk: They're 30-minute bells.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, you start walking west and I'll start walking east, and we'll see which one of us gets to the chamber first.

The Chair: I don't think either one of us would get there very soon. I can't walk on water.

Since the bells are ringing, can I ask for unanimous consent to continue for another 15 minutes? That would leave 15 minutes on the bells for us to get set up to do our vote.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We'll deal with this shortly, in 15 minutes.

Madame Gill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: I was a little surprised by Mr. Hardie's motion. When an amount of money is set aside in the budget, it indicates a commitment to do something, some specific action that has been planned. I feel like Mr. Hardie's motion runs somewhat counter, as if the money announced isn't earmarked for any specific purpose.

Is that what Mr. Hardie wanted to say?

I just wanted to check if I understood correctly.

• (1720)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Well, I think what we have heard—and we've heard this over the last two Parliaments in fact—is that a lot of work needs to be done. The study we've done so far—and we've heard from some excellent witnesses—gives us a sense as to what's in the realm of the doable versus what we can't control and where we then need to focus and prioritize.

Certainly since the budget came down and since these people have approached us, they now have ideas. We really need to work those practical ideas into this study to make the study itself worthwhile and to make this investment pay off as much as possible.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

I see no further interventions, so we will vote on the motion by Mr. Hardie.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: In the few minutes we have left before we leave for a vote, I don't know if anybody wants to discuss schedule.

Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Actually, I just have a question. I'm looking for some clarification on this, because we've never had the ability before to be virtually attending a committee meeting and virtually voting in the House of Commons at the same time. Chair, you asked for permission to extend. Normally you would ask for that permission so that we would have enough time to still get to the chamber. I can assure you that I don't have to move one inch from where I'm currently situated in order to attend the chamber to vote.

I'm wondering what the ramifications of being able to continue with the committee meeting while a vote is in progress in the House of Commons might be, and whether or not the Speaker or the parties have come to any agreement that I might not be aware of in that matter.

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. Calkins.

It is my understanding that we're on a time limit. The bells were ringing and we could have stopped right there. I wanted to get the full two hours in if I could, and we're very close to doing that. When we get to that point, we will have to ask whether we're extending beyond that. I think there are probably about six or seven minutes left in the time slot allotted us. The only time we've extended in the past was when we were delayed by votes, and that hasn't happened today.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I guess my question is more theoretical, Chair. Let us suppose, for example, that this vote had been called 45 minutes ago and we were still in committee and had witnesses. Normally we would close the committee, be summoned to the chamber and lose all that committee time. We don't have any of those issues now. I'm just wondering what the correct procedure is here, given the fact that, through technology, we can actually be in two places at the same time.

Anyway, I'll leave that theoretical discussion for a future time.

The Chair: That's not a problem. I appreciate that.

I see, Mr. Battiste, that you have your hand up.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Yes, I just wanted to propose that we get into the spot prawn study, followed by Bob Morrissey's motion, and then resume the discussion about the Pacific salmon. I would propose that order.

• (1725)

The Chair: Okay, that's a proposal by Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Yes, just given the logistics of getting witnesses, etc., I would want to see our Pacific salmon study go forward, as scheduled, next Monday.

The Chair: Yes, if I'm not mistaken, next Monday's meeting is already scheduled. That will go ahead as planned. That's not part of the actual motion that you just made.

I don't think it's going to be easy to battle out what we're doing next and over the next few meetings. I would suggest that we try to carve out some time along the way to have a more wholesome, ful-

some discussion on the actual schedule. I know that some members have raised the issue of getting done what we already have on the docket. Some new ones have been added. We don't have a lot of time left between now and when the House is scheduled to recess in late June. I think it would be foolhardy to try to put that together in the short amount of time we have left today.

We all know now, and I'd ask for members to reflect on what we have done today in regard to motions and other things still on the docket for consideration when we come back. I'll try to set some time aside as soon as possible to do committee business—to do an actual schedule—if that's okay with committee members.

Mr. Ken Hardie: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, we had a motion by Mr. Battiste.

The Chair: No, I don't think it was a motion. I think he was suggesting that we would look at doing this first, that second, and that third, in some order of importance. It wasn't moved as a motion.

I'm not seeing any discrepancy in what I have just said.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I might have left out the words, "I move a motion", but that's what I was proposing. It was a little bit vague, but that's the motion. Those were the priorities I was hoping we would vote on before we have to vote in the House.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: I just worry that we're going to need conversation around this. If we run into the vote....

I think we should be talking about this, in fairness.

I'm excited, Jaime, to have further dialogue on salmon, as you can imagine—always—but I want to be respectful. There are other studies and we should have a fulsome dialogue, more than one minute.

The Chair: Actually, it's not much more than one minute. There are about two minutes left before the committee time is up. I would suggest that, yes, we look at it in a more fulsome way for the schedule. It's going to be tight to get in what we want to get done. I think we have to be cognizant of the fact that we are going to be interrupted over the next six or seven weeks for votes and whatnot. We are probably going to lose some committee time along the way as well. I don't think we should try to jam everything up. As a committee, we should look seriously at what we want to get out of it before we recess in June.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Okay. I move that we adjourn.

The Chair: Mr. Battiste, first, you have to withdraw your first motion.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Mr. Chair, I will withdraw it and make that motion to adjourn instead.

The Chair: There is a motion to adjourn.

We are adjourned. I'll see you all at the next committee, and probably before that. Thank you.

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