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Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald



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• (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. We'll start meeting number three of our Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

Before I get into the normal rant that I give at the beginning, I'm going to ask for the committee to agree here. We all know how to use Zoom now and we know how to use the raised hand function, so I'd like to skip over the big speech that I normally read and just highlight these facts for you: Please direct all comments through the chair and we'll get to everybody in order.

As we left off on Tuesday, we had a list of people who had raised their hand to introduce motions. We'll continue on with that list. The first one up today will be Mr. Cormier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Good morning, everyone. I hope you are all well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Serge, could I interrupt for one moment? I forgot to do something important. Madame Desbiens asked if she could have a short intervention before we continue with the motions.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Yes. I also have a point of order at the beginning, but we can certainly let Ms. Desbiens go ahead. It's probably the same thing, but anyway, go ahead, Ms. Desbiens.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): I also have a point of order.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Desbiens.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It was Mr. Cormier's birthday yesterday, so I wanted to mark it with a little song.

[*The member sings the following lyrics:*]

My dear Serge

On your birthday

I would like to hug you with my voice

And tell you out loud what everyone thinks in secret

May happiness surround you

May happiness surround you

Happy birthday, Serge!

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Happy birthday.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Happy birthday, Serge.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Thank you, Mrs. Desbiens.

I know that Mrs. Desbiens is an excellent singer. This is not the point of order I wanted to make, Mr. Chair, but I thank her very much.

[*English*]

Thanks, everybody, for wishing me a happy birthday for yesterday.

Mr. Chair, I have a point of order at the beginning before I talk about my motion.

[*Translation*]

I know I can express myself in English. You have seen it since I have been on the committee. Nevertheless, it is sometimes a bit difficult for me to follow the debates. I need interpretation, and I think that Mrs. Desbiens also uses it often. In fact, this is as much the case for us francophones as it is for the anglophones.

At the last meeting, when it came time to vote, it was a bit difficult for me, and for Mrs. Desbiens as well, I'm sure, to follow the motions and amendments. The interpreters do an extraordinary job, but sometimes there is a delay of a few seconds—

[*English*]

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Chair, could I interrupt for just one second? I'm hearing both voices at the same time. I'm hearing Serge and the interpreter, and I can't make out either.

• (1105)

The Chair: Have you set “Translation” on “English”, Mr. McLeod?

Mr. Michael McLeod: Yes, I have.

The Chair: It's strange for you to hear both.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Are you guys hearing it, or am I the only one hearing both?

The Chair: You're actually on twice. Your name is showing up on the screen twice, once with your picture and the other with the sound. When you speak, it's not your picture that lights up as yellow; it's the other one, the sound. You're actually on twice somehow. That's maybe why you're hearing the French and English.

Mr. Michael McLeod: That means I have two votes, Chair, at committee.

I don't know why I'm on twice.

The Chair: We'll see how you make out with the two votes, but that might be why you're hearing it twice.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Chair, there was an overlap on mine as well. It was distinct. Serge was on and the interpreter as well.

The Chair: Tina, can we check why they would hear both?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tina Miller): Yes. We're looking at it right now here in the room.

Mr. McLeod, you're going to get a phone call.

The Chair: Is that better now, Serge?

If you continue, Serge, and it's not doing what it's supposed to do, I'll stop again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: I was saying that when it came to voting on motions, it was sometimes difficult. Even though I can speak English, I sometimes use interpretation to better understand what is going on, and I know that Mrs. Desbiens has to do the same thing. I say this as much for francophones as for my anglophone colleagues. If Mrs. Desbiens or I present a motion in French only, the interpretation may be delayed a bit, even though the interpreters do an excellent job, and the same goes for interpretation from English to French.

I suggest that you, Mr. Chair, or the clerk confirm that we all understand the motion and the amendments before we vote. Often, when we vote, we have to vote when the interpretation is not complete. It is a bit confusing for us.

[*English*]

It goes both ways. It's more of a collegial thing, and we can all benefit from it.

The Chair: Thank you for that, Serge. I will try to remember to ask for a short delay before we get into any vote.

Tina has her hand up.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After speaking with the ambassadors here in the room—this may be more specifically for Mr. McLeod, but it can apply to everyone else—at the bottom of your screen where you see the option “Interpretation”, if you select to mute the original audio, that will cut out the additional sound.

The Chair: Serge, if that's your point of order before you get to your motion on the list that we have developed, Mr. Perkins has a point of order as well.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Okay. I will wait for Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I want to give notice that, depending on how today goes—because it was originally scheduled to be a meeting to sort through the work plan and figure out what the priorities and timing would be—I have a motion in that regard before the end of the meeting, if we don't get to that part.

The Chair: It is my intention, if the committee is in favour and we get through a number of these motions, to dedicate the last half hour to some scheduling. If not, we're going to run into a problem when we start our first meeting when the House opens. We'd like to know what we're doing for the first couple of studies so that we can line up witnesses and send out headsets, if need be, or any equipment they need in order to appear before the committee if they're not doing it in person. It was my intention to get things ironed out in that fashion.

I also want to mention that I am delighted to see Mr. McLeod, the member for Northwest Territories, subbing in on the committee today. This is probably the first time for him to be on the fisheries committee. He sits close to me in the House. I find at times that he has a wealth of knowledge and other times he doesn't. I hope this is a time when he has a wealth of knowledge to offer the rest of the members of the committee. Welcome, Michael.

Serge, it's back to you.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are back to my motion that I presented last Tuesday. I think you've had a chance to see it.

I've explained it a bit. It's a study that was adopted in the last Parliament by all members of this committee to study the right whales measures that were put in place by our government in 2017 to protect the right whales that are increasingly present in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and have an impact on the fishing industry, the communities and the fish plant workers. We had to deal with that.

The measures that were put in place were good. They do a lot of things. Yes, they protect the whales, but they also protect our market in the United States. You know how difficult that is sometimes.

This is a study that I want to do to make sure that we are on the proper track and that what has been done so far with these measures strikes a good balance between protecting the whales and protecting the industry we have and the communities all around it. This does not only affect my area; it touches some parts of Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Quebec. We were lucky that in the last two years there were almost zero deaths in relation to fishing gear and the entanglement of whales, but there were some strikes involving big boats that transport our goods from one place to another.

I want to look at those measures to see if there is a way to improve them. Is there something else the government and all the fishermen's associations can do? There has been unbelievable work. We have some testing being done right now on some traps without ropes. They press a button, the trap goes up and there are no ropes in the water. It's things like that. Sometimes it's difficult for fishermen to fish with that gear, and there are all sorts of other measures that were put in place. I want to study that. I want to see what more we can do.

