

*Government Orders*

best of them, that one would not get with a bridge. On the other hand, one will not get the sort of wind delays, winter or summer, with ferries that one will get with this bridge.

The only bridge I am personally familiar with which is in any way comparable is the one across the Straits of Mackinaw. It is often closed because it is impassable in bad weather conditions. By going a couple of hundred miles out of their way drivers can get around but it is pretty hard to get around Northumberland Strait. Again I am trying to look at this from a practical, realistic point of view. I would like the hon. member's comment on that.

**Mr. Easter:** Madam Speaker, in Prince Edward Island we look at the investment and economic activity of this link project in the very short term.

The minister outlined creating jobs this morning. He talked about 70 per cent procurement expenditures in the Atlantic area. Ninety-six per cent of the jobs will go to that area so there will be an economic boost in the initial stages of the project as a result of the expenditure of funds.

Our concern in the study on ice was what ice could do to the bridge. We were assured by all the experts that the bridge will be able to withstand the pressure of that ice.

• (1645)

The fishermen have another real concern: if the bridge delays the ice moving out of the strait it would have an impact on the lobster fishery in terms of the waters remaining cooler and the lobsters therefore remaining dormant for a longer period of time. It would have an impact on lobsters.

Studies have clearly shown that the ice delay would be very limited and would have minimal effect, if any, on the lobster fishery.

**Mr. Morrison:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. The hon. member misunderstood my question. When I talked of ice delay I meant delays to ferries due to the presence of ice in the channel. I was not referring to delayed breakup of the ice.

**Mr. Easter:** Madam Speaker, I will just make a comment on that. Certainly we are familiar with the ice delays to ferries these days. As I mentioned earlier this afternoon, truckers at the moment are having anywhere from a three-hour to five-hour extra wait due to a slowdown in ferry movement because of ice congestion at the terminal and so many trucks moving. Under the current scenario with the ferries and the ice it becomes an extremely difficult situation in terms of getting product to market on time and in an efficient way.

**Mr. Rock:** Madam Speaker, I wish to make a statement to the House and I wonder if I might have unanimous consent for that purpose.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is there unanimous consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Madam Speaker, I am indebted to my colleagues for their consent.

I would like to take the opportunity this afternoon to respond to concerns raised this morning in the course of this debate by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He raised concerns arising from the translation and a possible different meaning between the French and English texts of the constitutional amendment. The Department of Justice has now provided an opinion by those persons who are drafting experts in matters of this kind.

It is the opinion of the Department of Justice that the French text and specifically the word "remplace" is in the subjunctive tense and as such imports a possibility. In other words the French text, according to the Department of Justice, says nothing more or less than the English text which reads: "may be substituted".

I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for having raised the matter. We respect his concerns but we believe they are groundless. I appreciate this opportunity to clarify any possible misinterpretation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this constitutional amendment which the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency put forward under section 43 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

I am one of the last members scheduled to speak. I hope that the parliamentary secretary of the government party will listen to what I have to say. While I will be going over some ground that has already been covered, toward the end of my speech, I will be voicing several opinions which subsequently will have to be analysed.

The amendment in question provides for a fixed crossing joining Prince Edward Island to the mainland to be substituted for the ferry service between Cape Tormentine and Borden. It should be noted that one of the terms of Prince Edward Island's entry into Confederation was that efficient steam service for the conveyance of mail and passengers be established and maintained between the Island and the mainland, winter and summer, thus placing the Island in continuous communication with the Intercolonial Railway and the railway system of Canada.

• (1650)

In 1873 the realization came about that the terms and conditions for admission into Confederation, namely the promise of efficient steam service, were not being adhered to.