



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Regional Development

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Reservoirs Bill: Department for Regional  
Development and Northern Ireland Water

12 February 2014

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Jimmy Spratt (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne  
Mr Alex Easton  
Mr Declan McAleer  
Mr David McNarry

**Witnesses:**

Mr Robert Crawford	Department for Regional Development
Mr Paddy Brow	Northern Ireland Water
Mr Bill Gowdy	Northern Ireland Water

**The Chairperson:** I welcome Robert Crawford, director of the Department for Regional Development's water policy division and shareholder unit; Bill Gowdy, acting director of engineering procurement at Northern Ireland Water; and Paddy Brow, head of asset strategy at Northern Ireland Water (NIW). You are very welcome. The session is being reported by Hansard, given that it relates to the Reservoirs Bill. Please make your presentation, and that will be followed by members' questions.

**Mr Robert Crawford (Department for Regional Development):** The presentation will be made by Bill and Paddy, as they are the technical experts.

**Mr Bill Gowdy (Northern Ireland Water):** Chairman, thank you very much. Northern Ireland Water welcomes the opportunity to explain where we sit with the Reservoirs Bill. Northern Ireland Water, like its predecessor, DRD's Water Service, is committed to ensuring the safety of the public in Northern Ireland with regard to reservoirs. Since our inception, we have been managing our impounding reservoirs in line with the England and Wales Reservoirs Act 1975.

Northern Ireland Water has arranged that competent staff carry out inspections on a monthly, biannual and annual basis. In addition, Northern Ireland Water employs an independent inspecting engineer to carry out 10 yearly inspections. They are the section-10 survey inspections. They provide a comprehensive report on reservoir condition, and they include any recommendations that may be required. An independent inspecting engineer holds an engineer certificate and is a member of the all reservoirs engineers' panel under the Reservoirs Act 1975. So, for any improvements identified in those section-10 surveys, Northern Ireland Water puts in place a programme of work to identify any problems and to implement the recommendations. The most recent round of section-10 surveys, which was carried out in 2007, is being completed as we speak. To comply with the Reservoirs Bill, a new activity for Northern Ireland Water will be required: the preparation and maintenance of formal on-site and off-site flood plans.

As the largest single owner of structures that will be affected by the proposed Bill, Northern Ireland Water welcomes the clarity that the Bill will bring regarding responsibilities and management of reservoirs. Overall, the introduction of the Reservoirs Bill will not have a major impact on Northern Ireland Water apart from, as I have said, the requirement for the preparation of on-site and off-site plans, although, of course, we recognise that it may have a greater impact on impoundments in private ownership.

My colleague Paddy will explain some of the assets in Northern Ireland Water that would be affected.

**Mr Paddy Brow (Northern Ireland Water):** Thank you, Bill. Northern Ireland Water has 71 structures under its ownership that will come under the proposed Reservoirs Bill. They are set out in the appendix. There are 46 impounding reservoirs, including two that are operated by a public-private partnership (PPP) contract. Impounding reservoirs are those that hold raw water that has not been treated. There are 25 serviced reservoirs in clear-water tanks at 13 sites; they hold treated water to rebalance the water before it is put into supply. For most of those sites, Northern Ireland Water will be the designated reservoir manager and will carry out all related responsibilities.

Northern Ireland Water has developed an action plan to prepare for compliance when the Bill is introduced. That plan is being implemented.

**Mr Gowdy:** I will explain how the Reservoirs Bill will affect Northern Ireland Water's estate management plan in relation to disused reservoirs. The plan lists several impounding reservoirs that are no longer required for operational use and, therefore, may be disposed of. That is because they have been out of service for some time and have been assessed as unsuitable for the use of raw water sources. Despite each reservoir being out of place, and even where it is possible that we lease the reservoirs for recreational use, such as fishing, unused reservoirs can be a drain on our resources, as they require ongoing inspection and maintenance. As a public body, under our regulatory licence, Northern Ireland Water is required to manage its assets efficiently, obtain best value for money and, indeed, release unused assets. There are a number of factors to be taken into account. For example, recent economic issues have affected land values for property development and other commercial uses. Indeed, the proposed new Reservoirs Bill is likely to reduce the potential sale value of disused impounding reservoirs, because a buyer who proposes to buy one will have to comply with the Reservoirs Bill and carry out surveys and the required maintenance.

