

Premier McKenna of the province of New Brunswick has had strong concerns about the environment and the direction that we as a country and we in New Brunswick as a province should take. He has been supportive of environmental concerns. He too has put his signature to the document that starts the process.

Liberals are hoping for a full, fair and frank discussion of the issues before a committee that will take a look at the environment. We recognize that this is probably the only fishing area left in Atlantic Canada. We have seen the destruction of the fishery in Newfoundland, in much of the gulf region and along some of the coast of Nova Scotia. The fishery in Northumberland Strait is one of the strongest. It is in the best shape and is the only viable fishery left on the east coast. Therefore we do not want to take any chances with respect to that fishery. We want to make sure that what we are doing will not have an adverse impact.

We recognize that when we build a bridge there is some environmental damage. It is going to have some impact as each pier goes down and as the bridge extends across Northumberland Strait. The fishery is going to be adversely affected. From the studies we have seen it has been indicated that the impact will be of a very short duration. We feel the proper compensation packages must be set up to compensate the fishermen who will be adversely affected in the short term by the construction process.

This agreement provides \$10 million for that particular fund. We want to hear evidence as to whether that is sufficient and whether the fishermen of the Northumberland Strait will be adequately compensated by that fund.

Workers presently working for Marine Atlantic have been trained and are skilled in their jobs. They will ultimately lose their jobs as a result of this particular construction. The bridge will offer new careers for some of these workers. Again I think the committee looking at this particular bill should hear evidence as to the types of programs and support mechanisms to be put in place.

Marine Atlantic headquarters is located in Moncton. This could possibly have an adverse effect as well. We have heard the assurances of the government and of

Marine Atlantic that no changes will arise from the construction of the bridge, but I have heard those assurances before when we were not going to see the CNR shops close. I heard the same assurances when I was told that rather than close the supply depot in Moncton we were going to see the supply depot enhanced, subsequently to be closed.

It is absolutely essential that we make very clear commitments to the workers at CN Marine at Cape Tormentine and at Borden, to the maintenance of the headquarters in Moncton, and to the maintenance of the positions of the people working in Moncton.

As we look at what is going on here we have to recognize that there will be a bit of a boom-bust circumstance. The expenditure of a large sum of money, \$800 million in actual construction, will have a tremendously important impact on the economies of Prince Edward Island and the southeast portion of New Brunswick, but that will only be for roughly five years. We have to ensure that the mechanisms are there to smooth out the transition from that boom to a bust situation, that we put in place the necessary protections to ensure an easy transition.

We must also make sure that new technology will be developed to make that bridge as environmentally sound as it possibly can be, that it will be maintained, and that knowledge will be developed that can be utilized all around the world. In that sense when the committee takes a look at this project we must ensure those types of measures or protections are added to this particular bill.

We are anxious to get on with this particular project. The time has come to move on. Let us take a look at the project, have an environmental assessment, and proceed as quickly as possible with the construction of the bridge.

We in the Liberal Party support the bill going to committee. We are concerned about the environment. We are concerned about the people presently working for Marine Atlantic. We are concerned about the fisheries on the east coast, particularly in Northumberland Strait. We want the assurances and the in-depth analysis the committee can bring to this legislation and this particular project. Let us keep in mind always that this is a bridge. It is not a causeway. It is not a project that will have a massive impact on the environment.