

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

Mr. Clement Vincent (Nicolet-Yamaska): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Is the corporation of the Three Rivers bridge now authorized to start the construction of this bridge?

[Text]

Mr. McIlraith: The order in council referred to by the hon. member for Port Arthur was one indicating the concurrence of the government to the construction of a bridge. There were some questions raised about the order in council.

[Translation]

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice a question.

Could he tell us whether his department studied the order in council, dated March 4 last, concerning the Three Rivers bridge, and if so, whether his department recognized the validity of that order in council?

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we did study that order in council and, as the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska certainly knows, an opinion once expressed becomes the property of him who requested it, in this case, the Minister of Transport, and it would be up to him to communicate it to the house when and wherever he deems fit to do so.

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to ask the Minister of Transport with regard to this matter. Could he tell us whether or not the Department of Justice told him that the order in council was valid?

[Text]

Mr. McIlraith: The Department of Justice did provide an opinion on this subject, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Leon Balcer (Three Rivers): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether he could tell us what was the opinion of the Department of Justice.

Mr. McIlraith: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Balcer: Why not?

Mr. Fisher: I should like to ask the minister a question arising out of this series. If the cost estimate to the government in connection with this project is high, will the government have the authority, aside from whether the order in council is valid, to make sure that the project is not proceeded with?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Secretary of State): On a point of order, I would be glad to arrange for the estimates of the Minister of Transport

[Mr. McIlraith.]

to come up the next day we have an opportunity so that this information can be supplied to hon. members. It seems to me that a detailed question of an argumentative, debating nature such as the one which has just been asked is not appropriate on the orders of the day.

Mr. Fisher: The Secretary of State has raised a point of order. I should like to point out that we have on the order paper for consideration a bill which is very similar to the one setting up this Three Rivers bridge organization, and I feel there is some urgency in finding out what is the position of the government in this case as far as the Department of Transport is concerned, because it would certainly affect the consideration we would give to this other bill when it is before the house. It is for this reason I think there is a certain urgency about it, particularly if the cost which is to devolve upon the government rises as much as the minister has indicated.

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On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I refer to a question which I have already directed to the Minister of Public Works and to which he could not give any answer because he did not have the proper information. Can the minister tell the house whether any change will have to be made to the site of the world exhibition following the problems involved?

Hon. J. P. Deschatelets (Minister of Public Works): Definitely not, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question if you allow me. Could the Minister of Public Works tell us whether his statement is inconsistent with those made by the mayor of Montreal, according to whom many difficulties have arisen which could result in the selection of a new site?

Mr. Deschatelets: Mr. Speaker, I wish to be quite clear on this subject. The hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm is asking me whether the site would be changed. The answer is positively no, the site will not be changed.

Mr. Pigeon: If there are major or minor changes in the development of the islands?

Mr. Deschatelets: Mr. Speaker, if major changes are made, plans will be submitted to us and we shall then advise the hon. member.