

ment of the charters of existing organizations incorporated by Parliament, by application to the Registrar General.

Honourable senators, this does not appear to be a very complicated bill, but for several reasons I feel it should be referred to a committee. In the first place, it is a public bill which, when passed by this house, will be sent to the other place. It should, therefore, receive careful clause-by-clause study in the presence of officials of the department. In the second place, clause 2 should be considered carefully because it amends a number of sections.

Another reason why I feel this bill should go to a committee is that some honourable senators may want to ask about the legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada in this respect and how far it extends.

My fourth reason is that at present one of our committees is sitting, and a number of honourable senators have left the chamber in order to attend the meeting. Among them are some very prominent corporation lawyers. I know that a number of members of the legal profession are still in the chamber, but I do feel that those who have gone to attend the sitting of the Special Joint Committee on Divorce might want to examine this bill carefully in committee.

Therefore, if the bill does receive second reading I shall move that it be sent to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Flynn, debate adjourned.

RICHELIEU BRIDGE COMPANY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

Hon. Jean-Paul Deschatelets moved the second reading of Bill S-44 to amend an act to incorporate the Richelieu Bridge Company.

[*Translation*]

He said: Honourable senators, if you have examined Bill No. S-44, you will have noticed that it contains only one clause. However, one must sometimes be wary of these bills consisting of a single clause. I do not hesitate to tell you that this one contains certain legal or constitutional implications which the proposed amendment does not define clearly.

First, what are the facts? In 1882, a company was granted a federal charter under the Companies Act, enabling it to build a wooden bridge over the Richelieu river between

Noyan and Cantic and, when that wooden bridge was completed, a toll was required; this toll is still in effect today.

Three sections of the charter granted to this company are directly connected with the bill before us. I will outline them to you, as briefly as possible.

First, section 10—I will quote the section in English, since the copy I have of the charter is written in the English language.

[*Text*]

Section 10 of the Richelieu Bridge Company Act reads as follows:

The Company are hereby authorized to build, erect, construct, work, maintain and manage a solid and sufficient toll-bridge for ordinary traffic purposes, over the Richelieu River near the mouth of the Lacolle River from the Parish of St. Thomas, in the County of Missisquoi, to Ash Island; thence westerly to the Parish of Lacolle or St. Valentine, in the County of St. John's, Province of Quebec, and to erect, make and sink all piers—

In other words, under section 10 of the act this company has received the right to proceed with the erection of this bridge.

Section 12 reads as follows:

After the said bridge is open to the public, and while it remains fit for traffic, no person or company, other than the Company hereby incorporated, shall construct or cause to be constructed any bridge or bridges, or shall use as a ferry any boat, scow or vessel of any kind, for the purpose of conveying any person, animal or vehicle whatsoever, for hire or reward, across the said river, for a distance of three miles on the north of the said bridge and to the Province line of the south of the same—

which is the American border.

Let us now examine the article which is the basis of the bill before us, namely, section 18, which reads as follows:

The bridge of the Richelieu Bridge Company, hereby incorporated, is declared to be a work for the general advantage of Canada.

[*Translation*]

I said a little earlier that this bridge is still operated by the Richelieu company. It is a toll bridge.