

if the Federal Government fails to assert itself, existing problems could be compounded, and the possibility of ever solving them might become remote. The Thousand Islands Bridge is due to revert in 1976, but already efforts are being made to postpone this. There has been mention of possible bridges at Kingston and Amherstburg, and so far there has been little federal involvement. There are plans to twin the Blue Water Bridge, without any indication that the Federal Government will be consulted. In all these cases, there is a danger that the issue will be thrust before the Federal Government at the last moment, and that expediency will determine the outcome rather than a clearly defined policy. Furthermore, the fact that the Federal role has been consistently downgraded, has led Government departments to act independently with prejudicial effects on policy as a whole. For example, it appears that the Department of National Revenue (Customs and Excise) has been advising the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority about their accommodation needs at the same time that the Interdepartmental Committee was resisting efforts by the Bridge Authority to obtain authorization for a bond issue for the purpose of, among other things, improving customs facilities.

In attempting to evaluate the Ontario proposal in terms of declared Federal policy, it is assumed that the Federal Government has no intention of reversing the general trend towards public ownership of international bridges, and this is clearly the line which the Government of Ontario favours. It could, of course, be argued that international transportation services are frequently provided by private organizations, but in the case of international bridges, these are fixed structures in a quasi-monopolistic position with no alternative use other than as scrap metal and incapable of adjusting to any significant degree to economic pressures and changes in demand. Moreover, international bridges exert a considerable permanent influence on the provincial highway network and traffic patterns, and are therefore so closely tied to the