This is what my motion is. It's something that will be impossible to do right now, this spring, because the fishing season is starting pretty soon, as you know. When we come back in the fall will be the time to do that. The crab fishing season is over then. It also has bit of an impact on lobster. With global warming and the oceans warming up, whales can be present in other places, so it would be a good study to have. It will benefit everybody on the screen.

I hope that I have your support for that study. If you have any questions, I am open to answering them.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you, Serge.

Mr. Perkins, you have your hand up.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cormier, I fully support what you're proposing here. I have no questions. I think it's a very valuable study for the committee.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Thank you very much, Mr. Perkins.

The Chair: I don't see any other hands up.

Do I see consensus on the motion as presented by Mr. Cormier? Are there any dissenting opinions? No.

(Motion agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: The next one up is Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: On December 14, I gave this notice of motion:

That the following reports of this committee in the Second Session of the 43rd Parliament be adopted as reports in this session:

Report 1, Striped Bass in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Miramichi River: Striking a Delicate Balance;

Report 4—Implementation of the Mi'kmaw and Maliseet Treaty Right to Fish in Pursuit of a Moderate Livelihood; and

that the Chair present the reports to the House.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

I see that Mr. Morrissey has his hand up.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, before probably heading into some votes, did we get a clear interpretation or ruling on the eligibility of participating in committee voting without being live? I don't want to deny Mr. Zimmer his role, but did we get a clarification on that?

The Chair: Yes. If Mr. Zimmer is required to speak or if there's a vote, he would have to have his camera turned on.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay.

The Chair: I believe that's what the clerk kind of indicated to him. While there's discussion on the go, of course, he can leave it off, but if he wants to speak or vote, the camera has to be on.

I hope that settles that issue.

• (1115)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: We hope it works. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks, Bob.

Mr. Hardie, you have your hand up. Are you speaking to the motion of Mr. Perkins?

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Yes, I am.

I'm wondering if the clerk can give us advice on whether we can gang them all up and handle them in one motion or if we need a separate motion for each study that needs to be brought back.

The Chair: Go ahead, Tina.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, if this is regarding the motion of Mr. Perkins that's just been moved, I would recommend that they can be done together in one motion. However, it is recommended that they be separated into two separate motions, because they do refer to two separate studies, and it would be clearer in this way.

The Chair: If we do separate them, we'd obviously have to do a separate vote on each one, would we?

The Clerk: A separate vote...? I'm not sure I understand the question. The current motion that's before the committee, as it's been read into the record, has both together.

I'm sorry; could I speak with you for just one moment?

The Chair: To make it easier, Tina, I can ask Mr. Perkins if he'll withdraw the motion as read and do report number one first and then report four.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I'm always in the hands of the committee, but we still have a number of motions to go through, and there are some others to be tabled that we don't have notice of motion of yet. I think it's just easier if we put the two together, because they're just being tabled in the House. It's simpler that way. I have another motion, which is one that we gave a notice of motion on, as you know, and for this motion we'd like a report, as opposed to its being tabled in the House.

I think it's easier to put these two on the House procedure. Since the clerk said it's in order, I would prefer doing that, if that's possible.

The Chair: Okay.

Tina, do you still need to speak to me?

The Clerk: As long as the committee agrees to adopt it as it has been proposed, that's fine as well.

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

Mr. Ken Hardie: I do indeed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The motion says at the end, "that the Chair present the reports to the House". Is it Mr. Perkins' intention to ask the government for a response? If so, that should be included in this motion.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: We're not intending to ask it in this way. These motions are just being tabled in the House, so the answer is no.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Then you don't want a report or a response back from the government?

Mr. Rick Perkins: I'll leave that to House leaders to decide once the report is tabled.

Mr. Ken Hardie: That gets us into the potential for concurrence motions and other things that tend to chew up time in the House. Perhaps it would be better, then, just looking ahead at all the things that need to be dealt with in the House itself, if this were amended to request that the government provide a response to the studies.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I'm not open to amendment, but obviously others can propose it.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I would propose, Mr. Chair, to amend this motion by adding, "and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to these reports."

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

We've heard the amendment by Mr. Hardie. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none and seeing no hands raised, I'll ask for a show of thumbs-up for yea to the amendment, and then I'll ask for thumbs-down.

I think we have six thumbs-up.

Tina, are you counting the thumbs-up?

The Clerk: I would just remind you, Mr. Chair, that pursuant to the House order of November 25, all votes in committees must be decided on unanimously or carried on division or by recorded vote.

• (1120)

The Chair: Would you do a recorded vote, please?

The Clerk: On the amendment of Mr. Hardie, it is agreed to.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7, nays 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Okay, the proposed amendment is passed.

We'll now go back to discussion on the main motion as amended.

There is no further discussion. Is it passed on division? Is there any dissent?

I'm seeing thumbs up on all sides, so it is passed on division.

(Motion agreed to on division [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

Go ahead, Madame Desbiens.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I didn't think my turn would come so soon. I was under the impression that I would speak later, but I am very happy to read the motion to you now.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study about foreign ownership and corporate concentration of fishing licences and quota through transactional agreements, and review the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' process for allocating and transferring commercial fishing licences and quota; and that the committee receive witness testimony from officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, industry representatives, and experts; that the committee also accept written briefs from individuals or organizations who wish to submit input; that the committee hold five (5) meetings for this study; that the committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.

I hope I did not read the motion too quickly.

[*English*]

The Chair: That was just a little bit quick for the translation.

Have the members received the text of that motion? Tina has her hand up saying yes.

The Clerk: I just—

The Chair: I'm just confirming.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I think Madam Clerk has had time to send the text of the motion to everyone.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Everybody has seen the text of the motion and has heard the motion as presented.

Go ahead, Mr. Cormier.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mrs. Desbiens, I read your motion quickly.

It talks about what the committee studied in the last session, including some transactions made by large foreign companies that invest in Canada to buy our fish processing plants, for example. Sometimes, some even go to the docks to offer rock-bottom prices to fishermen.

The effect of this is that after two or three years, the prices are at the lowest possible level. So the fishermen have to deal with a company that has a monopoly in the area. It becomes difficult to preserve the gains of our coastal communities.

Are foreign investments and the large corporations exercising extraordinary control the subjects of your study?

• (1125)

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: That's precisely it, Mr. Cormier.

The motion makes room for a study, not a guess or a suggestion. Once we have heard from the various stakeholders and witnesses, the study will bring a range of things to light. We are hearing concerns from people in the community.

In my opinion, this motion is a priority. I hope that it will be unanimously supported by the members of the committee. There is really an imminent danger of loss of quota, particularly for fisher owners. That is what concerns us most.

We agree with you, and I hope the whole committee agrees with you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, could we have a brief suspension? This motion just came in. It's a good motion, but I just want to make sure that I fully understand where this is going. Maybe we could have a few moments' suspension so we could discuss it.

