

of Atlantic Canada and that, of course, is the fixed link to Prince Edward Island.

Even though the environment review panel did not endorse the project as proposed, they did recognize that improvements must be made to transportation. Now with dramatically higher fuel costs and the increased traffic to Prince Edward Island this summer, I and all Atlantic Canadians would like to know if every effort is being made to address the concerns of the panel and move on with the fixed link to P.E.I.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, Public Works continues to be supportive of this project, provided the concerns of the environmental assessment review panel, which reported last summer as my colleague knows, can be satisfactorily addressed. This opinion is also shared, in my view, by the premiers of the maritime provinces.

For example, Premier Ghiz, in a recent speech to the Charlottetown Rotary Club, said the following, and I think it is worth putting this on the record. "With the fixed link it may well be that further engineering will reveal a particular design that can withstand the most rigorous environmental tests. If such environmental integrity can be demonstrated publicly then, in my view, the fixed crossing should proceed." I think that is the correct view.

Mr. Speaker: I want to advise the House that there will be a single question from the hon. member for Rosemont, followed by a single question from the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap.

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[Translation]

HIBERNIA PROJECT

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Since the 1984 Conservative government election the Minister of Finance has been trying, rightfully so, I think, to convince Canadians that the deficit has to come down. However he told us recently that this year's deficit would be at least \$1.5 billion more than expected.

Last week the Prime Minister also said that, because of the bills now stalled in the Senate, there is a possibility that next year's revenues may fall short by \$8.3 billion.

Oral Questions

Be that as it may, I would ask the Minister of Finance how can he possibly support the federal government's \$2.7 billion commitment for a project like Hibernia, particularly considering that we have no firm guarantees that Canada will get a fair share of the work?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that the Hibernia project, as compared to the first projects in the North Sea, for instance, in Norway or the U.K., have achieved a domestic percentage of approximately 35 per cent. The statement of principles of July, 1988, targeted approximately 45 per cent Canadian content in Hibernia, that was with the negotiations. With the negotiations, we have reached a level of between 55 per cent and 60 per cent. All areas of the country will benefit, including the Province of Quebec.

• (1500)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap on a single question.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question really falls under three areas of responsibility—environment, fisheries, and transport—but to facilitate the question, I will direct my question to the Minister of the Environment.

My question concerns the Fraser River Estuary Management Program which is a joint federal-provincial program. Over the past five years it has been mandated to assess and to monitor the environmental health of the lower Fraser River in British Columbia. As the minister knows, the five-year funding for the program expires shortly and the management committee has applied for a three-year continuation in funding.

Can the minister advise the House whether the government at this time is prepared to ratify the federal moneys required to maintain the program and whether the government is also prepared to expand the mandate of the program so that it can proceed with an implementation strategy to clean up the Fraser River?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the first question, I would like to assure my hon. colleague that we are prepared to