

*Government Orders*

I challenge the cabinet ministers from the province of British Columbia to have a public meeting in Vancouver, stand up on a platform and say: "Yes, we have decided on a new way to save money. We are going to spend \$42 million a year to save \$21 million in P.E.I. and you still do not get a penny out here in British Columbia".

Since 1960 we have built and run government owned ferries in the province of British Columbia, paid for by the taxpayers of British Columbia and not one cent came from Ottawa. We never once complained about the subsidies given to the maritimes. Now we are complaining that the subsidies are misdirected.

**Ms. Mitchell:** And they took away the *Polar 8*.

**Mr. Barrett:** The *Polar 8*. We never even got that.

I agree with those critics but my agreement is something more uncomplicated. This is sheer vote buying at the stupidest level that one can think. If you want to do some vote buying, give the money directly to the people, not to a consortium offshore and not for a fixed link that makes up for the missing link that does not go with the thinking both of the Liberals and of the Tories.

You cannot justify this financially. You should all be ashamed of yourselves in supporting this, every single one of you.

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca who commented about insulting the people of Prince Edward Island that the majority of people in Prince Edward Island voted for the fixed link to New Brunswick.

We have heard the NDP with its high moral pronouncements for some time now. The previous speaker just alluded to what a thin veneer that actually is.

I will go back to *Hansard* of February 8, page 15591, when the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands stated at the beginning of her speech: "The population of my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands in the 1991 census was 122,051 and the population of Prince Edward Island is 129,800 people. The people of Saanich—Gulf Islands might very well ask where their billion dollar project is when you are talking about per capita dollars".

That means if a private corporation wanted to spend \$1 billion building a bridge across to Vancouver Island, these people would be all for it. They would not be up here saying what a vote buying thing this is. We have four seats in Prince Edward Island. That is not a lot of seats in a 295-seat house.

The fact remains that if the federal government or a private corporation was willing to build a bridge to Vancouver Island, this party would be all for it. Now in British Columbia they are saying what a terrible thing this is that the people of Prince Edward Island may have good transportation but for the rest of Canada we should make it more economically viable. This is sheer hypocrisy.

**Mr. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, if this gentleman is saying this is not to buy votes in P.E.I., if the hon. gentleman is saying that four seats do not count, let me remind the member that politicians count every single seat as important. If they think that it is going to be a close election, this sounds like a good deal for New Brunswick and P.E.I. and for the governing party.

He did not address the specific problem that I raised. Why spend \$42 million a year to solve a \$21 million a year problem? You are a Liberal and you support it. You are up every single day in your front benches attacking this government for not spending money on the unemployed, not spending money in terms of education and not spending money on the environment. I hear hon. members from your front bench every day get up and complain as the Official Opposition, but on this deal you are in favour of it. It does not make any fiscal sense and it shows the sheer shallowness of the Liberal Party.

You are so shallow it is all surface, \$42 million. That is pretty shallow, but they are at it. This party that is leading the polls and says trust us is willing to go along with that dumb boondoggle to spend \$42 million to solve a \$21 million problem.

You come out to British Columbia, I will go to P.E.I. and we will both state our positions. Tell me how you can justify demanding that the taxpayers of British Columbia pay 100 per cent of those ferry charges for the link between Vancouver Island which was a Crown colony and because as a Crown colony it tipped Confederation into Canada.