



(photo R. Mahoney)

CRUMBLING ARCHES -- Time and the elements have taken a toll on the 68-year-old bridge spanning the South Nation River in Plantagenet. A \$53,000 reinforcement job will extend the life of the structure, however, the united counties of Prescott-Russell will have to replace the deteriorating bridge with a new \$2 million span within three to four years.

Time, salt take toll on Plantagenet bridge

By Richard Mahoney

PLANTAGENET — Time is running out on the 68-year-old bridge that spans the South Nation River in Plantagenet.

Although the two-span structure on County Road 9 is being reinforced, an engineer has advised the united counties of Prescott-Russell that the bridge must be replaced within the next few years. A replacement will cost about \$2 million.

"The engineer's study showed that the vertical concrete beams were overstressed 160 per cent," relates Plantagenet Reeve Marc-André Geoffroy.

JRB Construction, of Ottawa, has been awarded a \$53,000 contract to reinforce the stringers with steel. "We had to strengthen the verticals or put on load restrictions," explains county roads department head Albert Lynch.

The engineer's report suggests that a closer examination of the large bridge and a smaller concrete bridge situated further south be carried out in three to

four years.

"Eventually it will have to be replaced. All we are doing now is buying some time," says Albert Lynch.

Marc-André Geoffroy observes that a new bridge would cost about \$2 million. "We had received an estimate of \$1.8 million -- and that was in 1992 costs," he says. The reeve adds that, because the bridge is part of such a heavily travelled route, a causeway, costing about \$300,000, would have to be built in order to avoid major traffic disruptions.

"It is an important link for Plantagenet," Albert Lynch says of the road which provides area motorists with access to Highway 17.

The existing bridge was built over a two-year period and was completed in 1926. "Railway bridges can last 100 years but they don't have salt to deal with," Lynch observes. "Salt is one of the big problems."