



Photo: Handford Studios in Public Archives

Renfrew's first swinging bridge

By Harry Hinchley

Now that the swinging bridge has again made the news we trust that we may be excused for again carrying an old photo that has been published before.

The first structure was known as the "wire bridge" because it was made of spring coil wire. This was not entirely satisfactory and in less than 20 years it was replaced by a bridge of more substantial type which was suspended from cables. This came to be known by the rather descriptive name of the "swinging bridge."

The town of Renfrew is fortunate in being rich in unusual features both natural and man-made and the "swinging bridge" is one of them. Just where is there another?

In the City of Belleville there is a bridge for pedestrians only

across the Moira River. Unlike the bridge at Renfrew it is not of the suspension type but is of concrete construction. It is always referred to as the "foot bridge."

When the original wire bridge was built in 1895 it was entirely financed by public subscription. Council refused to have anything to do with it and would accept no responsibility. But council at least did not stand in the way and gave silent consent for its construction.

When in 1913 it came time to replace the old bridge, council that year was much more reasonable. They relented to the extent of allowing the new bridge to be constructed from designs prepared by the very versatile and capable town engineer, the late John R Stewart.