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INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES

The picture presented by international bridges between Canada and the U.S.A. is extremely confused, since there are considerable variations in the regimes of the various bridges. This situation is well-known and has been well-documented, but it is worth restating that the principal cause was the apparent unwillingness of Canadian Governments over the years to assert their constitutional authority in the international bridge field. In general, reliance was placed on ad hoc arrangements based on expediency, and almost any arrangement appears to have been acceptable, provided that an international bridge could be constructed at no cost to Canada.

While three Provinces have an involvement in international bridge matters, the significant difficulties have arisen in relation to bridges between Ontario and the U.S.A. Over a considerable period, the Province of Ontario was reluctant to acknowledge federal jurisdiction in the international bridge field and on several occasions, acted without reference to the Federal Government in matters relating to the construction and operation of international bridges. Although the Federal Government does not appear to have made much effort to exert its authority on such occasions, Ontario changed its position and has now reconciled itself to the fact that international bridges are a matter falling within federal jurisdiction. Nevertheless, problems from earlier Ontario actions still persist as can be seen in the case of the three Niagara River bridges which are not covered by Federal legislation, but merely operate under an Ontario business licence.

The Federal and Ontario Governments have both been reluctant to become financially involved in international bridge construction or operation, mainly because of the cost of the large structures necessitated by geography, and the pattern generally favoured was for a private group to be authorized by the

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