Councils and environmental bodies are naturally concerned that many of the impounding reservoirs should remain in public use for ecological and, indeed, environmental use. Nonetheless, councils and Departments such as DCAL are reluctant to take those liabilities on. We are working with councils and public bodies. The Regional Development Minister, Danny Kennedy, has asked Northern Ireland Water to ensure that public bodies are always consulted before we sell or propose to sell any of our reservoirs. The intention, of course, is to keep as many in public use as possible.

I will end by saying the plan for the future of our existing reservoirs is to carry out the 10-year surveys again in 2016-17. We have included those plans in our business plans into what we call the PC15 period. I will now pass you back to Paddy, who will say a little bit about Camlough reservoir.

**Mr Brow:** Thank you, Bill. Camlough dam is an example of an impoundment that is operated by a range of bodies and will be affected by the Reservoirs Bill. Due to the complexity of the arrangements regarding this particular impoundment, we have given you more details below. The Newry Improvement and Water Act 1871 empowered the Camlough Waterworks Trustees to build a dam at Camlough lake to regulate the flow and supply of water into Camlough river. The trustees are technically the owners of the dam. However, all are now deceased.

Camlough lake has been used as a raw water source for Northern Ireland Water since government reorganisation in 1973. The current rate of abstraction is some four to five megalitres a day, serving a population of roughly 20,000 people. As Northern Ireland Water does not own the lake or the bed, it has not historically inspected or maintained it. There is nothing in the terms of the historical or current abstraction licence for the lake that would constitute an obligation for Northern Ireland Water to maintain the site or the impounding structure.

In February 2010, Rivers Agency informed Northern Ireland Water that a panel engineer had indicated that the dam should be inspected, so, in 2011, we commissioned a preliminary inspection of the dam at Camlough lake for two reasons. The first was to assess the assets being used by Northern Ireland Water to supply drinking water to Newry and the surrounding area as part of our 2012 water resource

management plan. The second was to inform our consultation response on the proposed Reservoirs Bill. That report was completed in February 2012 and concluded that a high-level estimate of costs to improve the dam's safety in accordance with the requirements of the England and Wales Act would be in the order of £3.4 million. In addition, annual operating costs of about £13,000 would be required to maintain and inspect the dam.

There have subsequently been stakeholder meetings to discuss ownership and responsibilities under the Reservoirs Bill as well as a way forward for funding surveys and improvement works. URS consultants provided a report to stakeholders on 3 February, which set out a revised, more accurate, estimate of costs for the works necessary to comply with the Reservoirs Bill at £2.5 million, the annual maintenance costs thereafter, and it also considered a number of options. The report was developed to inform further discussions on deciding how to fund and deliver the works to improve the dam and to consider its future ownership and long-term management. A further stakeholder meeting took place on Thursday of last week to discuss the findings of the reports.

Northern Ireland Water has no interest in becoming the owner of the reservoir, as it is uncertain whether or not it will be required as a source of raw water from 2017. Newry and Mourne District Council has stated an interest in becoming the owner; however, it needs to understand the associated operating and maintenance costs. A number of legal issues remain to be resolved. That concludes our evidence.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you very much, gentlemen. I will start with a few questions. What are the cost implications for the Department and Northern Ireland Water from the Reservoirs Bill?

**Mr Gowdy:** The costs will be minimal because we have been carrying out all the actions that are required under the England and Wales Act of 1975, which are remarkably similar to those proposed in the Reservoirs Bill. The additional activities, as I said, were the introduction of the formal on-site and off-site flood plans, which will add a small cost. It is a matter of looking at the reservoirs and, for example, what will happen and what we will do if there is a problem with a reservoir and a release of water. It is about making and submitting those plans.

At the moment, we average between £15,000 to £20,000 a year for each reservoir in that region by way of inspection and some remedial work that might happen, although, of course, it depends on the size of the reservoir. We carry out our 10-year inspections if they are required, and, if we are required by the panel engineer to do more work, it will cost us a little bit more. We have maintained those reservoirs quite well over a number of years. The amount of major civil engineering work that we have been doing on them has been well under control, although, at the moment, we are carrying out some work on the ancillary equipment in the reservoirs or the dams. The ancillary equipment could be the off-take towers that you see in the middle of dams. The water goes down into the off-take and is then treated. Some of the mechanical equipment needs to be replaced, which we are doing. In fact, you may see some reservoirs being drained; Ballysallagh, for example. We are draining it down solely to get access to the mechanical equipment and to replace it. That is all part of our inspection.

