

Government Orders

I want to reiterate my concerns with regard to the fisheries compensation package as well as to indicate that a ferry workers compensation committee must also be struck as soon as possible. As with the fishing committee, the ferry workers compensation committee is also the responsibility of the federal government. The 500 to 600 employees of Marine Atlantic have entitlements. If one looks back into the not too distant past one will find the total abandonment of the railway in Newfoundland, a total abandonment of the railway in P.E.I. as well as the partial abandonment of the railways in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Settlements with displaced workers in these areas have provided precedents for the kind of settlements to which Marine Atlantic workers are entitled.

I do not think we can underestimate the positive economic impact that a fixed link would have on Prince Edward Island. Everything indicates that if we are to improve or even maintain our standard of living we must also become more self-sufficient. We must have a greater degree of economic independence and we must become more competitive.

An improved transportation system is crucial to our becoming more competitive. Whether it is for our manufacturers or processing sectors, our agricultural sector, our fishing industry or our tourism, we have to keep costs down if we are going to be competitive. Economic activity will grow not only during construction, but in the years afterward. The link will generate industrial expansion and create jobs. The link will generate growth and tourism and create jobs.

P.E.I. has a desperate need for meaningful, full-time jobs. There will never be an opportunity as great as this one we now have within our grasp. The successful completion of the fixed link is vital to the future of Prince Edward Island.

Let us hope that all parties have done their homework properly.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak about Bill C-110 this afternoon. However, I regret to say in the opening of my remarks that I think it is the ultimate double-cross of the people of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, the maritimes and of Canada generally because this government is on the record as saying it is committed to

sustainable development, yet not too long ago it passed the new environmental assessment legislation in this House.

I really felt it did commit this House. Although I voted against it because I thought it was inadequate, I still thought that it was a good intention by members of Parliament to indicate where we were going on environmental assessment.

However, I do not think that anyone who has followed the cabinet's guideline order since 1984 and its tortuous movement through the courts of this country all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada can be anything other than deeply hurt today to see Bill C-110 being passed with the quiet acquiescence of the Liberal Party. Apparently it openly supports it if that is the only speaker we are going to hear. There is also the support of the Conservatives on that side of the House.

This is an abusive process. I intend this afternoon to lay out precisely how bad the abusive process is and who the critical players are. Keep in mind that Strait Crossing Inc., SCI as it is called, is the same group of promoters and developers from Calgary that have been involved in the Oldman River dam. That involved the destruction of 38 kilometres of an internationally recognized river system for a highly questionable project. It was finally forced by the courts back into a second environmental assessment and review process where the number one recommendation was to decommission the dam.

The government only accepted the recommendations following that and none of them have been lived up to by the government. This was an abusive process that flew right in the face of the Supreme Court of Canada.

This project contained in Bill C-110 has never been approved by an environmental assessment process in this country. It is a hoax to hear the Liberal member from Egmont and the Minister of Public Works rise in this House and use very carefully crafted language to suggest to the people of Canada that this project was ever legally, legitimately, morally, ethically or properly approved through any kind of an environmental assessment process. The environmental assessment process said no to the generic crossing proposal. It went before this non-peer reviewed, non-public hearing group of so-called ice experts and now the government claims: "Oh well, everything is fine now; we can just forge on ahead".