

We need a renewed, firm commitment to improve the Trans-Canada Highway as well as to finish the bridge—and I keep saying that—the bridge to Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the Liberal member from the area just exactly what the Liberal position is on environmental assessment. The member is aware that there has been no environmental assessment and review done of the bridge proposal contained in Bill C-110, that the generic bridge proposal was turned down by the FEARO panel.

I would like to know from the member, since the Liberals are supporting the project, what is their position on environmental assessment? That is a critical concern to Canadians in all areas of the country.

**Mr. Rideout:** I thank the member for his question. He raises some important considerations. Maybe the halls and the walls were echoing with the reverberations from his speech and therefore it plugged his ears, like mine are plugged with a cold.

I stated the position of the Liberal Party very clearly and straightforwardly. We support this project. We want this project to go forward. We have supported this project over the years that it has been discussed.

We also support the principle that there should be a sound environmental policy dealing with these types of megaprojects, and that there should be an assessment. We support this going to the committee, but we also want a full environmental assessment of this particular project and this particular bridge.

**Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to contribute to the debate this afternoon.

This place gets curiouser and curiouser. Just to put it on the record, the population of Prince Edward Island, as received from the Library of Parliament this afternoon, is 129,800 people. The population of my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands in the 1991 census was 122,051. The people of Saanich—Gulf Islands might very well ask where their billion dollar project is, when we are talking about per capita dollars from the federal government.

This whole megaproject mentality that has its genesis with this government, and obviously is supported by the Liberals, is just incomprehensible, particularly in light of this government's rhetoric flowing out of the earth summit in Rio on sustainable development.

### *Government Orders*

Does the government really believe what it said in Rio? Obviously not. I think we have a fair answer in this House today with the tabling of this bill and its support of it.

One billion dollars for a fixed link. As an Islander, I ask sincerely why do they need a fixed link? I know the people in my riding and the Gulf Islands want ferry service, and as a matter of fact not too convenient ferry service. It is a means of controlling development because the development is going through the roof. Why should we have our environment degraded by population growth, by fly-by-night developers coming in and ruining our land base?

• (1750)

I ask sincerely of this government and the Liberal Party that is obviously supporting this project, what is the thinking behind a fixed link? Why should you make it a billion dollar project to facilitate more truck and car traffic to an island? Prince Edward Island is a beautiful part of Canada. As a Canadian I am concerned, not just about my area but for all of Canada. My concern is sincere. It seems like such a wacko scheme.

The current project, as the minister cited in his speech today, did not originate with the general public, the provincial government or the federal government. The idea was generated by the private companies lobbying for a billion dollar contract. This is a sort of *carte blanche*. Yes, we will manage to expedite your ability to earn a billion dollars from our tax dollars.

In this so-called era of restraint, one wonders how they can possibly look at themselves in the mirror when they say out of one side of their mouths: "We have a real deficit problem. We have real concerns about the base of support in Canada". Yet out of the other side of their mouths they are willing to give a private corporation a billion dollars for an environmentally unsound project.

I also want to talk about the federal environmental assessment, a six-member panel which was convened in April 1989. The public hearings from that FEARO project were held in the three maritime provinces between March 12 and March 30, 1990. There were over 1,500 participants in those hearings, an intense public participation in that federal environmental review. That was on a generic bridge concept. The public participation increased the credibility of the process. A lot of people viewed it with great scepticism. With those 1,500 participants their credibility increased.