

Bridge Construction

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether, in view of the time that has been lost, the house would rather go on with government business. We would be prepared to go on with the railway branch line bill.

Mr. Knowles: Would it not be fairer, Mr. Speaker, to give a little extra time to the hon. member who has a private motion?

Mr. Pickersgill: Is it the wish of the house to go on a little beyond seven o'clock and take an hour for private members' business?

Mr. Knowles: My suggestion is that we have private members' hour now and that it last until one hour from now.

Mr. Pickersgill: I would like that to be understood, Mr. Speaker, because my bill will be the next item of business and I want to be back in the house. I would suggest that with unanimous consent private members' hour extend to twenty-five minutes past seven o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Is it agreed that private members' hour commence now and continue for one hour until 7.25?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

BRIDGES**WALPOLE ISLAND-CHATHAM TOWNSHIP—
SUGGESTED CONSTRUCTION**

Mr. Mac T. McCuiccheon (Lambton-Kent) moved:

That in the opinion of this house the government should give consideration to the advisability of constructing a bridge on Chenal Ecarte (also locally referred to as the Snye), one of the channels at the mouth of St. Clair River, where at present there is a cable-operated ferry linking the shore of Walpole Island to the shore of Chatham township, county of Kent, (mainland side), Ontario.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I cannot begin my remarks on this subject without first thanking hon. members most sincerely for their generosity in allowing a full hour for private members' business so that I may present this motion.

Rarely do we as members of this house have an opportunity to do something directly for our fellow man that will be as helpful to any group of people in Canada and as satisfying to hon. members as the acceptance of this resolution. Here is a golden opportunity for us as members to go on record. When we

support this resolution we will be taking a great step toward establishing again in the minds of the public the fact that members of this house do care about their fellow man and can co-operate for the common good. Many of the newspaper reports of political infighting, partisan prejudice and bias will be proven wrong in the face of such action on the part of men of good will in this house.

It is in this vein that I thank the hon. member for Lambton West (Mr. Foy) for his interest. I welcomed his offer to second my motion. He has done this because I believe he honestly and sincerely wants to help the 1,500 people living on Walpole Island in my constituency. Let me remind the house that these people vote in my riding, not his. However, he is fully aware of the problem as he lives close to the area and is therefore well qualified to speak on the subject as I hope he will.

This bridge is required desperately so that reasonable access may be obtained to the island which is only about 300 feet from the mainland. Transportation to the island from the mainland is only possible by the use of an antique scow whose only condescension to modern trend in the past 100 years has been the replacement of handpower on the cables by a gasoline motor. For a ride on this contraption the public pay 25 cents each way. Quite often an hour's wait or more is required before a potential user can get aboard and pay his 25 cents to risk his life and vehicle in the crossing.

Many people in the area will not cross to the island because of a well-founded fear of the crossing. Indeed, there are people in this area who have never been on the island. If reasonable access to the island can be obtained it will mean many dollars of extra income to the residents. There are natural resources on the island that can be utilized. To give one example, there is a large, sandy beach which could become a source of income to the band and thus reduce their dependence on federal funds. In addition, there are thousands of acres of the most fertile soil awaiting development. I am told that less than one-third of the potential agricultural area on the island has been developed. The island, if provided with reasonable access, could be a veritable garden spot.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there are many skilled and semi-skilled people on the island who would naturally gravitate to our side for employment rather than as at present going on the diesel ferry that carries them to