The Chair: We'll suspend for a couple of minutes and get back to it after that time.

• (1125)

(Pause)

• (1130)

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on the motion?

(Motion agreed to on division)

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

Madam Barron, you're next on the list, even though you weren't here the other day. Mr. Bachrach had put his hand up to put one forward, but we just didn't get to him in time, so you get to do it yourself.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): That's great. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That answers my question. My question was whether it was put forward in the previous meeting, so that's great.

The motion we are putting forward has been resent. Just to clarify, Mr. Chair, have you received a written copy?

The Chair: Is it the one that you put forward for your notice of motion?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Yes.

There's a slight change, which I'm told was resent in written form. I want to confirm that you have received it.

The Chair: Yes. Tina has given me the thumbs-up that everybody has received it.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: That's great. Thank you very much.

Here's the motion that I'm bringing forward:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of marine cargo container spills on Canada's marine environment with regard to (i) the environmental impacts of cargo container spills; (ii) improving response times and efficacy to cargo spills; (iii) addressing jurisdictional gaps to improve collaboration with volunteer, charitable organizations, provincial and territorial agencies, municipalities, and Indigenous communities during spill responses; (iv) improving polluter responsibility and financial accountability; that no fewer than four meetings be allocated for this study; and that following this study the Committee present a report to the House.

To clarify, Chair, can I provide the rationale now?

The Chair: Yes, you can.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Thank you.

This is a motion that I'm happy to bring forward. As many of you know, there was a recent cargo spill off the west coast of Canada with the *Zim Kingston*. Unfortunately, this recent spill in October resulted in 109 containers falling into our waters, and 105 of them—I should confirm that number—yes, 105 have sunk. We saw debris and containers washing up onto our shores.

Now, this is not an isolated incident. We had another spill in 2016, and three years after that we saw styrofoam items that should not be in our waters washing up on our shores.

The reason for bringing this motion forward is that we have seen that approximately 3,000 containers have fallen into the Pacific waters between September and December of last year. This is going to continue to increase, unfortunately, as transportation increases in our waters and as we inevitably see the impacts of climatic events within our oceans. With climate change, we're inevitably going to see storms like the one that caused the *Zim Kingston* spill.

We also heard from Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council president Judith Sayers, who wrote to transport minister Omar Alghabra to say, "The ongoing incident involving the container ship *Zim Kingston* has brought to light numerous shortcomings in the overall marine emergency response capacity for the west coast of Vancouver Island."

This motion is attempting to address that issue so that we can understand how we can better provide a response to these spills and protect our coast and our waters.

Thank you.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Barron.

I see that a couple of people have their hands up for comments. Go ahead, Mr. Kelloway.

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

To MP Barron, thank you for this study. It's clearly defined, point by point. I'm appreciative of the context, the verbal context, and your study really highlights it quite well. I'm actually very interested in the study as well. With gratitude, I want to thank you for putting it forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kelloway.

Next is Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I would again ask for the clerk's advice on the scope of this particular study, because a lot of the regulations, etc., with respect to the safety of cargo handling, etc., would fall into Transport Canada, whereas of course the response is clearly an issue that would come to this committee in terms of the activities of the Canadian Coast Guard and the liaison with community groups up and down the coast.

It would be a shame to see a worthy study like this ruled out of order by the Speaker if we've strayed too far into somebody else's mandate. A reading of this or an opinion by the clerk might be useful at this point.

The Chair: Go ahead, Tina.

The Clerk: I can confirm that, yes, the committee can study this matter for sure, but when we present reports and the Speaker finds that we're reporting on a subject that goes outside the mandate of the committee, it could be indeed ruled out of order.

We rely on our analysts. I see Thai and Michael with us today. They can certainly give some guidance as to the responsibilities of the department and the mandate.

The Chair: I don't know if Michael or Thai have any comment.

Go ahead, Michael.

Mr. Michael Chalupovitsch (Committee Researcher): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regard to the scope or mandate of the committee, it's not my role to decide that; it's for the committee to decide in a vote. The oceans protection plan is run out of Transport Canada. However, DFO and the Canadian Coast Guard have a role to play in response to marine cargo incidents, just as the previous member explained. That's as far as I could guide the committee on that.

The Chair: Thank you, Michael.

It touches on several departments, but the Minister of Fisheries certainly has some responsibility. The Coast Guard falls under that, as well as a lot of the responses. If it were up to me, I'd say yes, do the study, and if we report to the House and the Speaker deems it inadmissible from our committee, maybe we can argue the other way. As Mr. Kelloway and Mr. Hardie indicated, it seems to be a good study to do.

Are there any other comments?

Go ahead, Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Perhaps what we could do is carry out the study with the scope as is, and then when it's time to go through the report, try to identify areas where we may be stepping over a boundary and deal with it through edits to the report or whatever, or referral to the transport committee if necessary. I agree with everybody else. This is a worthy study and it's certainly worth looking into. I would hate to see it tossed out as being out of order.

We could maybe do some patches, fixes, hacks or whatever is required at the end of the process to make sure that everything works.

The Chair: That's where we'll lean heavily on Michael and Thai down the road.

I don't see any other hands up, other than Ms. Barron's.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: I just wanted to clarify something. I appreciate the comments and the thoroughness of discussing how this looks moving forward.

I'm open to looking at how that might be presented in the end, as long as the work is done. The reality is that there's overlap between many of the committees, but the scope of what we're looking for through this motion falls very much within this committee. I would love to see us dig into this work and get things moving forward around it.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Barron.

Seeing no more hands up for discussion, let's move to the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: That gets us to the end of our first list, so I'm going to ask people to use the "raise hand" function again to move on with further motions.

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

● (1140)

Mr. Rick Perkins: I have two. I sent you an email, but I'm not sure how you want to handle them. I can just do one and then you can decide what to do next.

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Rick Perkins: We gave notice of a motion on December 14, although I'm making a slight amendment. It reads:

That the following report of this committee in the Second Session of the 43rd Parliament be adopted as a report in this session:

Report 2, Aquatic Invasive Species: A National Priority; and that the Chair present the report to the House.

The Chair: We've heard the terms of the motion. Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I would propose the same amendment that I proposed on the last of Mr. Perkins' motions so that a comprehensive response from the government would be requested. It would read, "That, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to this report."

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Madame Desbiens, you have your hand up. Is that to talk to the amendment? Your hand is down now.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: No, Mr. Chair, I apologize. Actually, I just wanted to make another motion.

I wanted to make sure that—

[*English*]

The Chair: That's okay. It's not a problem. I have you on the list. Go ahead, Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I want to speak in favour of the motion itself.

The Chair: This is to the amendment.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: If this is to the amendment, I'll pause until that occurs. Thank you.

The Chair: I'm not seeing any other hands up on the proposed amendment.

