

ing that bridge was so high? If the bridge had been built in a manner similar to other bridges in the vicinity of Montreal I am told that the cost of construction would not have been more than about \$5,000,000. I am told that during the seventeen years that revenues have been collected on that bridge they have exceeded \$500,000 annually. I understand that, according to the last report, the figure is \$900,000.

Mr. CHEVRIER: The revenues from tolls in 1946 were \$720,000, but the deficit is \$600,000.

Mr. PINARD: That may be true, but while there may be a deficit in connection with the Jacques Cartier bridge as far as its operation is concerned, the fact remains that there is a surplus amounting to millions of dollars in the case of the Victoria bridge. In both cases these revenues are collected by the government and they should be indivisible. In other words, the surplus in one case should be applied against the deficit in the other.

Mr. CHEVRIER: There is no such surplus in connection with the Victoria bridge.

Mr. PINARD: I do not think there is any doubt that the Victoria bridge produces high revenues each year from tolls charged automobile traffic. I was told that the revenues in the case of the Victoria bridge are much higher than in the case of any other. In the one case, so far as the national harbours board is concerned, we are dealing with revenues of the crown. In the other case we are dealing with revenues of the crown obtained through the Canadian National Railways. It would not be legal to my mind to contend that the revenues in the one case should not compensate for the losses in the other. Any other contention in that respect would appear to me to be more legalistic than legal.

The maintenance of tolls is a bar to the development of all the cities and towns on the south shore of the St. Lawrence river. It is also a great handicap to the tourist industry, which today, as we all know, is one of the greatest industries of Canada. I do not believe there is any justification in asking tourists to pay twenty-five cents, or whatever it is, to cross over a bridge of that kind, which is dangerous and totally inadequate and has been so for many years. Three or four weeks ago I had the privilege of presenting a memorandum to the Minister of Transport on behalf of a considerable delegation, and the minister gave us encouragement. I hope the question will soon be settled, because it is one that is serious and of great importance, not only to the people of my constituency, but to the general public of Canada.

Mr. COTE (St. Johns-Iberville-Napierville): Mr. Chairman, I want to add a word to what has been so well said by my colleague the hon. member for Chambly-Rouville.

(Translation):

In 1942, tolls were abolished in the province of Quebec with respect to provincial bridges, Victoria and Jacques Cartier bridges being excepted. When tolls were no longer required on other bridges however, the government of that province declared its willingness to offer any reasonable compensation in return for the abolition of tolls charged on Victoria and Jacques Cartier bridges. They were therefore convinced that, in fairness to all, the abolition of tolls should apply to every bridge in the province of Quebec.

The abolition of tolls like taxation, must be effected without discrimination towards anyone. Unfortunately, however, Victoria and Jacques Cartier bridges remain toll-bridges, although charges are no longer required on provincial bridges.

Such a situation is extremely unfair toward the people settled on the south shore of the St. Lawrence in the vicinity of the island of Montreal. They represent, with the exception of the metropolis, 70 per cent of the population of the province of Quebec. Today, moreover, these same people, the only ones from whom charges are still exacted on Victoria and Jacques Cartier bridges, continue to pay so that all other bridges in the provinces may be toll free.

I understand that the province has jurisdiction over its highways and the bridges which extend them. The fact, however, that the dominion government shouldered the cost of building bridges within the limits of the province of Quebec does not remove from the province the duty of providing equality of treatment for all its taxpayers. The injustice of exacting tolls from a large section of the province when all other citizens enjoy the free use of bridges cannot be sanctioned.

To sum up, that is why, in 1942, when the government of the province of Quebec decided to do away with tolls on provincial bridges, it deemed fit to request that charges be also dispensed with on Victoria and Jacques Cartier bridges. Further, it declared itself willing to offer the dominion government reasonable compensation in return for the abolition of these toll charges. Unfortunately, what should have been done in 1942 has not yet been carried out but should come about in the near future.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, I would ask the minister to see that dominion and pro-