

A quick trip to Moncton?

I recall some time ago seeing a bumper sticker which proclaimed in large letters, TECHNOLOGY IS THE ANSWER. But printed in smaller letters just beneath it said, "but what is the question."

This has great applicability with regard to the fixed link debate taking place in the province at the present time. The fixed link is being promoted as a technological solution; but do we have a clear view of the size and shape of the problem.

The question we need to ask is whether or not this is a piece of technology which is appropriate to this province and to our vision of ourselves, or whether it is a case of some Islanders being willing to shape our society to fit the technology. This latter tendency represents one of the most destructive aspects of the modern age, for it is a tendency which is prepared to sacrifice human society and culture to the demands of the technological imperative.

As Islanders we all recognize that there are certain inconveniences associated with ferry transportation, but a project of this magnitude must not be reduced to a question of personal convenience.

Islanders must also consider seriously whether or

not it is wise to follow a line of thinking which tends to regard our insularity as a problem, rather than an opportunity. If we are to prosper and thrive in this province we must be able to recognize the advantages and potentialities of our insular status.

The building of a bridge or a tunnel does not, of course, destroy completely our status as an Island; however, it does represent the victory of a way of thinking which tends to regard our Islandness as a problem and a liability.

A knowledge of our history reveals that many of the

best things that have happened in this province have been the direct result of our insularity. Our very status as a separate province stems from this fact. If we had been, a hundred years ago, a peninsular extension of New Brunswick, we would today be a political, economic, and cultural extension of the mainland. Few Islanders would want to see that happen, and yet a vote for a fixed link which many are promoting represents a step in that direction.

In the end it comes down to this: we are Islanders, living in a place set apart by time and nature. Over the generations we have adapted ourselves to that reality. It is one of the things that makes us what we are. If we are deeply dissatisfied with being Islanders then perhaps a vote for a fixed link is appropriate. But if we are proud of this place—and confident of what it has been and might

be—then a vote for a fixed link is a mistake.

I like what one man in Summerside said at a meeting just last week. "What do we want to leave our children?" he asked, "a clean environment and a pride in the Island; or a quick trip to Moncton?"

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