Go ahead, Ms. Barron.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for your patience as I navigate these waters.

I like that. I will use that, with this committee being FOPO.

Can someone please clarify how this amendment would result in a deferred outcome in the end for this motion? I'm trying to understand the differences that would result from this amendment.

The Chair: Okay. I'll try to do my best with it. If I do it somewhat haphazardly, the clerk might want to correct me.

It's due to the fact that we can do any study we want if it relates to the work of the committee. A lot of times when reports are presented in the House, more often than not you're asking for the government to actually respond to a report that's being presented in the House.

There are times, of course, when the committee or the members may decide that they don't require a response. They just want to hear witnesses, do a particular study, report it to the House, and that's the end of it, but for the most part it's very common to ask for an official response from the government on a particular study.

Mr. Hardie, you have your hand up.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Yes. Actually, I'll confess to not being up to speed on all of the intricacies of this. I understand that leaving out the proposed amendment would create a situation in which motions could then be brought forward to the House of Commons that would involve debate and the use of, basically, House of Commons' time. We can avoid this by simply asking for this amendment and asking for the government to table a response.

Again, that's as deeply as I can go into the technicalities, but perhaps somebody has a bit more clarification.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I think Mr. Hardie is right.

The simple difference is that with this amendment, the government tables a written response. With it worded as I propose, there is the option for this report to be debated in the House. With my motion, we're giving the leadership of the parties the option to do that.

The amendment is a substantive change in approach, and it significantly changes the original motion.

It is something I would oppose.

• (1145)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

Not seeing any other hands up on the proposed amendment by Mr. Hardie, I think it might be easier on this one to ask Tina to do a recorded division, since I know there are going to be some yeas and some nays.

Tina, when you're ready, please go ahead.

I'd like to remind you before you start that we'll take a short pause to make sure Mr. Cormier and Madam Desbiens are fully aware of what's been interpreted for them.

The Clerk: Thank you.

The question is on Mr. Hardie's amendment.

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: We'll go back to the original motion.

Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, the only point I'd make is that the previous committee studied this issue. We just denied requesting that the government actually table a response or a report to the work of the committee. It's rather contradictory.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Kelloway.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I won't belabour the point, but I'm with MP Morrissey on this point. To not have a response from government is to me a—

• (1150)

Mr. Rick Perkins: On a point of order, why are we debating a vote that just happened?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Agreed.

The Chair: We're discussing the main motion, actually. After the amendment, we decided—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The interpretation has stopped working.

[*English*]

The Chair: There is no translation.

Tina, could you check on that, please?

The Clerk: We can hear the French. Now we can hear the interpretation.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you so much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go back to you, Mr. Kelloway, to finish off.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: I'll be very quick.

It's exceptionally odd for me to not have a government response to a study. It is absolutely mind-boggling—

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: I'll conclude.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I know they may not have liked the last vote, but that previous motion was defeated, as my colleague Mr. Perkins just said, and they're still speaking to it. I just hope we can speak to the main motion.

The Chair: I believe that's what I asked to be spoken to. I think that if you're speaking to the main motion not requiring a response from the government, as Mr. Kelloway mentioned, in my view that would be considered discussing the motion itself.

If there's no further discussion, we'll go to a vote on the main motion as presented by Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, please, I'm trying to follow here. Was the last motion defeated?

The Chair: The proposed amendment was defeated.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Okay. Perfect.

The Chair: Tina, when you're ready, please, we'll have a recorded vote.

The Clerk: Thank you.

This is on the motion of Mr. Hardie—

Mr. Ken Hardie: On a point of order, we've already voted on Mr. Hardie's motion, Madam Clerk. This is on the main motion.

The Clerk: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes. Thank you.

This is on the motion of Mr. Perkins. I correct the record.

Mr. Serge Cormier: The vote is on the motion of Mr. Perkins, you mean?

The Clerk: Yes. It's on the motion of Mr. Perkins.

• (1155)

Mr. Serge Cormier: I just want to make sure, because it seems to be a little bit confusing here, at least for me.

The Clerk: Would you like me to reread the motion?

Mr. Serge Cormier: The amendment that Mr. Hardie proposed was defeated. Now we're voting on Mr. Perkins' motion, right?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Okay.

The Chair: When you're ready, Tina, please go ahead.

The Clerk: Again, I apologize for the confusion.

This is on the motion of Mr. Perkins.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 2 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Now we'll go to Madame Desbiens.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the Small Craft Harbours program, particularly its findings regarding the divestiture of wharves; that the committee invite the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, experts, government officials and industry stakeholders to discuss this issue, and that the committee hold at least four (4) meetings to do so; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We've all heard the motion. Is there discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Cormier.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mrs. Desbiens, first of all, thank you for bringing forward this motion that deals with small craft harbours.

That said, I'd like to give a little more context.

If memory serves me correctly, the committee conducted a study on small craft harbours under the former Parliament. I understand very well that this is important to you. We certainly agree that we should study the matter, because there are good things to be said about small craft harbours.

I just wanted to let you know that the committee had already done a study on this. However, it would certainly be interesting to see if there is anything else to add. There was a study carried out in 2018 or 2019. I was not on the committee at that time, but I have read the result of that study, as I am interested in this topic.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: May I reply, Mr. Chair?

[English]

The Chair: Yes, Madame Desbiens.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cormier, I am very aware that the government has made investments. Also, I know that the government has responded to the study that you are talking about.

My objective is to assess the results, to see where we are and what remains to be done. There have been some unfortunate incidents recently. We want the government to go further. I do not want to present the conclusions of that study, as my objective is simply to propose that the committee assess the results of the government's investments and what remains to be done. I see this as an update.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Is there any further discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I just want to say that I support this motion. I do understand that there have been previous reports. There is great disappointment that the government hasn't actually acted on them, from what I can see. I think it is time to focus once again. I think the last report was in 2019, perhaps.

Anyway, I support the motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

Could I see thumbs-up or thumbs-down?

I see thumbs-up on all sides. Is there any dissent?

(Motion agreed to on division)

The Chair: Mr. Perkins, it's back to you.

Mr. Rick Perkins: It's not a procedural one, so hopefully it will have more support. I live in fear of the chair commenting on my age or some sort of thing.

I gave notice of motion on December 14 for this motion:

That the Committee undertake a study examining systems and requirements pertaining to at-sea safety of commercial harvesters including Transport Canada regulations related to vessel design, safety requirements and seaworthiness; and examining federal commercial training courses and licensing requirements of mariners before going to sea and upgrading of skills as required; and examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates; and that the committee allot no fewer than [six] two-hour meetings to receive said testimony; and that the committee also accept written briefs from individuals or organizations who wish to submit input; and that the committee submit its findings with recommendations in a report to the House.