**The Chairperson:** That is helpful. Paddy made a point about Camlough dam, and clause 5 might result in Northern Ireland Water being appointed as reservoir manager for reservoirs not under the legal ownership of NIW. How significant is that and should Northern Ireland Water be exempted from this like the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development?

**Mr Brow:** I do not think that being exempted is necessary. That is one helpful thing that the Bill brings clarity on because, until the Bill was brought forward, the ownership of Camlough was uncertain. Indeed, when we commissioned the first report, we identified who we thought were the stakeholders and who owned it, and, after a series of meetings, it emerged that who everyone thought owned it did not, in fact, own it. We think that, under the Reservoirs Bill, we would be a joint operator of the impoundment, because Newry and Mourne District Council has lowered the level in the past to build works for recreational access. It has also lowered the levels to do other things. It has also stated a requirement to continue to use the water in the dam and to top up the levels in the canal. It owns and maintains Newry canal, and if it drains it for inspection and maintenance works, it has to fill it again. Under that, it would be a joint operator with Northern Ireland Water. That is why we have engaged with it. We think that it is better to address the issues now rather than wait for the Bill to come into effect.

**The Chairperson:** You are telling us that you feel that exemption is not necessary.

**Mr Brow:** That is correct.

**The Chairperson:** Leaving Camlough out for any other reason.

**Mr Crawford:** The Department's and our Minister's position is that we have not sought exemption. The difficulty with exemption is that, where there is only one operator, nobody would be left with responsibility for repairing a structure that could become dangerous. That is the risk.

In relation to Camlough, there are two operators. If NI Water were exempt from any contribution — again, there is an issue there, as NI Water may not need Camlough in the longer term — that would leave Newry and Mourne District Council as the only operator, and it would therefore bear the full cost of any required safety repair work. That is the logic behind the Department's thinking.

**The Chairperson:** I will stop at that point. Joe is hosting an event in the Long Gallery and I want to bring him in before he leaves.

**Mr Byrne:** I welcome the presentation and apologise that I have to leave as soon as I ask the question. Is there a joint working group between NI Water and the Rivers Agency to make sure that there is no misunderstanding between the two agencies? Secondly, given that you have carried out a 10-year inspection, how many reservoirs will you withdraw from? What about the capacity for future demand? We do not want to end up having demand and perhaps not enough capacity in the system.

**Mr Gowdy:** First, as far as the joint meetings are concerned, Mr Byrne, we have a very close relationship with colleagues in the Rivers Agency and DARD to ensure —

**Mr Byrne:** Is there a formalised structure?

**Mr Gowdy:** Paddy has met people in the Rivers Agency to carry that out.

**Mr Brow:** We have had meetings. Since the Rivers Agency told us that the Bill was being prepared, we have had three or four meetings with Rivers Agency staff to discuss elements of it. We are familiar with it; there are no surprises, and we are content with how it is being put together. We proposed that there would be meetings, specifically about Camlough, which the Rivers Agency kindly agreed to chair. Those meetings have taken place.

We need to have further meetings, as the Rivers Agency will need to classify each of the impoundments as high, medium or low risk. We will have to do that with them by providing information.

**Mr Byrne:** Are those ad hoc meetings? What I want to know is whether there is a formalised structure whereby, on an ongoing basis and given the importance of the Reservoir Bill, there is a schedule of meetings to make sure that no difficulties crop up down the line?

**Mr Brow:** Those meetings happened when they needed to happen and will happen again in the future. We have not scheduled them yet, as much depends on the progress that is made. We are content that we do not need to have a monthly schedule of meetings.

Joe, you asked whether we are certain that we will not need the impoundments in future. We have 46 impounding reservoirs that hold raw water, and 23 are disused. We are satisfied that we will not need the water from those.

We are charged with the responsibility of providing security of supply and best value to customers. On a five-yearly basis, we carry out a water resource management plan that analyses those resources, looks at a range of factors and determines which are economic and which are unlikely ever to be economic.

We are satisfied that those impoundments are not suitable. They include many in the Hollywood Hills, which contain very small amounts of water compared to those in the Mourne or Lough Neagh and are not of very good quality. To comply with modern drinking-water standards, we would need to carry out disproportionately high levels of investment to build plants that would be excessively expensive to operate. That is why we have confidence that they can be discontinued.

