

# Bridge should be replaced, Bradford engineer says

Responsibility and funding possibilities for the canal bridge are in question, but council decided last week to go ahead and apply for a grant to replace the 34-year-old structure.

The town's engineering firm has completed a study to determine the alternatives for the bridge, which has shifted about two feet, causing the it to twist and resulting in large gaps at either end.

Engineer Ernst Heinrichs told council last week (Jan. 21) at a committee meeting that it would be best to replace the bridge.

While it would be less costly (though not much) to repair the it, there is some question whether the work could be done to current bridge standards, he said.

Instead, he recommended the long-term solution of rebuilding the bridge in a dif-

ferent position, at a cost of about \$360,000.

The present wooden supports would be removed, and the bridge would be built at a 90 degree angle to the canal, making it shorter than the existing one, the engineer said.

The bridge has shifted because of pressure put on it as the dikes (roads) on either side give way.

A new bridge would prevent the higher ongoing costs that would result from constant maintenance monitoring if it were only repaired, he said.

The problem for the town comes in funding for the work.

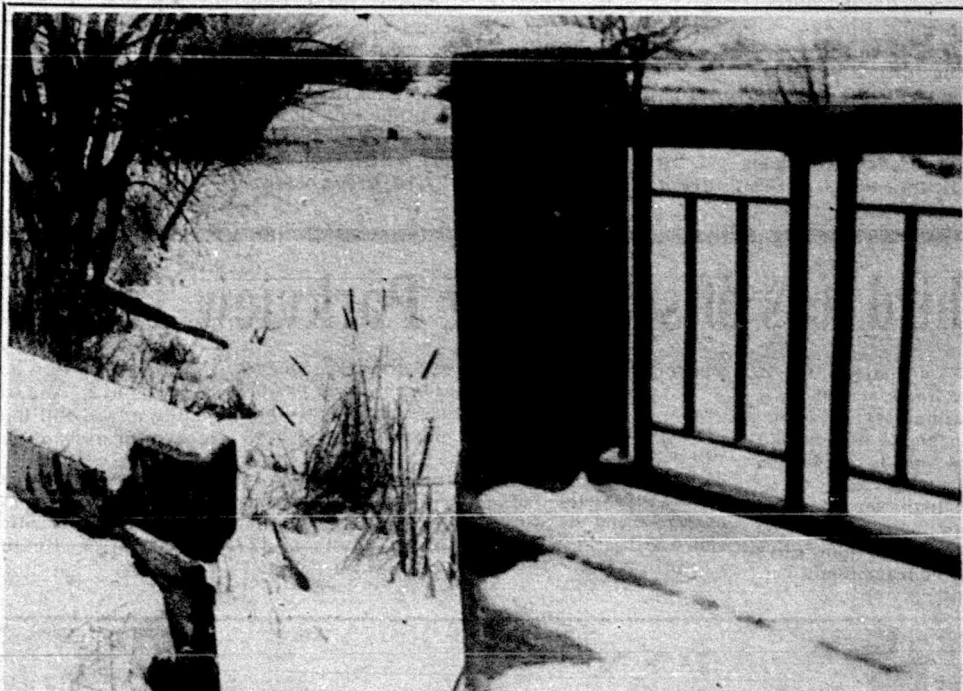
While Simcoe County may pay a portion of the cost (a request in the fall to help pay for the engineering study was turned down), the town may be forced to put off some other planned work in order to rebuild the bridge.

The town has some options regarding how to pay for the work, so is going ahead with a request for what is deemed the most beneficial grant.

The Ministry of Transportation, however, may require the town to put some of its regular roads subsidy toward the work. If that happens, the town may have to put off improvements planned for this year to David Street.

Mr. Heinrichs told council members that one ministry official stated to him the bridge was unnecessary, and should be demolished, rather than have provincial grants awarded to rebuild it.

But council members were adamant that that would not happen, since the bridge is heavily used, and its destruction would mean a small part of Bradford would be cut off from the rest.



The bridge over the Holland Canal has twisted out of shape to leave gaps at each end.