● (1200)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

We've heard the text of the motion.

Tina, I don't know if the change from eight hours to six hours has to be voted on as an amendment. I will ask for your clarification on that.

The Clerk: No, it does not. The committee is good with that. I'll just make the change.

The Chair: Okay, I just wanted to be sure. I didn't want to run into trouble down the road.

Go ahead, Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I want to speak to this motion.

It is particularly important to pursue this study for the safety of our fishing community, so I support it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: It is a very good motion, but then again, we've now done two motions, one of them from the Bloc. Is there no interest in those motions in having the government bound to prepare a report and report back?

This is a good item to study, Mr. Perkins. A lot has changed over the past number of years on this issue. It overlaps with different ministries, and there are a lot of what I'll call "backyard modifications" occurring within fishing boats—

Mr. Rick Perkins: I'd be open to an amendment, if you want to make one. I'm sorry; I probably missed that when I drafted it.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: If it's appropriate, I will. On this one, I feel very strongly that the government should report back to the House so that we have a report and we know what we're doing.

I would make that amendment, Mr. Perkins, to your very good motion.

The Chair: Are you presenting an amendment that there be an official government response?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: I think that's the only way we can actually get an official response. Am I correct, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: I would make that amendment, then.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Desbiens, do you want to speak to the amendment?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: No, I have another comment on the original motion. I'll come back to that.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll deal with the amendment first, and then I'll get back to you, Madame Desbiens.

Seeing nothing in the way of hands up to speak to the amendment, can I ask—

Go ahead, Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like clarification on the amendment. Does it ask for a government response or for a response to the House? I think they are two different things. Could you clarify that, please?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: It would be a government response to the House. It's the same text that was used before to ensure that the government responds to the report. When the committee does this work, I feel very strongly about it, since I've sat on it for years. We have seen very good reports in the past that had no response from the government. This amendment simply clarifies it.

Mr. Arnold, it would be similar to the motion that was adopted earlier. One was defeated, and now we're back again.

The Chair: Seeing no other hands up for discussion on the amendment, can we see a show of thumbs-up or thumbs-down on the proposed amendment by Mr. Morrissey?

(Amendment agreed to on division [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll now go to the discussion of the main motion as amended.

Madame Desbiens, you had your hand up to speak to the main motion.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I'd like to see a review of the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates in terms of both official languages. I've been told of situations where pleasure craft in distress haven't been able to communicate in French with emergency services.

It could be in the form of an amendment, but we could also do this as part of the study. I would like to suggest this to the committee and we can consider it together. I don't know how you feel about this. We can include it in the amendment or come back to it during the study. We can discuss it.

[*English*]

The Chair: In the actual motion, one of the recommendations is “examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates”. Response rates, to me, would be the timeliness of the response, not that they're charging a rate to respond to any particular response. That's the way I took it.

I don't know if that's what you're trying to make sure is included.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Yes. It can be an amendment regarding the two official languages. So it would be “response rates in both official languages.”

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I have no objection to that, but I think that would be covered in the wording, which already says “examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities”. I would assume we could have witnesses and discuss that issue as part of examination. I'm open either way.

The Chair: To Mr. Perkins's point, Madame Desbiens, are you asking for the response back to the House to be in both official languages? I would think that would normally happen. Could you please explain exactly what you're looking for so we fully understand?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I want to draw your attention to situations reported to me concerning pleasure craft in distress that didn't receive a response in French when they tried to communicate with the Coast Guard. In one case, the man spoke only French, so he couldn't understand what was being said to him in English. This didn't help the rescue effort.

Now, do we want to look at this as part of the study or do we want to pass a small amendment regarding equivalent response capabilities in both official languages?

It's really an open discussion. I want your backing on this.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think it would be something that would come up, since I think the Coast Guard would be called before committee as

a witness. A question for the Coast Guard would be to ask why they don't have the rescue capabilities—which is part of the actual motion—to understand somebody who is calling in French. Getting a response in English would definitely be a problem for somebody who is not totally bilingual. I would think that would come out in the actual study itself, given the way it is phrased, and it should be covered in the motion.

If you want to make an amendment, you can make sure that this particular thing is included. I don't know if “the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates” would cover that for you or not. If you want to put that in the form of an amendment to make sure it's in there, you're more than welcome to do that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before we make a decision to amend the motion or to consider the issue during the study, I'd still like to hear what Mr. Cormier has to say. I don't want to take your place by giving him the floor, Mr. Chair. I'll leave it up to you to ask him about it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Cormier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: I completely understand what Mrs. Desbiens is saying.

The study requested by Mr. Perkins in his motion is a very good idea. We have a great deal to learn about safety at sea. I think that Mrs. Desbiens, like me and our English-speaking colleagues, wants to make sure that this issue is addressed in the study. I'm thinking of your example, Mr. Chair, of someone who is at sea and who calls the Coast Guard.

• (1210)

[*English*]

If I'm drowning, I expect that the people on the other end of the line can understand what I'm saying. I think what Ms. Desbiens is saying here is that we want to make sure that both official languages are also part of the search and rescue call that the Coast Guard receives and that there's a capacity to respond in both official languages.

I'm not sure, Mr. Perkins and Ms. Desbiens, if you want to discuss that and put that forward as an amendment. There's no harm in doing that. It's just respecting both official languages and making sure that we have a person capable of answering a distress call in the language of the people who are calling.

[*Translation*]

I think that this addresses your concern to some extent, Mrs. Desbiens. The goal is to ensure that the Coast Guard can respond to emergency calls in both official languages. I think that Mr. Perkins would support an amendment of this nature if you were to move one.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I would agree, just as long as it doesn't narrow the wording. I'm not quite sure how to do it. The other way to do it, I think, Mr. Chair, as you just said, is through our agreement here in the committee that when we start to work on the witness list and all of those things, we will all agree that this will be part of the study and part of determining the witnesses we call. That's just to simplify it. Either way, I'm fine.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: This is a valid point that was made, but wouldn't the place to question that be under the Coast Guard's "capabilities"? It's included in the main motion. That would be a very real capability issue that would come out in the study when we have ample time to question if they have the capacity and capability to respond in both official languages.

As my colleagues Mr. Cormier and Madame Desbiens have said, if you're a unilingual francophone and you're in real distress, you're in an animated environment anyhow, and agitated, and it's important that somebody in the Coast Guard fleet.... It's my understanding that there's always somebody who has that capability, but....

The committee will do as it chooses, but on amending it, I don't know how you would add more to the definition of "capability". That would be a key capability item within the Canadian Coast Guard.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

Madame Desbiens, does that answer your question?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Yes, that answers my question. It also informs my decision to amend this notice of motion.

