

Another point, Mr. Chairman. There was some impression, in the early press reports, at the initial stage of this inquiry, to the effect that the Victoria bridge was mixed up with the investigations made by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and also that, perhaps, the Victoria bridge toll collectors, past or present, had been subjected to the raids which had been shown. Of course, that is not the case. In view of these impressions, and the inferences that may have been drawn from them, we are, of course, very glad to have this opportunity to give you the facts pertaining to toll collection on the Victoria bridge.

I have with me a statement giving you the general background on the Victoria bridge—the statutory background, from the construction point of view, concerning different dates and so on, which may be of interest to you.

I do not know how you wish me to deal with that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would be better if you read it.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Are there copies of the statement available?

Mr. CÔTÉ: Yes.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Could we have copies? In that way it would be easier to follow it.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have them distributed?

I will now ask Mr. Côté to proceed with the reading of the brief.

Mr. CÔTÉ: The document is entitled "Historical Notes re Victoria bridge", and reads as follows:

Historical Notes re Victoria Bridge

Construction and accommodation for traffic

1. The Victoria bridge was built originally as a tubular railway bridge by the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada.

1853

2. The authority to build the bridge was granted to the company by an act of the province of Canada (16 Vict. c. 75) of 1853 to provide for the construction of a general railway bridge over the river St. Lawrence at or in the vicinity of the city of Montreal. Under that statute, the plans of the bridge and of the other works connected with it had to be approved by the governor in council, and the company was also empowered to construct, if it so desired, the proposed railway bridge "as to adapt it to the passage of ordinary vehicles, animals and passengers", in which event the company would be entitled to fix and collect tolls for such passage.

3. The construction of the bridge was begun on January 22, 1853 and the first train passed over the completed structure on December 17, 1859. The bridge as designed and constructed was for railway operations exclusively, with no facilities "for the passage of ordinary vehicles, animals and passengers."

4. The bridge structure consisted of 24 wrought iron tubular spans on 24 limestone masonry piers and was capable of accommodating one single railway track.

5. The bridge was 6,590' long from the face of the back wall of the abutments on the opposite shores and the width of the bridge was 16' from center to center of the vertical side girders of the tubes. At the time of its completion, the bridge was known as one of the "Wonders of the World".