

*Government Orders*

Unfortunately, there are prerequisites to the implementation and development of megaprojects. Allow me to point out five prerequisites I regard as essential. First, the projects must be carried out legally; second, we must have the necessary financial resources; third, the environment must be protected; fourth, this megaproject must benefit the population and help to create jobs; finally, we must ensure that all Canadian citizens can be treated the same way.

I would like to see if the conditions I just listed are met by this project.

As far as legality is concerned, as I was saying at the beginning of my speech, part of the population, in a plebiscite, authorized the Prince Edward Island provincial government to go ahead with the project. But the other side, brought together in the Friends of the Island Coalition, strongly objected to this project for different reasons. First, the dangers for the lobster and scallop fishery, migratory birds, the environment and the Islanders' tranquillity.

We must not dismiss this group which opposes this project. It applied to the Federal Court, which issued an order requiring the Minister of Public Works to conduct an environmental assessment pursuant to section 12 of the Order in Council in relation to the developer's detailed construction plan, before making any final decisions which may have irreversible environmental consequences.

On April 22, 1993, the specific environmental assessment prepared by Jacques Whitford Environment Consultants for Strait Crossing Inc., at Ottawa's request, was presented.

Although this study shows that this project is not harmful to the environment, as we agree, the Friends of the Island do not accept the decision and have appealed. The Court of Appeal upheld the lower court's decision, which apparently means that the project is now legal, but we must raise questions about its morality. The opponents will watch everything the developers do as they carry out the project.

Now let us talk about the financial resources. A few weeks ago, Canada's national debt passed the \$500 billion mark, not counting provincial and municipal debt. I will be very brief in my financial evaluation. The federal government now pays Marine Atlantic around \$21 million a year for the cost of the ferry service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. The ferry service is adequate and fits in with the local environment very well.

Several years ago, the federal government announced that it was considering building a fixed link under one main condition: that the costs not exceed the price of the ferry service for the same period. Yet, the federal government is about to give to the private sector an annual subsidy of \$42 million, in 1992 dollars, for the construction and management of the bridge, over a period of 35 years. This represents close to \$1.47 billion, in

constant dollars, for the whole duration of the contract. From that angle, no one can claim that the fixed link project is self-financing. Can Canada afford to spend \$21 million a year, this on top of what it is already paying for the ferry service?

We are not opposed to the principle that Prince Edward Island is entitled to a ferry service subsidized by all Canadian taxpayers. In fact, this commitment greatly facilitated things when PEI joined Confederation; it was an historic constitutional compromise.

We do not oppose the fact that the federal government continues to fully respect this constitutional right, although I must point out that this same government was not as generous in the past when dealing with Quebec's historic constitutional rights. Remember what Mr. Trudeau did in 1982. It is because of episodes like this one that Quebec is irreversibly headed for sovereignty.

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Moving on to environmental concerns, in spite of all the studies conducted and the approval obtained from both the trial and appellate divisions of the Federal Court, there is no question that during construction and most likely afterward, the lobster and scallop fisheries will be disrupted because of the underwater movements resulting from the construction of a fixed link. The proof is that plans have been made to set aside \$10 million every year to compensate the 240 fishermen affected by the construction of the bridge. We are only talking here about the construction phase. What will happen to the fishery once the fixed link is in operation? Will the government have to continue paying the \$10 million in compensation? Are the fishermen supposed to rely on unemployment insurance to get by? Will they be joining the growing ranks of unemployed fishermen throughout the Maritimes and Quebec?

I would now like to examine the issue of job creation and the benefits to be derived from this megaproject by the residents of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. During the construction phase, more than \$1 billion will be invested and normally, this should result in the creation of temporary jobs and bring about some semblance of prosperity.

Initially, the project backer will have to bring in workers from across North America. This is the case with all megaprojects. Since this is a pan-Canadian venture, we are counting on Quebec construction workers to figure prominently in bridge construction activities. Quebec workers—and there are many of them in my riding of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans—are known for their skills and willingness to work on megaprojects. Need we remind people that Quebecers worked on some of the largest hydroelectric projects in North America, if not the entire world. I am confident that initially, the unemployment rates in both provinces affected will decline substantially. However, the question we need to ask is this: Does the Government of Canada