

training and relocation, if necessary. We do not have the answers to these questions yet.

● (1700)

It will cost \$10 million to compensate fishermen. A federal-provincial agreement respecting the construction of the fixed crossing was entered into by the Government of Canada and the provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick will each receive \$20.4 million toward upgrading their road system. Is equal treatment to be expected for all of Canada? Finally, the communities of Borden and Cape Tormentine will receive a special development fund of up to \$20 million.

Some 70 per cent of the construction materials for the bridge will be purchased in Prince Edward Island. The delivery of fish and farm products will no doubt improve. Tourism is expected to increase by 25 per cent. Are these estimates based on genuine studies, studies demonstrating the feasibility of this project? And the island's shipping industry will save \$10 million a year according to the Liberal Party. I doubt it.

Of course, we must not overlook the effects of building such a structure will have on shipping, wildlife, fish, migratory birds, agriculture and ice.

God forbid that this project become another Hibernia, a project which has swallowed up in excess of \$1 billion in public and private funds to date, for the federal government contribution to that project presented some fundamental flaws as the Auditor General pointed out in his 1992 report. He described the Hibernia project as high-risk due to the uncertainty of prices as well as technological and environmental factors. We hope that the construction of the bridge will not be plagued with the same problems.

With regard to the bridge project, Parliament and more importantly the public should be provided with quality reports throughout the project so that corrective action can be taken immediately, as required. A work schedule should be submitted to Parliament and a special House committee should follow the progress made in all areas—financing, construction per se, deadlines, environmental studies—and report to the House at specific times.

The Bloc Quebecois believes that taking these comments into consideration and supporting this amendment will take care of a long-standing request. I hope that the Prince Edward Island bridge project is built on solid ground because we will be the rightful owners of this infrastructure 35 years from now.

To be a good deal, this project must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of clear and measurable objectives; suffi-

cient co-ordination of monitoring of industrial benefits must be put in place; environmental damage must be kept to a minimum throughout the project and the rights of the fishermen must be preserved during the entire process.

We, in the Bloc Quebecois, hope that the minister will take into consideration the points I have just raised and, in the near future, respond favourably in this House to the suggestion of setting up a special House committee, as major investments are at stake and it is essential to monitor carefully the use made of Canadian taxpayers' money and hopefully preserve steady, structuring and paying jobs for the young people.

● (1705)

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate the members of the Official Opposition, the Bloc Quebecois, on the facility with which they turn any subject discussed here in the House to their advantage and bring it around to the only debate that concerns them, their only goal and objective, which is independence and the separation of Quebec.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Serré: I am glad that they applaud when I talk about separation and independence, because I see that you are sending a clear, unambiguous message: Quebec independence is what you want, not Quebec sovereignty. I am glad to see the reaction of my hon. colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois.

They have that knack and I see the rationalization they used for approving this project. They said, "Because there was a plebiscite in Prince Edward Island, we must respect the will of the people". They draw a parallel with a future referendum in Quebec. I would like to make a distinction.

The project in question is a bridge, a link, something to unite Canada and build Canada, something constructive. The eventual referendum in Quebec is a plan to destroy bridges and ties in this country. These people do not want a constitutional amendment; they want the outright destruction of our country, and I will never agree to that.

Mr. Fillion: Madam Speaker, I must sincerely tell you that I thank the hon. member for his comment. Throughout the election campaign—and it was publicized in English Canada and in French Canada, in Quebec and elsewhere—we said that while we were here in the House, the Bloc Quebecois's mandate was to prepare for Quebec sovereignty.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fillion: We did not refrain from saying and explaining that during the election campaign. Our leader and other members are ready to explain this position throughout Canada.