

St. Lawrence Seaway

will the seaway authority have over the height of bridges and so on? There are all sorts of problems, as I mentioned earlier. A bridge might obstruct traffic and other things could happen. Could the minister give us some assurance in this respect?

Mr. Marler: I would draw the hon. member's attention to the terms of the resolution which give an indication of the legislation which is to follow. The first phrase reads:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to empower the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority to construct, maintain and operate international bridges as specifically authorized by the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act.

I think those clear terms of the resolution indicate that specific authority would be required. Mention has been made of the bridge over Pollys Gut. I take it that if contrary to my own expectations at this time it were decided at some future time that the seaway authority ought to be the instrument for building some other bridge of an international character, then that would require a specific amendment to the act. I hope that answers the question.

Mr. Nesbitt: Not the exact question I had in mind. If other international bridges are built across the St. Lawrence, constructed either by a private company or a governmental agency, not by the seaway authority itself, what control if any would the seaway authority have over such bridges?

Mr. Marler: Mr. Chairman, control of that kind is not exercised by the St. Lawrence seaway authority. The particular section of the St. Lawrence river with which we are concerned is not the only navigable water in Canada. Broadly speaking, the jurisdiction of the authority will extend from the port of Montreal westward to the end of the Welland canal, but it is not the authority which approves the plan. That is a duty which falls upon the Department of Public Works under the Navigable Waters Protection Act. That act requires that the height of a bridge over a navigable water shall be such as not to interfere with the course of navigation. That is not a function which properly ought to be carried out by the St. Lawrence seaway authority, which has a specific administrative task to carry out. There is general control by legislation to protect navigation against bad engineering or overenthusiastic bridge builders, which is to be found in the statute to which I referred a moment ago.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Mr. Chairman, earlier in his remarks the minister gave us to understand that the present lease on the existing bridges at Cornwall

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

would have expired in December, 1957, but was renewed in 1950 until 1982. Between what parties was that lease executed?

Mr. Marler: The lease is between the New York Central railway, a subsidiary of the New York Central railway the name of which escapes me at the moment, and the tenant, which is the Cornwall International Bridge Company. As I recall, those are the three parties to the lease which was negotiated I believe back in 1950.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Is the federal government a party to that lease in any way? In other words, when the bridge was originally constructed it must have been constructed with the knowledge and acquiescence of the federal government. Is there any way in which the federal government is currently a party to this lease?

Mr. Marler: My recollection of it, Mr. Chairman, is that the bridge over the north channel, and the Canadian portion of the bridge over the south channel were built under the authority of legislation adopted a great many years ago. I should not like to affirm this as having been verified just a short while ago, but my impression is that the legislation goes back to 1887. There were provisions in that statute, but unfortunately they did not provide any particular relief so far as the federal government was concerned in considering what might be done in connection with the bridge.

I should like to emphasize the fact, however, that the bridge over the north channel, and likewise that over the south channel, were built as part of a railway operation. They were never intended to be for road purposes when originally built. In fact, as I understand it, when there is a train on the bridge there is no possibility of highway traffic using it, so my hon. friend will understand it goes back quite a long way.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Yes, I think I know the bridge in question and it is not very large, nothing to be very proud about. As a matter of fact, I guess the only bridge that looks and is worse than this bridge is the Victoria bridge near Montreal; that is just a personal opinion.

However, the point I am trying to get is whether, when this lease was renewed in 1950, there was any measure of acquiescence whatever required on the part of the federal government in order that this renewal could come about.

Mr. Marler: I do not want to leave without comment the hon. gentleman's remarks about the Victoria bridge. I do not look upon the Victoria bridge as a modern structure like