

it was in 1909 that the Grand Trunk Railway Company took the lane away from automobile users and gave it to the Montreal and Southern Counties railway, one of its subsidiary companies. And yet the Montreal and Southern Counties railway paid the Grand Trunk Railway Company, and is each year paying to the Canadian National Railways the sum of \$50,000 for the use of the very lane which had been built with the subsidy of the government for the use of ordinary vehicles. In spite of the fact that the cost of constructing these lanes for vehicular traffic was paid by the subsidy awarded in 1900 by the government, the Grand Trunk kept on collecting tolls and the Canadian National is now collecting tolls ever since the government of this country, by special statute, purchased the Grand Trunk Railway Company.

Since the Canadian National Railways was created, instead of redressing this injustice that company became an accomplice to the perpetration of the injustice, and the injustice became greater as the years went on. During all this time this famous bridge kept getting older, to such an extent that today it has become totally inadequate and it is even extremely dangerous to use. One must almost be compelled to use the bridge and, unfortunately, that is the position of a great many people. As far as tourists coming to visit our country are concerned, many of them refuse to go over this shaky lane with their cars. They prefer taking the Jacques Cartier bridge.

If through misfortune—and I have been the victim of such misfortune many times—through collisions or even from a punctured tire or an automobile running out of gas, there is a tie-up on the bridge it is likely to delay traffic for hours. The motorists who have paid to cross the bridge are then forced to wait for two or three hours before they can resume their course. I should like to ask the Minister of Transport, who, I am sure, is in a position to obtain the information, to give the number of accidents which have occurred on this bridge. I am told that especially in the last ten years these accidents have been very numerous and, in some cases, they have proved fatal.

In connection with the cost of constructing this Victoria bridge, there is the question which one has a right to ask himself and also the government: What has been the total revenue from the tolls collected on this bridge, in the first place by the Grand Trunk Railway Company and then by the Canadian National Railways, since 1860 when the

[Mr. Pinard.]

bridge was first opened to vehicular traffic? All those who have asked for these particulars from the Canadian National have never succeeded in obtaining the information. From the scattered information which I have been able to collect, I understand that the Grand Trunk and its successor, the Canadian National Railways, collected \$4,733,000 up to December 31, 1934, in tolls on one lane only of the Victoria bridge, and that up to the end of 1943 the total of this revenue exceeded \$7,000,000.

If that information is correct one will realize how far away we are from the \$100,000 which was the cost of constructing the vehicular lanes on the Victoria bridge. If that information is not accurate, in order to complete it I would ask the Minister of Transport to give the total revenues derived from all tolls charged on the Victoria bridge. I am convinced that the figure will be frightening and will lead everyone to conclude that the cost of constructing the Victoria bridge has been obtained more than one hundred-fold. The Hon. G. A. Simard, a legislative councillor of Quebec, declared some years ago that the Victoria bridge had been paid for 142 times. The only answer he got from the Canadian National was that that was a gross exaggeration. That may be true, but it appears to me that it is unnecessary to try to convince anyone that this situation has lasted long enough. Before this old bridge collapses, motorists should be permitted to use the bridge free of tolls for the few remaining years.

There is in Quebec another bridge which also spans the St. Lawrence river, the Quebec city bridge in the vicinity of that city. This is a much larger and more adequate bridge than the Victoria bridge; but, despite that, for a long period of years motorists have been permitted to use this bridge free of toll. Why make a distinction between that bridge near Quebec city and the one in Montreal, especially when the bridge in Montreal was built so long ago, is today so totally inadequate and has been paid for hundreds of times?

I do not want to be too long with my remarks, and I shall now deal briefly with the other bridge in Montreal, the Jacques Cartier bridge. In this case the injustice is not quite as striking. I should like to state briefly why I think the tolls on this bridge should also be abolished. The cost of constructing this bridge was \$19,000,000, but that was due to the fact that the bridge was constructed in a manner to permit ocean traffic to pass underneath. Are the people in the vicinity of Montreal to be penalized because the cost of construct-