

Private Bills

made in a proceeding which in itself is intended to preserve free enterprise. He therefore can have no objection to the acceptance of these figures when we ask that this matter be carefully examined under the laws as they now stand, and that we decide exactly what should be done with regard to the maintenance of employment for Canadian workmen when we find in existence elsewhere wages that are so far below ours that they are producing the result we see in this case. That can be done under the existing machinery with due regard to our desire to trade with Hong Kong and with every other great trading centre of the world; but let us remember that the first responsibility of the government of Canada is to the working people of Canada, and let us see how we can meet the situation with which we are now confronted.

There is a growing feeling that we are strangely reluctant to make any move ourselves to assure continued work to Canadian workmen, although we see international arrangements being disregarded when other governments think that will be to the advantage of workmen in their countries. We had under discussion earlier this afternoon the nature of the answer that has been given by the government of the United States to the request that there should be no artificial limitation upon the movement of oil from Canada to the United States. The government has the answer. We are awaiting it. Having regard to the fact that the submission of the government was made public in the first instance, I must confess I am curious as to why there is so much delay in making public the answer. After all, this is an ordinary business communication. We were told what the government of Canada was saying to the government of the United States, and we want to know what the government of the United States has said to the government of Canada. There are a number of other cases where we want information of that kind.

The Prime Minister has said that the government must accept responsibility for employment. The Prime Minister has not sought in any way to diminish the effect of the statement he made. Under our system it is the responsibility of government to administer the laws passed by parliament. The opposition cannot do that. There are laws on the statute books which can be invoked to deal with these subjects. There are laws on the statute books which can be invoked to deal with some of this very unemployment that we are discussing. This afternoon I have simply added to the many examples already given the figures only recently made public showing how unemployment is being created in one particular industry.

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Therefore, Mr. Speaker, for the reasons I have explained we shall support the sub-amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough). We support it not only because the words used are specific words but also because it is a want of confidence motion with respect to the action of the government on this very important subject and we wish to register our vote accordingly.

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): May I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being five o'clock, the house will proceed to the consideration of private and public bills.

PRIVATE BILLS

ST. MARY'S RIVER BRIDGE COMPANY

Mr. G. E. Nixon (Algoma West) moved the second reading of Bill No. 281, to incorporate St. Mary's River Bridge Company.

Mr. Green: Could we have a statement from the sponsor of the bill?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to incorporate a company with powers to construct a bridge over or a tunnel under St. Mary's river at or near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The location of the two "Saults", Canadian and American, marks a very important point and is often referred to as the hub of the great lakes. This can be readily understood when one realizes it is at this point that the only international border crossing is provided between the westerly end of lake Superior and some 700 miles east, at the southerly end of lake Huron.

I understand that in 1927 the number of motor vehicles which crossed the river at the Sault by ferry was 76,000, and that the number has increased until last year there were approximately 290,000, which means an average of about 800 vehicles per day. I think it is reasonable to expect that this number would increase greatly if the crossing could be made by bridge or tunnel, especially when we realize that under construction at the present time, just 60 miles south of Sault Ste. Marie, is the Mackinac straits bridge, connecting southern Michigan with the upper peninsula by the longest suspension span in the world.

The four-lane highway on the Mackinac bridge will have an estimated capacity of 3,000 cars each way per hour. I am advised that a four-lane highway from southern Michigan to Sault Ste. Marie via the Mackinac straits bridge is assured and will tap important transcontinental roads in the heavily populated states bordering on the