In the interest of flexibility, I would still like to move an amendment. We'll see the committee's response. I'll be as efficient as possible. I simply move that we add the following: "examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates, and studying both official languages."

The purpose of the amendment is simply to ensure that this aspect is taken into account in the study.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Could you repeat it once more so that everybody fully understands—whether they hear it in French or in English—exactly what you're proposing?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I would be happy to do so, Mr. Chair.

My amendment concerns the third paragraph of the motion and proposes to add the following: "examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates, and studying both official languages."

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you. I think we've all heard the amendment.

I have Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, I need clarification, because now her wording is "and study both official languages". This is not an official language study; it's a capability study of the Canadian Coast Guard, and we have to stay within that context.

In the wording, Madame, your wording is now clear: "and to study both official languages". Could you explain where we're going?

• (1215)

The Chair: Madame Desbiens, would you comment?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I understand what my colleague is saying. The punctuation may need to be reviewed. It's about examining the response rate and the rescue capability, and doing so while studying the ability to provide this service in both official languages. The service is being studied, not the two official languages. If the motion were worded differently, we may get there. I didn't mention commas when I read the motion. Often, punctuation makes the motion clearer.

I can read it again. It's about examining the search and rescue capabilities and response rates of the Canadian Coast Guard, and studying the search and rescue and response capabilities in both official languages, by doing—

Can you give me a moment, Mr. Chair? I'll just—

[*English*]

The Chair: That's no problem. We'll suspend for a minute so you can get your thoughts together and we will come right back.

• (1215)

(Pause)

• (1215)

The Chair: We're back. Is that sufficient time, Madame Desbiens?

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: We must remain optimistic, Mr. Chair. We'll get there.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead whenever you're ready.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I'm moving an amendment to the third paragraph of the proposed motion.

[English]

The Chair: You can't amend your own amendment. You can withdraw your amendment. You can ask for permission to withdraw your original amendment and introduce a new one. Is that what you want to do?

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: If I withdraw my amendment, do I lose the opportunity to move something else?

[English]

The Chair: No.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Okay.

In that case, let me withdraw my amendment and move a new one.

Does everyone agree with this?

[English]

The Chair: Now I will ask for the consent of the committee to allow you to withdraw your amendment and introduce a new one.

I see we all have thumbs-up. It's back to you, Madame Desbiens.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I move an amendment that pertains to the third paragraph of the motion: “examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities and response rates, and studying the service capabilities in both official languages.”

[English]

The Chair: We've all heard the amendment.

Mr. Hardie, you have your hand up.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I do, Mr. Chair.

The amendment as just proposed would focus that whole examination on service in both official languages, but I believe the examination was meant to be much broader than that. I'm wondering. I have alternative wording. I'm doing some wordsmithing here. I don't know if it's appropriate that I introduce that now and suggest it perhaps as a friendly amendment to Ms. Desbiens.

The Chair: No, it has to be a subamendment or you have to talk to the amendment as proposed.

Mr. Ken Hardie: The amendment as proposed, as I say, could be taken as limiting the examination to only the language issue, but it's certainly meant to be much more than that.

The Chair: Are you actually proposing a subamendment?

Mr. Ken Hardie: I am, yes. You can decide for me if it's appropriate as a subamendment.

I would have that paragraph read as follows: “examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities, including service in both official languages and response rates”, etc.

The Chair: Your subamendment is adding the word “including”.

Mr. Ken Hardie: It would not include what Ms. Desbiens was proposing. Instead it would change the amendment to read as I indicated.

The Chair: Now we're speaking to the subamendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I was going to propose some clarifying language too. I wonder if I could do that without formally proposing it.

Speaking to Mr. Hardie's subamendment, I think it suggests that what we're trying to get at here is that it's about the search and rescue capabilities—that's the original part—as well as response times and the ability of the Coast Guard to respond to the mariner in the official language of their choice. I think that's what we're trying to get at. I think what we're getting hung up on is this issue of studying the official languages capacity overall in either the act or the Coast Guard. As I understood Ms. Desbiens' original thing, it was really about the ability to respond in the language that the mariner wants to communicate in, unless I have that wrong.

The Chair: No, I think you have it right. I see Madame Desbiens is shaking her head to indicate that you have it right as well.

Right now we have a subamendment from Mr. Hardie, unless Mr. Hardie wants to withdraw it. Madame Desbiens would then withdraw her written motion as moved and include it as you've said, Mr. Perkins. I don't know, but right now, we have to deal with Mr. Hardie's subamendment.

• (1225)

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'm neither here nor there on it. I believe that the amendment I proposed simplifies everything. It includes the notion that the capabilities must include service in both official languages. That was the intent of the subamendment.

If people want to give me a thumbs-down on that, I'll withdraw it. How's that?

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Cormier has his hand up to speak to the subamendment.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mrs. Desbiens, I'll try to reassure you.

I think that Mr. Hardie's subamendment falls in line with what we want to do. As a French speaker, I want to make sure that services are provided in both official languages. I think that Mr. Hardie's subamendment accomplishes this. It's somewhat similar to your proposed amendment, Mrs. Desbiens, but it's more specific.

Through the amendment, we want to ensure that the services provided by the Coast Guard are available in both official languages. I think that this falls in line with what you said. I think that the two movers can agree on this. Personally, I think that Mr. Hardie's subamendment covers all this.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey, you have your hand up. Is it to speak to the subamendment?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Yes.

I agree with Mr. Cormier. Mr. Hardie's subamendment addresses the issue that Mr. Perkins raised and deals with the issue that Madame Desbiens is raising. Clearly, it says it does not stray into other areas. It makes it clear that in looking at this aspect, the study would also examine the Coast Guard's capability to respond to the mariner in both languages. We do not need it to be any more complex than Mr. Hardie's subamendment addresses.

The Chair: I'm not seeing any other discussion on the subamendment. Can we vote on it?

(Subamendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The subamendment as presented by Mr. Hardie is accepted. Now we're discussing the amended motion as a subamendment.

(Amendment as amended agreed to on division [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Mr. Chair, the clerk is trying to get your attention, I believe.

The Chair: Yes, I'm trying to unmute.

Go ahead, Tina.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The committee has adopted the subamendment of Mr. Hardie. Procedurally, we moved to the amended amendment of Madame Desbiens, so at this time, we're missing the vote on the motion as amended.

The Chair: Okay. I thought we voted twice. That's my mistake. Now we'll ask for—

Mr. Morrissey, you have your hand up.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Could we read back the motion, with the amendment, that we will now be voting on? I'm not clear on it.

Could the clerk read back what we are voting on this time, please?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, do you want me to read the motion in its entirety, or the paragraph that's being amended?

The Chair: The paragraph that's being amended will be fine for everyone, I think.

