

tion. My colleague, the member for Fraser Valley East, dealt with this issue at great length.

I find it inconsistent that this government proposes to open the Constitution and make changes only when it suits its purposes.

I would like to read another quote. On February 3 in the House the Prime Minister of Canada stated that: "No one in Canada wants to discuss the Constitution". Here we are today discussing the Constitution.

We all saw the rejection of the Charlottetown accord and what the Canadian people thought of it. This is just another case of the government's agenda versus that of the Canadian people. The government has chosen to selectively change the Constitution. Canadians do not accept this method.

I would submit that any changes to the Constitution should involve all Canadians and should be approved in a referendum. The Constitution should be concerned with the broad definition of matters rather than ways and means of accomplishing the intent, such as a fixed link.

• (1615)

The Constitution should deal with Canada's commitment to maintain communications and transportation with Prince Edward Island no matter what the method chosen to accomplish this.

We are running into the danger of making constitutional commitments for Canada that may not be in the best interest for all of the country. Technology may change. Currently in this day and age we must realize the rate at which things change. We are going to have to commit to this fixed link throughout time if it is entrenched in the Constitution.

These are things that we have no control of and that may change. I can give members the example of the Florida sunshine skyway and the Chesapeake Bay bridge. They have been known to close for months at a time. Are the proper plans in place for this fixed link?

If we are going to have to change the Constitution, it must be for a good and sufficient reason. We have all heard the emotions of the minister of public works. I would respond that Canadians must feel that they are a part of this constitutional amendment.

In closing, I would like to say that this motion is not just a simple motion to build a bridge. This is a motion to change the fundamental document of how our country operates, the Constitution.

This is a bridge over the troubled waters of true Canadian democracy.

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services):** Madam Speaker, I want to make sure that my colleague's understanding of this constitutional change is the same or different from mine.

Prince Edward Island 130 years ago decided that it could and would become part of Canada with a certain condition, that ferry service would be provided forever and a day.

Over the years, a number of options have been examined such as a fixed link. There is now a project under way. It was a judgment of a federal court that unless there were a constitutional change indicating simply that ferry service could be changed by fixed link—that is all it does—the government could be in a position in which it would have to build a bridge and continue the ferry service.

The subsidies, as I have defined them for the ferry service, are going to be used to pay for the bridge. After that, there will not be any more contribution by Canada.

Is my hon. colleague saying that the elected representatives of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Canada should not be determining that it is okay for a fixed link bridge to be replacing ferry service? That is the way I understand this change.

He understands it differently. Could he tell me how his interpretation is different from mine? I have read this several times and that is all I am getting from it.

**Mr. Hart:** Madam Speaker, in response to the question, it is my interpretation that the intent 130 years ago was to provide communication and transportation.

I feel that this motion should not be directly related to a fixed link because of what I have said in my address to this House. Technology may change. It is wrong to assume that there would be no cost to all Canadian taxpayers down the road.

We are entrenching this in the Constitution. That means that we must ensure over a long period of time into the future that this will be maintained.

**Mr. Milliken:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, there have been discussions among the parties and I think you might find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

• (1620)

That not later than 15 minutes before the ordinary time of adjournment on Thursday, February 17, 1994, the Speaker shall interrupt any proceedings before the House and shall put, forthwith and successively, without any further debate or amendment, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion of the Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs for the appointment of a Special Joint Committee. (Government business, No. 8), and if any division be demanded such recorded division shall be deferred until Tuesday, February 22 at 3 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Do we have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.