

Government Orders

To have manipulated the public in those two provinces, to have manipulated the law so crudely and so vulgarly is delinquent and perhaps worse. I think the courts are going to have something to say about that. I am proud there are Canadians who have not been brow-beaten by their neighbours and are willing to take this kind of matter before the courts.

I would like to quote briefly from one member of the council, Mark Freiman, who points out quite clearly what the problem is. He writes: "Bill C-110 seeks to authorize and so that it is also aware of just how many important environmental issues have either not been addressed or have been ducked up to this point. Even those who favour the idea of a fixed link between P.E.I. and the mainland should be made aware that the government has not abided by its own guidelines", and he goes on.

With that in mind and knowing that the government's intention is to have this matter sent to a legislative committee, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-110, an act respecting the Northumberland Strait crossing be not now read a second time but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on the Environment.

I do this knowing that the environmental side of this issue has been buried and hidden from all Canadians and there is a sense of urgency.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. Having tabled a motion for amendment the hon. member does not have the floor now.

[*Translation*]

The Chair will take the motion for amendment submitted by the hon. member for Skeena under advisement.

Ten minutes for questions and comments. The hon. member for Longueuil.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the minister said earlier that it would cost \$800 million to build this bridge. I have some serious doubts because I know a bridge across the St. Lawrence cost close to \$1 billion. We are talking about a bridge that would be about 13

kilometres long. It would be built where ice and currents are a problem. I doubt very much that it would cost only \$800 million.

Through the hon. member who just spoke, I would like to ask the minister a question. I find it hard to understand how a company could take sole responsibility for the construction of this bridge without having guarantees. Could the minister inform the House whether the company has any guarantees from the federal government in case it goes bankrupt or fails to cover its costs? Is the government going to pay for all the project evaluations? Will it do research for the company? How much is this going to cost? This is important, because we are talking about 35 years. The government is committing itself to paying \$42 million per year for 35 years. That is a lot of money.

• (1720)

I wonder whether the company will be able to survive that long without guarantees that the government will subsidize this project to the tune of who knows how many millions of dollars. With all due respect for the people of Prince Edward Island, there are only 127,000 people living there. We have to consider the number of inhabitants in relation to what is being spent here. The government is committed to paying about \$1.360 million per year, for 35 years, just for a bridge. We on Montreal's south shore were rather taken aback by this announcement, because we have been trying to get \$75 million for Highway 30 for the past 10 years. And for the past five or six years we have been trying to get \$80 million to build a tunnel under the St. Lawrence, but nobody is listening. We have 350,000 people living on Montreal's south shore. I mean, it is rather unusual to see the government getting involved in such a major project for a population of 127,000.

I agree with the hon. member for Skeena who just said that the environmental impact should be given further study before a start is made on such a major project. I therefore support the hon. member for Skeena and his demands for an in-depth study of the environmental impact before construction is started on a bridge of this size.