

al government, is that—and I think this is recognized by the provincial authorities—the Richelieu waters are navigable.

Even if this legislation is adopted, before construction of the new bridge can proceed, the Province of Quebec should, according to its legal advisers, appeal to the federal Government for permission under the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

If honourable senators have other questions to put, I will be happy to answer. However, I would like to come back to what I said before concerning consideration of this bill by a committee of the house. We are used to sending our bills to a committee and I think this is a case where perhaps more caution should be shown; I hope all those interested will be called, so that when the bill comes back for third reading honourable senators will be sure that this is a case where public interest transcends any other.

If some honourable senators would like to ask questions, I shall be delighted to answer.

Hon. Mr. Fournier (Madawaska-Res-tigouche): I should like to put a question to the honourable senator. Could he tell us in what year the bridge was built? Was it built immediately after the charter was granted?

Hon. Mr. Deschatelets: I may tell Senator Fournier that the charter was granted in 1882, and the bridge was built in 1883.

Hon. Mr. Fournier (Madawaska-Res-tigouche): I should like to ask another question. Do you know what tolls are being charged to users of this bridge?

Hon. Mr. Deschatelets: With reservation, I would say it is \$1—with all due reservation.

Hon. Mr. Fournier (Madawaska-Res-tigouche): Is the traffic fairly heavy?

Hon. Mr. Deschatelets: I must say—again with all due reserve—that I do not have the official figures, but I believe the gross revenue for last year reached some \$55,000.

Hon. Mr. Fournier (Madawaska-Res-tigouche): One last question. Are the shareholders of the company against this bill?

Hon. Mr. Deschatelets: I say to the honourable senator that the president of the company and the company itself are against this bill; they want to stay under the protection of the federal law.

Hon. Mr. Fournier (Madawaska-Res-tigouche): Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Dessureault: Are you aware of similar cases in the Province of Quebec, that is, cases where bridges would have been built under the authority of a federal charter and would enjoy a privileged right as the Richelieu bridge does? Are there still other similar cases?

Hon. Mr. Deschatelets: There are surely other wooden bridges, not many but some, I am sure. However, I do not know if these other bridges give rise to the kind of legal other problem that we now have.

In this case, the problem results from the fact that in the original charter of 1882 it was stated that the bridge was to the general advantage of Canada while in fact, today with technical advances, with the road projects of the Quebec government, needless to say this bridge is no longer considered to be in the general interest of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Dessureault: Could the province still decide to build bridges on other improved roads in the province? The same thing could happen somewhere else in the province.

Hon. Mr. Fournier (Madawaska-Res-tigouche): If the bridge was built in 1883, would there not be a matter of security involved, since it is made of wood?

Hon. Mr. Deschatelets: Maybe. I am quite reluctant to talk about security. However, there is no doubt that if this problem does not arise at the present time, it could arise within five or ten years, there is no doubt about it.

[Text]

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

On motion of Hon. Mr. Deschatelets, bill referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

NOTICE OF MEETING

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, before I move the adjournment of the Senate, I would draw honourable senators'