

Government Orders

Let us have a look. I have dealt with the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. What about the Minister of the Environment? Right now in his office his knees are probably trembling and his spine dripping mustard coloured sweat because we know what has been going on. He wrote to me and threw in the towel on March 10, 1992. He said: "The requirements of the EARP have been fully satisfied with respect to that proposal". Well, in February, a few days before he wrote this letter Environment Canada gave sworn evidence to the FEARO panel that on the cumulative impacts, "this matter has not been addressed to the satisfaction of Environment Canada".

That is his department. Ministers are supposed to stand up for their departments. A cosy deal is going on in cabinet. The promoters are here from Calgary, London and Houston and they are saying: "Look, we have been waiting for a decade to build this damned bridge. Just give us the money. Forget about your voters. Forget about the taxpayers. Get over to the mint and give us \$1.5 billion. Who are you guys anyway?" Joe Ghiz and Premier McKenna are trembling. Well, what about the fisheries at about \$100 million a year? We know how it has been savaged by political incompetence and neglect on the east coast. It is just now occurring on the west coast. We know what happened to the Great Lakes. We know about tioxide in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence.

What about the lobster fishery? What about the groundfish? What about the migration back and forth of the invertebrates? The reason for the concern about the two-day delay in ice movement is all temperature related. This was not plucked out of the air by some airy-fairy scientist. It is based on critical, known, scientific, peer review data. It is not the B.S. that has been coming from the cabinet.

The courts are going to be extremely angered by this kind of approach. The Environmental Assessment Act must now be seen in this light. People who are concerned about the environment and sustainable development now know the government's intention to politically manipulate the new Environmental Assessment Act is demonstrated by what it is doing today.

The likelihood of the Liberals ever standing up for the Environmental Assessment Act is dashed today because

it is cowardly to rise in this House and not stand up for the laws that are passed in here.

It is just tom-foolery to say: "Oh, this is going to help our constituents. It is going to mean more tourism and we are going to be able to move potatoes more quickly and all these things are going to be great". Studies have been done in all these sectors that have never been given the opportunity to be assessed by a public review panel under federal law. Those who travel around the maritimes saying: "Oh, it has had an environmental assessment" should also add "and it was turned down". No one seems to give a damn any more and it infuriates me.

There are three ministers of the Crown. The Minister of the Environment threw in the towel, ran away and is hiding in his office. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans told the fishermen: "If you do not like it and you tell me you do not like it, I will block it". Well, they said they do not like it and he will not block it. The Minister of Public Works, through some kind of corporate infection that apparently has no treatment other than defeat electorally, has been driven to approve this project and bring it before this House. It is an incredible embarrassment to this country that it has been done.

How did big money do this? It is a very primitive plan and let me run through it quickly. First, hunt around for a project that has some public support but do not ever let the public get a clear focus on it, particularly its costs and the alternatives to it. Second, identify a few key spokespersons who appear to represent large sectors potentially affected by the project and keep them oiled well. Third, make sure the taxpayer pays the full shot for everything including the decommissioning of the project. That has been done in spades with this project.

The only silver lining in all of this is that we went through this exercise in this Chamber in the mid-1960s. The approaches for either side of this notorious project were begun in 1966 and the plug was ultimately pulled. Money was voted forward, property was expropriated and so on.

We know that these sorts of things tend to repeat themselves. We know that for more than a century generations of maritime politicians have made their careers on the back of the fixed link. It has always been the missing link to their electoral success just as sightings of the sasquatch have been in British Columbia.