The Clerk: The third paragraph in the motion of Mr. Perkins is:

examining the Canadian Coast Guard's search and rescue capabilities, including service in both official languages and response rates.

The rest of the motion then continues.

• (1230)

The Chair: Okay, so what happens to the amendment of Madame Desbiens that she added at the end? We didn't remove that. We just added an amendment from Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Mr. Chair, I believe I indicated that my subamendment would remove Madame Desbiens' wording and substitute what I had suggested. That passed. The paragraph in question has now been amended. That was accepted by the committee. I believe we are now on the main motion.

The Chair: Okay. That's where we'll go with it, if everyone is in favour and if that's the proper thing to do.

Go ahead, Tina.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is on the main motion as amended.

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

The Chair: Mr. Kelloway, you have your hand up, but you are on mute.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: You'd think that after almost three years, I'd get used to taking the mute off and putting the mute on.

I'm looking to make a motion with respect to a study. Is it possible to do that now?

The Chair: All right. You'll have to make it quick. We're supposed to have the last half hour for scheduling.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Very well.

The motion is as follows: "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to examine the impact of climate change on our oceans and the role oceans can play in carbon sequestering; that the committee meet for no less than six meetings in relation to the study; that each party send a list of witnesses, by priority, including contact information, to the clerk of the committee; that the committee report its findings to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive study."

The Chair: Mr. Kelloway, has this been sent to the clerk in both official languages and distributed?

Mr. Mike Kelloway: I believe it is happening right now, yes, or it should be.

The Chair: Okay. We'll give it a moment.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Thank you.

• (1235)

The Clerk: Mr. Kelloway, I'm just not sure that it's been sent to FOPO. I don't see anything yet. I'm monitoring.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: My understanding is that it has been sent, but I will check again right now.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, may I, while we're waiting for this to come through...?

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Arnold?

Mr. Mel Arnold: I would like to have time to present a motion before the close of the meeting today.

The Chair: We can continue making motions. When 2:30 comes, if we haven't done the schedule, we're going to have to do it at the first meeting when we get back.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

The Chair: That's one o'clock Eastern Time. I'm sorry; I'm using Newfoundland time.

Mr. Rick Perkins: That speaks to the procedural motion I wanted to make, which is that if that were to happen, I suggest we have a meeting next Tuesday at the regularly scheduled time. Perhaps we can have a vote on that before we adjourn, just to make sure.

The Chair: If I have time to get to you, Mr. Perkins, I will.

Tina, are you in receipt of that motion yet? Okay, and has it been distributed to the members? Okay.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Mr. Chair, I don't know if I can take 10 seconds just to speak to it, but if we're pressed for time, I'll take your lead on that.

The Clerk: Mr. Kelloway, do you have the French to provide to me as well?

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Everything has been sent. I'll double-check once again.

It's just the English for now, I've been told.

The Chair: Is the French coming any time soon?

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Would it be possible to take a one-minute pause on this, Mr. Chair, no more than 60 seconds?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. Our time is pretty tight today, so I don't know if this can wait. Maybe Mr. Arnold's motion can go ahead or something. I know time is very precious right now.

The Chair: Actually, it's my understanding that as it was read into the record by Mr. Kelloway, it was translated for everyone. I don't know if we have to wait for the actual transcribed copy of it in French. I can confirm with—

Mr. Rick Perkins: On a point of order, I've always been told we have to provide it in both languages to the clerk. That's what I've been told, but I'm new.

The Chair: Tina, could you clarify that, please?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, we are under committee business. Motions can be moved from the floor.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, that's a new one. To be able to submit it only in English is a new one for me.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: It was just sent. That would have been within the 60-second time frame I asked for, but it should be there now.

The Chair: To your comment, Mr. Zimmer, as the clerk reiterated, many times when motions are made, we accept amendments without their being interpreted, because they are read into the record and translated by the translators who are provided to the meeting by the House.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: But, Mr. Chair, that's not a motion.

That said, let's keep going.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: I apologize for this.

Mr. Chair, can the clerk indicate she's received it? It has been sent.

• (1240)

The Chair: Mike, could I ask you to read the motion again slowly so that translation can translate it?

Tina is giving a thumbs-up.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Would you like me to read it, Chair?

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: The motion reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the committee undertake a study to examine the impact of climate change on our oceans and the role oceans can play in carbon sequestration; that the committee meet for no less than 6 meetings in relation to the study; that each party send a list of witnesses, by priority, including their contact information to the Clerk of the Committee; that the Committee report its findings to the House and; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we proceed, I will ask Mr. Cormier if he was able to hear that in time, through translation, so that we can go to a vote.

Okay: My right hand is telling me that I have to open it up to debate before I call the question.

Go ahead, Madame Desbiens.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Like Mr. Arnold, I wanted to make sure that I had time to move a fourth motion before the end of the meeting. I didn't raise my hand to participate in the debate.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on Mr. Kelloway's motion?

Can I see either a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: That passed unanimously.

Thank you, Mr. Kelloway, for your understanding on that.

Mr. Arnold, I know that you'd put up your hand, but my assistant had Madame Desbiens down as the next person to speak. Then we'll go to you.

Please proceed, Madame Desbiens.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Can I give a brief introduction before I read my motion, or would you rather I read the motion and make my comments afterwards?

[*English*]

The Chair: Please do so.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Okay. I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the introduction of recreational saltwater fishing licences in eastern Quebec; that the committee invite the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, as well as experts, citizens and fishers to appear; that the committee hold no less than five meetings; and that the committee present its findings and recommendations to the House.

I want to add that this is an extremely important issue, particularly in Quebec. I know that the issue is also important in the Maritimes. Recreational fishing is woven into the fabric of the people living along the St. Lawrence and the Gaspé coast and the shores of the Maritimes. The fishing is recreational, of course, but it also helps feed some families.

I recall that, last spring, in my constituency, there was a capelin issue. Everyone wanted to eat capelin, but the only woman who could fish for it had a licence that came into effect after the capelin arrived that year. All kinds of ambiguities of this nature also affect your constituents and your respective regions.

I feel very strongly about this motion because it concerns the identity of most of the people living along the shores of eastern Canada and the St. Lawrence River in Quebec.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Mr. Perkins, do you want to speak to the motion?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Yes.

British Columbia has a very robust recreational saltwater fishery. In Atlantic Canada, currently there is no recreational fishery for many species. I would support this motion, but I would like to add an amendment, if I could, to add “Atlantic Canada” after “eastern Quebec” in the motion.

• (1245)

The Chair: We have heard the proposed amendment by Mr. Perkins. Is there any discussion on the proposed amendment?

Go ahead, Mr. Small.

Mr. Clifford Small: I'd like to know if this motion is species-specific. That's my question.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: No. That would be part of the study and the discussion. I don't want to limit it to particular species by naming them. The species may be a little different in different provinces and shorelines.