**Mr Byrne:** I appreciate the answer. Does that mean that you can use the Reservoirs Bill to streamline the supply of water that you will use? Finally, how much excess capacity do you have, relevant to current demand?

**Mr Brow:** The Bill is not a driver for us to rationalise. That driver has already come from the procedures and planning processes that we have in place. Our last water resource management plan was completed in 2012. We are working with the Department on guidance for a new piece of work called the water supply and supply resilience project, which will look at how we make all our assets resilient and our future strategy for all our impoundments. This piece of work will be completed in 2017, and it may tell us that we do not need to use Camlough as an impoundment.

**Mr McAleer:** Thank you, Chair —

**The Chairperson:** Sorry, I have to suspend the meeting.

*The Committee suspended at 10.35 am and resumed at 10.36 am.*

*On resuming —*

**Mr McAleer:** This is obviously a matter that was raised in the Chamber last week and yesterday at the ARD Committee, which I also sit on. One of the topics that I raised yesterday concerning some of your assets was about situations in which they are leased to a council or community organisation. I probably should declare an interest as the chair of a community organisation at home that leases one of your lakes at Loughmacrory for community development purposes.

My question is about reservoir managers. In circumstances in which you have long-term leases in place, who becomes the reservoir manager? Obviously, there will be fines, the potential for improvements of reservoirs, and infractions of the Bill. Who is liable for that? In the Bill — I think that it needs to be fleshed out in a wee bit more detail — there is the option of grants to enable reservoir managers to comply with the Bill. How will that be administered? How will that work? There is a wee bit of a lack of clarity.

I am uncertain whether the Creggan Country Park leases one of your lakes, but the same principle applies. Representatives of the country park contacted MLAs last week to express concerns about how the Reservoirs Bill might impinge on their duties and role to promote community development through water sports and activities. That is in Derry.

**Mr Gowdy:** Thank you for the question. If Northern Ireland Water owns the reservoir, then we will be responsible for it. When a reservoir is leased to a community — and we have a number that are leased to communities for fishing etc — a small amount of rent is paid, but only to lease the water. We will retain responsibility for maintaining, inspecting and repairing reservoirs. If reservoirs fall within our ownership we will do that.

**Mr McAleer:** So, the lessee is not the reservoir manager; it is NI Water.

**Mr Gowdy:** That is correct.

**Mr Crawford:** That is the case where NI Water is the owner of the reservoir. If a circumstance arises, as we have seen in Camlough, where NI Water is not the owner, our understanding is that, under the Reservoirs Bill, the responsibility for repair will fall on the manager and that could be anyone using the lake or reservoir for recreational purposes. If there is no owner, and the owner is not NI Water, the responsibility could fall elsewhere.

**Mr McAleer:** To be clear, in situations in which NI Water is the owner of the lake — Loughmacrory is not covered by the Bill as it is a natural lake rather than a reservoir — the reservoir owner, NI Water, will be the reservoir manager.

**Mr Gowdy:** Yes.

**Mr McNarry:** Welcome. My questions are probably based on my curiosity. If they are not relevant, we will move on. Can you detail the reservoirs that NI Water owns and those that the Bill applies to

that NI Water does not own? We do not need that information now, but could you send to the Committee?

**Mr Brow:** Yes.

**Mr McNarry:** I would be grateful for that. You mentioned disused reservoirs. Over the years, there have been serious accidents in disused reservoirs in my area, and, indeed, close to the Chairman's area. I do not know whether this is relevant to the Bill, but how many disused reservoirs are there? Where are they? Can you supply that information?

**Mr Brow:** Yes.

**Mr McNarry:** What difference, if any, will the Bill make to safety factors that are in place now?

**Mr Brow:** Appendix 1 of our briefing document sets out NI Water's impounding reservoirs. It is divided into two parts: those that are in service and those that are out of service. On its website, the Rivers Agency, very helpfully, has a document listing every impounding reservoir that it is aware of. It has a location map and details of ownership. So, you will be able to reference across those.

**Mr McNarry:** May I interrupt you on that? Ultimately, who is responsible for the safety of those reservoirs, if people illegally access them, as they do, and there are accidents of any nature? Who is responsible for the protection, for want of a better word, while they are not in use but still represent a danger for anybody accessing them?

