

Unemployment Continuance Act

believe the Minister of Railways (Mr. Manion) stated that I had dealt with the matter in an absolutely non-partisan manner. It is my intention to proceed in the same way this afternoon, but I shall try to obtain a definite answer to my question from the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett), or at least from this committee. My resolution last year read as follows:

Whereas the need for the construction of a trans-Canada highway has been accepted by the Canadian people;

And whereas, during last winter, that principle was being actually implemented by the construction of some of its links in northern Ontario out of the funds voted during the emergency session to relieve unemployment;

And whereas the necessity of the construction of two alternate routes is now well established;

Therefore be it resolved that in the opinion of this house that all moneys voted for that purpose will be spent on a fifty-fifty basis on the LaReine, Cochrane, Hearst, Nakina and Sioux Lookout section on the one hand and the Sault Ste. Marie, Fort William, Port Arthur and Kenora on the other.

I have in my hand the report of the dominion director of unemployment relief, which shows on page 39 that the sum of \$5,250,000 was spent on the trans-Canada highway. The wording of this report would lead one to believe that the route of this highway has been decided upon, at least through northern Ontario. This highway is of national importance because the nine provinces of Canada are all interested in its routing, and they are directly interested in the raising of the money to carry on the construction. One of the largest and most expensive sections to be constructed is in northern Ontario, which, in fact, is the geographical centre of Canada. However, there exists a problem in connection with this section of the country which as yet has not been solved.

During the emergency session of 1930, I made the statement that the provincial government tried to wash its hands of the routing of this road. At that time the then Premier of Ontario, the present High Commissioner for Canada, the Hon. Mr. Ferguson, stated that the routing of the trans-Canada highway rested wholly with the federal authorities. I will not quote the exact words of Mr. Ferguson, but I know they were well received throughout the length and breadth of this country. Although I asked the Prime Minister if these words were true, I did not receive a definite answer until after the session of last year, when a statement was made in Calgary by the Prime Minister.

I read a very interesting article in Saturday Night, as well as in MacLean's Magazine,

where it was stated that the country as a whole necessarily must take a hand in this matter so that a logical route could be chosen, less money spent and a smaller mileage constructed. Speaking in Calgary last year the Prime Minister said that the trans-Canada highway should go over the Ferguson highway. That was a definite statement and it was well received by every section of northern Ontario. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon) issued a statement to the effect that it was the only logical route. In the light of these statements I am at a loss to understand why it is that millions of dollars have been spent on other sections of the highway apart from the Ferguson highway. I ask the government to give this committee this information which the people should receive before any further money is voted.

The provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have their own highway systems from the east to the west and the same applies to some extent to Quebec, although that province has no real direct communication with Ontario. In Ontario vast stretches of highway will have to be constructed in the northern sections in order to give direct communication between the east and the west. If my information is correct, the province of Manitoba has a highway system from the east to the west, and the same applies to the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Will the government advise if a definite route through northern Ontario has been decided upon? One section of this country is represented by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon), but the people of northern Ontario want to know if our section is not to be taken into consideration. May I repeat the statement made in Calgary by the Prime Minister, I believe on August 18, to the effect that the trans-Canada highway would be routed over the Ferguson highway, via North Bay, Cochrane and Hearst. My resolution was very reasonable in its demands. I asked the federal authorities to make its expenditures on this highway on a fifty-fifty basis; that is, if money was spent on the Sault Ste. Marie, Fort William, Port Arthur and Kenora route a similar amount would be spent on the northern section. I received many letters stating that this was the only logical solution of the problem, and I believe it is the duty of the Minister of Labour to see that the same consideration is given to our section of the province as has been given to the southern section.

The construction of a trans-Canada highway is considered to be absolutely necessary. This