

[English]

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to answer on behalf of the minister who I am sure would give the same one I am about to give. That is that the government has provided that titanium credit card to the SCI consortia in terms of its expenditures and its ability to raise the capital from the banks or where ever it likes. It is guaranteed \$42 million a year for 35 years in inflation protected 1992 dollars. That is \$1.47 billion in 1992 dollars. I hope the media will stop calling it a \$600 million, a \$700 million, an \$800 million, or \$1 billion bridge because the company is getting \$1.47 billion.

Perhaps of greater concern is the overrun and I refer to a very excellent paper done by Friends of the Island. On page 13 they point out that SCI's completion bond will only cover up to 25 per cent of the overrun. Not only do the taxpayers get the bridge back, we get the honour of paying for it totally. We get the honour of getting it back once it is a rusting hulk to have to rebuild it, plus SCI's completion bond will only cover 25 per cent of the overrun, keeping in mind that it began at \$600 million. It has already gone up \$900 million in two years before one shovelful of sand has been moved. It did not go up 100 per cent. It has gone up 150 per cent in price before it has even moved off the drawing board.

In an article in *Policy Options* Professor Peter G. C. Townley concluded that: "It is important for decision makers to understand that the economic viability of a fixed link has not been established".

My friend is quite correct. These are the kinds of questions that need to be addressed in this debate. I have a few minutes to respond to the other questions he raised.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Other members want to raise questions with the hon. member for Skeena.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to agree with my colleague from Skeena on the reasons for blocking this bill. I think it is another testament of the kind of scurrilous activity in this House on the environmental assessment review process.

I would like to ask the hon. member to expand on some of the other reasons that we oppose this project.

Government Orders

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for the question.

It is important that Canadians have some understanding of some of the other implicit costs. I quote again from the paper "Against the Bridge":

Maintenance costs of the bridge will be high. Public Works Canada calculations that justify the bridge subsidy do not take into account bridge maintenance. The Gardiner Expressway in Toronto costs \$1 million per mile each year to maintain, with exposure to salt occurring only a few weeks a year. Additionally, the elevated road is serviced by land, not water. A bridge in Jutland, Denmark operating in conditions much less stressful than the Northumberland Strait has cost more in maintenance than the original construction price.

That is precisely why we are supposed to have full, proper environmental assessment and review procedures: to look at all of the social, environmental and precisely project related implications.

If anything can come out of today's debate it is important that a focus come back to what is being done in terms of an end run on the taxpayer. The most malicious end run, of course, is on the people of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. The generic bridge concept that went before the environmental assessment and review process was turned down. That needs to be kept very clear in people's minds.

What ultimately happened with the Oldman River dam has not yet occurred in this case. This bridge has not been built yet. What occurred with the Oldman River dam was that the legal arm of government ultimately found that the dam should be decommissioned and taken down. This was after it had been built at a gigantic cost to the taxpayers principally of Alberta by this same company.

Let us keep in mind that it is the same company, the same consortia which has these visions in the light of these projects that the private sector would never do. It knows how to shilly-shally and dilly-dally and lobby. It knows how to do all these things to get through to government. It gets government caucuses rolling. It gets people rolling. It gets promoters rolling. It oils the wheels and goes straight to the public trough to build these monstrosities.

The bridge is not necessary. There is perfectly adequate, quality service between the two provinces. That is the constitutional requirement.