**Mr Gowdy:** They are still in the ownership of NI Water, so we are responsible for them, regardless of whether they are used or disused. We are responsible for health and safety on any of the surplus reservoirs, those that are not being used. I agree that whilst we do the Reservoirs Act inspections and carry out all of the safety features, there are occasions when there is vandalism at the sites, which causes distress to local communities. We still have to deal with that. We have to try to make sure that that does not happen. So, we are in contact with local police and, sometimes, local communities to see if vandalism can be thwarted in any way, or if there is anything we can do by repairing fences, putting up fences or putting in concrete posts to stop vehicles entering. Similarly, you get motorcyclists going in and causing problems. It is about trying to do some sort of soft landscaping to try to stop that. That is a problem for us; you are quite right. It is our responsibility, and we have got to try to deal with it.

**Mr Brow:** Finally, you asked whether the Bill would address the issue of the safety of people who come in to swim in reservoirs. My understanding is that that is not the focus of the Bill. The Bill is focused on the control of the flood risk of the failure of the dams.

**Mr McNarry:** Fishing rights may also not be within the purpose of the Bill. Are they protected, as before, in the Bill? Is it just a carry through?

**Mr Gowdy:** Fishing rights are not within the Bill. We have about 28 reservoirs upon which we allow fishing. The fishing leases of 14 of those are managed by DCAL, and we manage the other 14, although we are in conversations with DCAL to let them manage all 28. The process is that we offer a lease to fishing clubs, usually by way of public advertisement, simply because of governance, probity and value for money, and fishing clubs may choose to bid for that. We lease fishing rights in those reservoirs as the lease permits.

**Mr McNarry:** Finally, does the Bill protect against anyone trying to create wind farms on lands around reservoirs that are in your ownership?

**Mr Gowdy:** No, that is not the purpose of the Bill. However, there is other legislation to protect our lands. Under the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, we are responsible for those catchment lands; they belong to Northern Ireland Water. Let us face it, we would not be entering into any negotiations for the use of that land if it did not suit Northern Ireland Water's interests, the shareholders' interests or, indeed, those of the regulator. The protection of those catchment lands is very much within our gift and that of our shareholder unit and the regulator.

**Mr McNarry:** That is extremely interesting. This morning I have learned more about what is not in the Bill than I have about what is in it; but I am very grateful for that.

**The Chairperson:** Given Mr McNarry's comment about wind farms, does that mean that there will be no ugly monstrosities such as windmills on lands that are designated as areas of natural beauty?

**Mr Gowdy:** Constructions like that would have to go through the normal planning process. If someone sought to build something like that, NI Water would clearly have a very strong interest in whether we thought it was a good idea or not. However, it is within NI Water's power to do that, backed up by our shareholder unit and the regulator.

**Mr Crawford:** There is nothing to compel NI Water to accept any structure on any land.

**The Chairperson:** It was peddled on one occasion at this Committee in relation to the Silent Valley area. That was a total outrage; so I am just putting the marker down that there will be total outrage if it is ever mentioned again.

**Mr McNarry:** We are very grateful for Hansard on this occasion. Those are brilliant quotes for my paper next week; thanks very much.

**Mr Easton:** I apologise for being late. Does the Bill cover some of the surplus reservoirs that are being sold off? There are reservoirs at Craigantlet, Conlig and Portavo, none of which are used, but the council took them on. Obviously, council staff are not trained to maintain reservoirs. Is there anything in the Bill to cover that aspect?

**Mr Gowdy:** The Bill focuses on the ownership of the reservoir. If NI Water sells a reservoir, the new owner will have to comply with the measures contained in the Bill. The reservoirs you mentioned — at Portavo, Lough Cowey, Ballysallagh and Conlig etc — have been declared surplus by NI Water, which is fully aware of the huge degree of interest in them, particularly from public representatives. NI Water would much prefer the reservoirs to be retained in public ownership rather than being sold to private interests.

Under NI Water's licence to operate, we are required to try to sell off any surplus property. We are obliged under that licence to at least explore ways to sell those reservoirs. Of course, it would be our endeavour and, indeed, that of our Minister, Danny Kennedy, to explore and exhaust all avenues for selling or transferring reservoirs in the public sector before they would ever be offered in the public market. That is what we are doing at the moment.

We are very conscious of the fact that this is an emotive subject. Some reservoirs are of no interest to people and may be sold to private buyers, but a number of those of which you spoke are very sensitive cases. We are progressing things slowly to make sure that all avenues to sell or transfer are explored before we would ever sell them to the market. Were there to be a transfer to a council, for example, the council would still have to pay market value but there would be a transfer of money.

