

Government Orders

• (1130)

I also know that all work on the construction sites, on the New Brunswick side or on the Prince Edward Island side, will be governed by strict procedures, both on land and on the waters of Northumberland Strait.

The workers will have to follow strict procedures supervised by a committee responsible for ensuring that all environmental precautions are taken. It is rather reassuring that the contractor and all subcontractors must control their procedures and respect the environment.

Of course, even if we take every precaution, some groups might be affected, and I am thinking particularly of fishermen here. In order to give these groups some protection, especially fishermen, including those who fish for scallops and lobsters, who will be most affected, a committee has been set up to implement a compensation program. From the very beginning, that is what we have demanded, citizens, fishermen and local associations alike: that a compensation program be set up before work begins so that those people would be compensated for their losses if the fishery were damaged.

Although the final mechanism has not yet been determined, a committee of fishermen, fishermen's association representatives and officials is studying this problem.

When I spoke of lobster fishermen, the people of Cape Tormentine will be the most affected first because a way will have to be cleared across the strait where construction will go on and the fishermen of other communities away from Cape Tormentine, like Murray Corner, Aboiteau, Cap-Pelé, Shediac and up the Northumberland Strait to Cocagne, Buctouche and even as far as our area could feel the effects from the construction. I do not think that these effects will be considerable, at least I hope not, but if they were affected, we will certainly have a mechanism in place to compensate them.

I spoke only of lobster fishermen, but there are also scallop fishermen, since scallop banks will be affected by this bridge construction.

[*English*]

There is a group that will be directly affected by the construction of this bridge. That group is the families of the ferry workers who will lose their jobs after construction of the bridge is completed. Right now there are over 400 workers and the bridge will provide about 60 or 70 jobs. I want to reassure those people and members of the House that every effort will be made to offer to those people directly affected a proper compensation and training package in order to minimize the effects of the loss of jobs when the bridge opens. I have been in communication

with Marine Atlantic. It has started discussions with the unions to try to put a program in place to minimize those effects.

• (1135)

I certainly offer my assistance in any way to make sure that the jobs available once the bridge opens are offered to those ferry workers and to make sure that those unable to get a job receive a proper compensation package.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion I support this project. I support it because it will create jobs and give new impetus to the tourism industry. Of course, my colleague from Prince Edward Island just said that Prince Edward Island's tourism industry will develop as a result. I am pleased about that, but we in Beauséjour, by offering tourism facilities like the land of la Sagouine, which you know well, Arboiteau Park, which is now being developed, and other projects under consideration, will try to attract visitors either on their way to the island or on their way back. We will invite them to spend a few hours or a few days with us.

[*English*]

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I concur with the hon. member that we have given great consideration to minimizing the environmental effects and the disruption to our fisheries, to guarantee as much as possible that this project is of worthy consideration and is first class for this day and age.

Having said that, when talking about retraining or providing job security for those who will be displaced, it has been brought to my attention during economic development discussions with municipalities in my riding that perhaps we could take our training programs to the job site. As these men and women are working on the new project they would be given the opportunity for upgrading in literacy and computer skills, those kinds of things that take them to the next job. Has the member given any consideration to this in manpower training programs?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments and question. Let me assure her that we will make every effort to ensure that all governmental programs, those of the local associations as well as those of the government itself, will be made available to the workers in order to encourage them and help them find a job both during the construction stage of the project and once the bridge is finished, through the opportunities that will be generated. Every effort will be made to ensure that this project brings about the maximum benefits possible.

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the amendment to the Constitution and the building of that bridge. I think it will promote tourism considerably. I have had the opportunity to visit Prince Edward Island; it is one of the