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing no other hands up, can I ask for a vote on the amendment, please? Will this be a show of hands, or do you want a recorded vote? I see thumbs-up.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: I'm not sure what you're asking me to vote on.

The Chair: It is the amendment as proposed by Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Then Mr. Small spoke to it too, so I'm confused.

Mr. Rick Perkins: It's just to add “Atlantic Canada” after “eastern Quebec”.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: That's the amendment you're moving.

The Chair: Yes.

Go ahead, Mr. Cormier—have you finished, Mr. Morrissey?

Mr. Serge Cormier: I wanted to have a clarification on what Mr. Perkins was proposing as an amendment.

The Chair: It was adding “Atlantic Canada” after the words “eastern Quebec”.

Not seeing any other hands up on the proposed amendment, can I see thumbs-up or thumbs-down? If it is confusing, I'll ask for a recorded vote.

We should do a recorded vote, because I see some thumbs-up and a lot of nothing.

Tina, please do a recorded vote on the amendment proposed by Mr. Perkins.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 6; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll move on to debate on the main motion as amended. I don't see any hands up.

Tina, could we have a recorded vote on this, as well, please?

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 6; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1250)

The Chair: Now we will go to Mr. Arnold.

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

I would like to introduce a further motion today. After discussion at our meeting on Tuesday, we've made substantive changes to the motion that was presented, and I would propose the following: “That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of at least six meetings to examine how the Department of Fisheries and Oceans prioritizes resources and develops science studies and advice for the department and how the minister applies data and advice provided by the department and other government departments to ministerial decisions; and that the committee call witnesses, including the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, senior department officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and persons who have directly contributed to the department's science and science process to testify; that the committee hear from no fewer than 20 witnesses; and that the committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House”.

I believe that's being transmitted to the clerk as I speak.

The Chair: Tina, could you let me know when you receive it, please?

There's a thumbs-up from Tina.

Mr. Serge Cormier: I have a point of order for clarification, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Cormier.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Is this the same motion that Mr. Arnold tabled last Tuesday, the exact one?

Mr. Mel Arnold: No, this is substantially different. The previous motion asked how the minister applies scientific advice to ministerial decisions. This one asks how the minister applies data and advice provided by the department and other government departments. This one also specifies how many witnesses at a minimum we should hear from at this committee. We were asked for further definition or a narrowing of the scope of that previous motion; we believe the current motion has done so.

Over the past six years, I can't think of a study undertaken by this committee that did not touch on the science or the need for science, a need that I believe all parties recognize. I didn't support everything in budget 2016, but I welcomed the investment in DFO science because I know how important DFO science is, and still is today, to the conservation and rebuilding of our major stocks, especially Pacific salmon. However, in the past six years, that major investment in DFO science since 2016 hasn't delivered the results that the fisheries need and the results that Canadians who depend on those fisheries need.

I would draw the member's attention to the testimony we heard in the last Parliament, which warned us that "we can't manage what we don't measure. We're not monitoring enough and we're not measuring enough."

In the last Parliament, that wasn't the only testimony our committee received that should have drawn our attention to DFO science. My understanding is that science is the ruler that the department and the government use to measure the state of stocks, the quality of habitats, and threats. We've been told that adequate funding is in place and we are told that appropriate plans and strategies are in place, but despite this, we're not seeing the results we need in many of our fisheries. Rather, we're seeing the exact opposite, as stocks continue to decline.

In the last Parliament we also heard that the government's reinterpretation of spot prawn tubbing regulations did not have a sound scientific basis, despite the assertion by DFO and the minister that the reinterpretation was based on science and conservation. It seems that the government has now pulled back its reinterpretation, but the damage has been done. Harvesters, retailers and supply chains, all of which employ Canadians, have been shaken. The confidence of Canadians in their federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has also been shaken. These are just two examples.

I'm glad that the member for Egmont pressed for clarity in the motion at the last meeting, because I do want all members to be clear on what this motion seeks to achieve and why it's of value to this committee and the work that we aspire to do and provide to Canadians. In the coming Parliament, I assure you that every single study we undertake together as a committee will touch on the sci-

ence and DFO science. I see great value in undertaking this study early in this Parliament to inform our understandings of DFO science and the science process in the department that is meant to inform the minister's decisions. We all want sound decisions based on sound science and we all want to support the scientific process that supports the minister whose decisions have significant effects on fisheries and oceans and the Canadians who depend on them.

I have more to say, but I'll allow some comments at this time.

• (1255)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

I see some hands up.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like Mr. Arnold to go back to explain the difference in the key phrasing that he altered. I want to be in a position to see if I can support where he is going, because his comments are very valid.

I can recall that one of the most dramatic decisions ever made by a fisheries minister was made—and I'll say it—by my good friend the late John Crosbie. He was a Conservative, but somebody I had grown to know and have great respect for, and we worked well. He discussed it with me personally when he went back to Newfoundland to deliver the terrible news of closing that key fishery. The science was telling politicians and ministers for years and years that something terrible was happening, but the political arm kept pushing where we'd go in a different direction.

We do have to have extremely strong science. That's why our government made a fundamental and strong commitment to strengthening the parts of the department that had been so reduced over the years, because science and data go hand in hand. Often the first body that gets attacked when a primary producer is affected—and I'm seeing this now in P.E.I. in the potato industry—is the regulator, the regulating body within government. Next in line is the politician. We've seen it over the years. It is extremely important.

I do like the context. We may need some opportunity to absorb the full context of your motion, Mr. Arnold, and your comments. I suspect that I, for one, could probably find some common ground, but where are we going and what is the part that we want to really get at in this study?

This could be one of the most fundamental studies. We've had several since I've been on this committee. One that drew a lot of passion and a lot of discussion was the one on moderate livelihood, but it was a very good study. This is where some of it came from. If you look at the problems, the issues we dealt with on the west coast, there is a constant tug-of-war regarding whose science we should respect. Who is independent? We've had, in the past, independent scientists and experts from outside DFO appear before the committee and speak, and often it's in conflict. Then the fisher is left to question which direction they are going.

I still feel—and you may want to speak to this point—that while you did change some wording in the motion, we are still at the same part. I would like to see a really clear focus, and maybe we could spend some time looking at the language and where we would want to go with the study. I would want to see that and reserve opinion on how I would vote on it.

That is my perspective, Mr. Arnold. You're right. There are examples in the past of the political leadership not responding to the science and the data very well, and the primary producer, at the end

of the day, paid the consequences. I can relate to a number of situations—

● (1300)

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Morrissey. I have to interrupt you. Our time is up for today. We have reached 2:30 Newfoundland time, which allows a two-hour committee meeting.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay.

The Chair: The meeting is now adjourned.

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