Finally, if a reservoir were to be transferred to North Down Borough Council or Ards Borough Council, they would have to comply with the Reservoirs Bill. The council would have to employ inspecting engineers to ensure that compliance with the Bill has been carried out.

**Mr Easton:** That is good to know. Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Could those engineers be employed through a contract or a deal with NI Water?

**Mr Gowdy:** Under collaborative working, there could be methods like that. It is not being spoken about at the moment, but under public sector collaboration, I imagine that things could be done like that. That would certainly be the way to go.

**The Chairperson:** I have one or two final points to make. Will the existing public private partnership (PPP) Alpha contracts have to be revisited after the introduction of the Bill?

**Mr Gowdy:** No. Five reservoirs are the responsibility of the PPP contractors. They have already assumed responsibility for those in the contract. They would be adopting the measures under the Reservoirs Act 1975, so they would be carrying those out in any case. The new Bill will affect them in



the same way it affects NI Water: the on-site and off-site flood plans. There is plenty of scope in the contract to ensure that that happens. I do not envisage any difficulties with the PPP contracts. I am responsible for those PPP contracts. The Alpha part of that is well up to date with what is going on with the Reservoirs Bill.

**The Chairperson:** You provided a list of the reservoirs that are in current use by NI Water and a list of ones that are not in use. Is that list likely to dramatically change in the future? Are there likely to be new or additional reservoirs added to it?

**Mr Gowdy:** Paddy is looking after the water resource strategy. Do you have any —

**Mr Brow:** We are very unlikely to build any new reservoirs. Instead, we are trying to look after the existing catchments. We have found that, due to changes brought about by agricultural practice and climate change, our catchments are changing. Northern Ireland is covered by lots of peat bogs. A lot of them have been drained over the years due to historical farming practice. This means that, in dry weather, they drain much more quickly, and, in wet weather, they let the water off more quickly. We want to restore them to their natural condition so that they hold water, like a very large reservoir spread over a large area, and slowly release that water. The benefit for us is that it slowly filters and releases the water. During dry periods, we will have much more water and, during periods of flood, the intensity of the flow down the rivers will be greatly reduced. We are doing that on the Garron plateau at the moment. We have a very good working relationship with the Mourne Heritage Trust, and we are doing that in the Mournes. It benefits not just us but flora and fauna. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is delighted; it is working with us. The practice also prevents wildfires. There are lots of positives.

As part of our water resource management plan process, we are looking at future resource needs. We have recently completed a £6 million project in the west of the Province to provide a second extraction point from another river to serve Derg Water Treatment Works. That gives increased resilience during periods of low flow. We assessed that the alternative option of building a dam on the River Derg would not have been acceptable for a whole lot of reasons, not just cost. Our impounded reservoir stock is in good shape. We are very blessed in Northern Ireland to have Lough Neagh, which is 384 square kilometres, right in the middle, from which we draw half the water that is put into supply. We are very blessed to have some good dams in the Mournes.

**The Chairperson:** I have one final point about something in my constituency, so I will declare that at this point. The Knockbracken reservoir on the main Saintfield road has not been in use for some time. It is very much an area that locals, in particular, want to keep as a green area in that catchment. You will be aware that a commercial company for sporting activities considered taking it over, but the economic crash came. Is it less likely that commercial people, who might want to create a water sports facility or whatever, will take on a reservoir as a result of the Bill?

**Mr Gowdy:** That goes back to my previous answer. Knockbracken is a surplus reservoir. Again, referring to Mr Easton's question, it falls into that sensitive area. Generally speaking, the public and public representatives would like it to be retained in public ownership. Subject to that, Knockbracken is currently in the ownership of NI Water. Even if we lease it for some form of activity, such as fishing, although that does not happen in Knockbracken, or some other water sport, we would retain ownership of it. We would still be responsible for it, and we would have to comply with the Reservoirs Bill to make sure that it is maintained properly. That, of itself, should not have any effect on any commercial interest that may negotiate a price with us to use the water in that reservoir. We still retain ownership and are still responsible for health and safety under the Reservoirs Bill.

**The Chairperson:** It has been a very helpful briefing as we move on with the Reservoirs Bill. Gentlemen, thank you very much indeed. The Hansard report will be of value.