

Government Orders

The project has met all the standards demanded by the environmental review process. It has met the standards of the P.E.I., New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and federal governments. It has passed the referendum process in Prince Edward Island. It is extremely important to people in the area. It is a win-win situation for everyone as we see it.

One member said it had a one-two punch a little while ago. I would like to add a few more punches to it. He said it had one punch as a construction project, that is true, and a second punch as a tourist attraction.

Probably the most important punch is that it will be a key to our transportation infrastructure in Atlantic Canada. It will be a very integral part of the over-all transportation system and it will help us as a region to be competitive, and help Prince Edward Island specifically to be competitive.

Certainly the over-all economic impact will be substantial. We have heard figures today of \$800 million and \$850 million, and we have heard figures even higher than that. By the time it is done the peripheral impact and all the housing, supplies, and services and goods that must be supplied to the people will be over \$1 billion. That is very attractive to us in our area.

The people of the region are most excited and anxious to see it go ahead. I appreciate this opportunity to speak on it and I certainly hope it moves along as quickly as possible and is as successful as we think it will be.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker in his remarks referred a number of times to environmental assessment and said that the project has undergone a number of environmental assessments.

That is true. The environmental assessment recommended that the project not proceed. How does he justify supporting a bill that the project proceed when the environmental assessment said no?

Mr. Casey: Mr. Speaker, the environmental assessment said the project should not proceed if the ice-out was going to be a seven days delay as it predicted.

When the specific environmental assessment on the ice-out was done this generic plan came up with the criteria that it would only limit the ice to two days a year.

The original reason for recommending it not proceed was that the environmental assessment panel predicted that it would take seven days for the ice to go out. That was just an assessment, and based on that assessment it should not go ahead. However, the panel said if it could meet a two-day ice-out it could go ahead. The present plan more than meets that criteria.

Mr. Nowlan: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have been in this House from the first minute of this debate. I am from Atlantic Canada and have an unusual interest in this debate. I have been taking count of the different members and have no hesitation in putting my time in purgatory for the normal switch in rotation between government and opposition members.

However, there comes a point of no return when members who are not even in the country when this debate started, let alone in this House, take priority over a member who has been here from the first minute of this debate.

With all due respect to my friend from British Columbia, whom I respect and used to enjoy when he was out in British Columbia, this is the fourth NDP member that has spoken. There have already been three. There have been three to four government members and two Liberals, and I have been here since the first.

Mr. Speaker, I would like some explanation of why you have been blind to this seat in the rear. Are you following a list? Of course you most likely are not because you do not follow a list in the theory and mystique of this Chamber.

I would like a clear explanation.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member you just recognized was not even in the House today when this debate—

Mr. Barrett: Oh, come on.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please.

[*Translation*]

I listened very carefully to what the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants had to say, and I realize he has a particular interest in this bill which has an impact on the area he represents. When recognizing members, however, the Chair must consider the number of members representing each party.